Agenda Date: October 23, 2025
Item Number: E7

Docket: **UG-250714**
Company: Northwest Natural Gas Company

Staff: Corey T. Cook, Regulatory Analyst

Recommendation

Issue an Order approving Northwest Natural Gas Company's Tariff Sheets filed on September. 15, 2025, and as revised on October 7, 2025, to become effective November 1, 2025, subject to the condition:

1. Within 30 days of the Commission issuing Policy Guidance regarding RCW 80.28.425(2), Northwest Natural Gas Company will file with the Commission an appropriate tariff revision, as needed, to this Docket.

Background

In Northwest Natural Gas Company's 2024 annual low-income filings,[1] rates were forecasted and set at $982,815.

On September 15, 2025, Northwest Natural Gas Company (NW Natural or Company) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission), proposed revisions to its Tariff WN U-6, Schedule 230, Gas Relief Energy Assistance Tariff (GREAT) Program Cost Recovery.

This is NW Natural's annual low-income true-up filing, which also forecasts rates for the next year. This filing proposes an overall decrease to revenue of $79,010.

On August 28, 2025, at the Commission's regularly scheduled Open Meeting, Docket A-250549 was heard. The Commission chose to initiate a Policymaking Docket regarding RCW 80.28.425(2). There is not yet a Docket number available for this item.

Discussion

In similar fashion to its peer utility Puget Sound Energy, and in keeping with consistent treatment across the Commission's regulated energy companies, Commission Staff (Staff) recognizes the Commission's ongoing Policymaking Docket regarding RCW 80.28.425(2), and the "five percent" threshold mentioned in statute.

Staff has reviewed the filing and applicable workpapers; we find the requested increase to be reasonable.

[1] Docket UG-240696.

With respect to public interest, Staff urges the Commission to prioritize finalizing the Policymaking Docket regarding RCW 80.28.425(2).

Similarly, how the Company calculates the 5 percent is also subject to Commission interpretation. Staff does not have the necessary insight to make any recommendations regarding calculation methodology currently; however, it looks forward to engaging in those discussions in future Open Meetings.

Conclusion

The Commission has previously determined that "advancing energy justice is integral to achieving equity in Washington's energy regulation,"[2] and "energy justice focuses on ensuring that individuals have access to energy that is affordable, safe, sustainable,"[3] and "that reducing household energy insecurity and retaining access to essential utility services in Washington are important equity considerations that are consistent with the public interest."[4]

Ensuring NW Natural's low-income programs remain adequately funded are critical to the advancement of equity in customer rates, and Staff finds the proposed rate increases to be reasonable and in the public interest.

Staff recommends the Commission Issue an Order approving Northwest Natural Gas Company's Tariff Sheets filed in Docket UG-250714, on September 15, 2025, and as revised on October 7, 2025, to become effective November 1, 2025; subject to the condition: within 30 days of the Commission issuing Policy Guidance regarding RCW 80.28.425(2), Northwest Natural Gas Company will file with the Commission an appropriate tariff revisions, as needed, to this Docket.

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[2] Docket UE-220053 et.al., Final Order 10/04 ¶ 106.

[3] Docket UE-220053 et.al., Final Order 10/04 ¶ 106.

[4] Docket UE-220053 et.al., Final Order 10/04 ¶ 111.