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September 29, 2020

Mark L. Johnson
Executive Director and Secretary
Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission
621 Woodland Square Loop SE
Lacey, WA 98503

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COMMISSION

RE: Docket No. UG-200308 Update Letter – Extension of Schedule 192 Temporary Modifications

Dear Mr. Johnson:

On April 2, 2020, Avista Corporation, dba Avista Utilities (Avista or the Company), filed proposed revisions to its natural gas tariff WN U-29, Schedule 192, “Low Income Rate Assistance Rate Adjustment”, incorporating temporary modifications to the Company’s Low-Income Rate Assistance Program (LIRAP) to help mitigate some of the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic being experienced by Avista customers. In its original filing, approved by the Commission via Order 01 in Docket No. UG-200308, the Company proposed that the temporary LIRAP modifications were “anticipated to expire at the end of the program year on September 30, 2020, however, Avista will monitor program activity and make a recommendation to its Advisory Group if an extension is needed.” Due to the prolonged effects of the COVID-19 public health and economic crisis, Avista has since consulted its Energy Assistance Advisory Group (Advisory Group) and received unanimous support to maintain its LIRAP modifications through September 30, 2021. As such, the Company provides this letter for informational purposes only, to serve as a notification of the extension of the temporary LIRAP modifications as approved in the docket referenced above.

As of August 31, 2020, Avista’s COVID Hardship grant, approved as a component to these temporary LIRAP changes, has supported 1,601 Washington households experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19, with approximately \$536,525 in assistance. As the Company looks toward the upcoming October 2020-September 2021 energy assistance program year, the availability

of these continued LIRAP provisions, as well as the approved 10% soft cap budget increase included as a contingency in the event that energy assistance need related to COVID-19 hardships far exceeds current expectations, will undoubtedly assist Avista and the Community Action Agencies (Agencies) to best serve its low-income customers throughout the continuing economic uncertainty. As stated in its approved filing, any overages beyond the existing budget will be updated through the Company's existing annual LIRAP true-up filing. Additionally, these temporary amendments to LIRAP will continue to be implemented concurrently with Commerce's COVID-19 Emergency Declaration Contingent Benefit Policy, and in partnership with the Agencies serving Avista's service territory.

Avista appreciates the hard work and support of its Advisory Group, as well as the compassion and diligence shown by the Commission in its efforts to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Washington residents. The Company believes the continuation of these modifications to be in the best interest of its customers based on the unforeseeable need for assistance resulting from COVID-19, and will continue to work with its Advisory Group to monitor these and other LIRAP provisions to ensure meaningful distribution of LIRAP funding throughout the upcoming program year.

Please direct any questions regarding this filing to Ana Matthews at (509) 495-7979 or Jaime Majure at (509) 495-7839.

Sincerely,

/s/ Shawn Bonfield

Shawn Bonfield
Sr. Manager of Regulatory Policy & Strategy