

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES & TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,

Complainant,

v.

AVISTA CORPORATION, d/b/a AVISTA UTILITIES

Respondent.

DOCKETS UE-240006 & UG-240007 (*Consolidated*)

**CROSS-EXAMINATION EXHIBIT OF SHAWN J. BONFIELD
ON BEHALF OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
PUBLIC COUNSEL UNIT**

EXHIBIT SJB-12X

Public Comments on Avista's Rate Case

October 1, 2024

Public Comments on Avista Rate Case

Cynthia Freyer:

I am in Colton, Wash., where I live alone at 72 years old in a 1700 one-story ranch-style home. I have an all-electric home. I pay \$171 month for electric on the comfort plan. I do not use my oven. I use an air fryer instead and only cook one meal daily. During our snowy winters, my thermostat is set at 60 degrees during the day and 55 degrees during the night. I do get a senior discount but it is only \$20 monthly. I have had folks in to check on weatherization. Work has been done but there is nothing more to do. I am living on \$2160 monthly SS. I would have had savings to draw on for retirement as we saved all of our lives but the government hurt us with the economic collapse during the Great Short fiasco, which was complicated by my husband getting cancer without health insurance because of that economic collapse. His contracting business could not afford it. We used all of our retirement funds to cover cancer treatment and then, he died. Can I reduce my thermostat more this winter? I guess I will have to. One idea is to provide us with more thermal underwear so we can stay warm.

Please consider the impact of government decisions on our lives. I only have one.

Mary Arlt:

To Whom It May Concern:

There was another notice in my recent Avista bill about another rate increase. Is this a monthly or quarterly thing now? Yes I am against another rate increase of any kind. Now they want an increase for connections to the system of \$3.27 per month (3.5%) if connected before July 25, 2021 and a 16% or \$14.76 per month increase for connections after that. We are already looking at a 3.1% rate increase in July of 2025 and there was a 3.2% increase last July. All this is based on using 64 therms a month. I looked at my 2023 bills. In January I used 154,944 for \$200.95; February 137,771 for \$178.69; March I used 92,389 therms for \$119.85; April 44,963 for \$63.97 (which also included a New Rate line); October 57,389 therms for \$89.98; November 132,251 therms for \$200.16 and December 134,379 for \$204.13. I am totally afraid of what January's usage will be with this very cold weather.

I live in an older home. I'm 72 years old, widowed and freezing. I keep my thermostat between 64-66. During the recent cold snap I had the free standing gas stove in the living room on for 5 days but turned it and the pilot light off yesterday to use less gas. I looked at my Avista account estimates and freaked. When I checked on the discount program, I make a little too much in my retirement income to qualify for any discounts. So guess I am stuck paying very high bills to Avista. Today's minimum wage is probably more than what many people my age retired on. Today's retirees are competing with Avista wages and minimum. Hard to do. Avista seems more concerned about getting the shareholders money than they are about budgeting for updates, etc. They have stuck everything onto the rate payers. Hopefully you all will do your job and say no.

Barbara Fe Vore:

I cannot afford the present rate and in the winter the bill is usually \$600 a month November thru February or March. As a senior citizen, my income is \$1646 a month. After insurances, and other bills, I have less than \$100 a month for groceries and gas. I am 81 years old and working in fast food but will have to quit before snow and icy roads. It is a 17 mile commute to work and roads are not maintained as they once were. I've slid off the road twice when hitting an icy patch... even traveling at 35 mph. Avista does not need to pay the amount they do to CEO. They need to learn to budget better and absolutely do NOT need an increase. I qualify for some help and it only covers 1 1/2 months in coldest month, so I'm usually still paying off winter bills from Avista in June!

Joyce Wedde:

We as consumers cannot keep funding the CEO's of this company the cost are out rages I'm a 65 year senior citizen who can barely afford food for my husband and myself but make a small amount just above what I can be approved for assistance during this recent cold spell it showed Avista again not putting there money we already pay toward the infrastructure they so talk about. I feel that if you did a audit of Avista and there practices you would find that this increase is unfounded considering, the government money they received for infrastructure improvements these increases comes at a time when we are tapped out there is no more money to give right now please vote no on this proposal and please do a audit of this company's practices.