

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION STAFF
RESPONSE TO DATA REQUEST

DATE PREPARED:
DOCKET: UE-150204/UG-150205
REQUESTER: The Energy Project

WITNESS: Juliana Williams
RESPONDER: Juliana Williams
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DR-1:

In testimony of Juliana Williams on page 14, lines 3-16 staff points out that RCW 80.28.068 authorizes utilities to provide low income services but it does not define "low income". Staff testimony goes on to state that both Senior Energy Outreach and the new Senior Discount program allows eligibility for a household with an income of 126 to 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). But the LIRAP Heat program established eligibility at 125 percent of FPL. Is it staff's recommendation that the LIRAP Heat program eligibility be changed at this time?

RESPONSE:

No, it is not Staff's recommendation to change the LIRAP Heat program eligibility. Exhibit No. JMW-1T, page 14, lines 3-16 discusses the basis for establishing bill assistance income eligibility criteria consistent with the federal LIHEAP income threshold of 125 percent of the federal poverty line (FPL), and for establishing income eligibility criteria at higher income levels, such as between 126 and 200 percent of FPL. Staff supports Avista's income eligibility requirements of 125 of FPL for LIRAP Heat and 126 to 200 percent of FPL for Senior Energy Outreach and the pilot rate discount for seniors and disabled customers on fixed income. These three programs serve different customer needs and it is appropriate for a utility to retain the flexibility in establishing income eligibility criteria that reflects the need in its service territory.