



STATE OF WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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July 1, 2025

Jeff Killip, Executive Director and Secretary
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
P. O. Box 47250
Olympia, Washington 98504-7250

RE: Participatory Funding Program Evaluation, Condition 4 of Order 03
Docket U-210595

Dear Jeff Killip:

On April 11, 2025, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) entered Order 03 Approving Agreement; Subject to Conditions in the above-referenced docket. Order 03, among other things, required Commission Staff (Staff), Public Counsel, and the Joint Parties to the Agreement to meet on or before July 1, 2025, to discuss the evaluation of the Participatory Funding program and submit a report.¹

Specifically, the Commission ordered parties to meet to discuss the “process and funding for a program evaluation, including scoping what the evaluation should entail, whether the evaluation should be conducted by Staff or an independent third party, and report the conclusions of that discussion to the Commission in this docket” on or before July 1, 2025.² Staff convened the Joint Parties to the Agreement and Public Counsel on July 1, 2025. Representatives from Staff, Public Counsel, Avista Corporation d/b/a Avista Utilities, Cascade Natural Gas Corporation, PacifiCorp d/b/a Pacific Power & Light Company, Puget Sound Energy, Northwest Natural Gas Company, Alliance of Western Energy Consumers, NW Energy Coalition, The Energy Project, Front & Centered, and Spark Northwest were in attendance.

Participants in the July 1, 2025, meeting discussed several issues related to the scope and content of the program evaluation, including the administrative burden of seeking Fund Grants through

¹ U-210595, Order 03 at Paragraph 22 (Condition 4).

² *Id.*

the Participatory Funding Agreement and the participation of new organizations in Commission proceedings. Participants expressed interest in seeking feedback from organizations new to the process and those who may have opted not to participate in Commission proceedings. Discussions also brought to light the scope of the evaluation as it relates to the Commission's Policy Statement on Intervenor Funding and other active proceedings before the Commission such as the Equity Policy Statement (Docket A-230217).

Participants also discussed whether Staff or an independent third-party should be the primary leader of the evaluation. No participant raised concerns about Staff's ability or impartiality to conduct this evaluation, though one participant raised a consideration about whether Staff would be the appropriate entity to engage groups that have not participated in Commission proceedings. Additionally, participants suggested the evaluation should be completed by the end of Quarter 2 of 2027 to provide Joint Parties sufficient time to negotiate a new agreement based on the findings of the program evaluation.

During the July 1, 2025, meeting, Staff indicated to participants that it would update the parties on the program evaluation within 90 days of the meeting. Specifically, Staff will provide more direction on who will conduct the evaluation, the timeline for completing the evaluation, and the scope and contents of the evaluation. Parties will need to further discuss funding a third-party evaluator, if that option is pursued. By holding this meeting and facilitating discussion of the Commission's requested topics, Condition 4 of Order 03 has been satisfied.

Sincerely,

Corey Dahl
Section Manager, Energy Rates and Services