



October 20, 2017

Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission
1300 S. Evergreen Park Dr. SW
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

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PLANNING & MANAGEMENT
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STATE OF WASH
UTIL. AND TRANSP
COMMISSION

Dear Commission members:

As members of the Planning and Management Council of Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington, which advocates for consumers of in-home and community based long-term care services in Ferry, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Spokane, and Whitman counties, we have taken a stance on the proposed Avista Power Cost Rate Adjustment and General Rate Request for a 9.2 percent increase per month. As the Commission considers the Avista requests, we ask that you take into account the following position adopted by the Planning and Management Council:

The Planning and Management Council believes that given the General Rate Case settlement increases granted to Avista for electric and natural gas nearly annually since 2006 and looming budget cuts to social services, no electric or natural gas rate increases should be granted. As the Commission considers the Avista general rate case for 2018, the Council requests that you take into account the following:

- Washington's 2016 Elder Economic Insecurity Rate (EEIR)—the percentage of retired seniors living in their own homes whose incomes fall below the local Elder Economic Security Standard Index—suggests that **47.6** % of seniors living alone lack the incomes they will need to make ends meet and age in their own homes.
- The state's economic insecurity rate for senior couples is **22.9** %. This rate stands in contrast to the state's modest **4.2** % poverty rate for senior couples. The difference reveals senior couples who are often overlooked, but whose incomes don't allow them to escape poverty's shadow. These seniors are more likely to go without one or more basic need, and are less likely to weather unforeseen expenses.
- Senior income in our region does not keep pace with rate increases. Many older adults in our area rely on social security, which only increased by **0.3%** in 2017.

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SERVING: Northern Ferry, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens & Whitman counties

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- Many older adults in our area qualify for Medicaid – we provided case management services to over 4,000 low-income individuals receiving long term care in 2016.

Members of the Planning and Management Council serve many clients who are low-income and who must manage either chronic health problems or disabilities, sometimes both. An increase in residential rates for heat and light impacts this segment of the population much more drastically than others. As these individuals struggle to make ends meet for food, medicine, transportation, and housing, the proposed rate increases for residential customers are simply too high.

Sincerely,

Marty Johnston, Chair, and

Members of the Planning and Management Council (Signatures attached)



Aging &
LONG
TERM Care
OF EASTERN WASHINGTON

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