



STATE OF WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

621 Woodland Square Loop S.E. • Lacey, Washington 98503

P.O. Box 47250 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7250

(360) 664-1160 • TTY 1-800-833-6384 or 711

Dec. 29, 2023

Kathy Hunter, Acting Executive Director and Secretary
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
P.O. Box 47250
Olympia, Washington 98504-7250

RE: Formal Complaint, Tony Garana, Docket TG-231035
Staff letter summarizing Informal Complaint investigation, CAS-44740-L3P1H6

Dear Kathy Hunter:

On Dec. 20, 2023, Tony Garana filed a formal complaint with the commission against Waste Management of Washington, Inc. (Waste Management). Garana believes Waste Management has been overcharging customers for years because Waste Management's rates are triple what Republic Services, Inc. (Republic Services) charges.

Tony Garana previously filed an complaint, CAS-44740-L3P1H6, with Consumer Protection's consumer complaint team regarding these same concerns. An informal consumer complaint was opened on Oct. 31, 2023, and closed on Nov. 17, 2023.

Summary of staff's informal investigation into CAS-44740-L3P1H6

Tony Garana is a current customer of Republic Services in Bellevue, and contacted Waste Management to obtain a quote for service in Renton. After receiving a quote from Waste Management, Garana contacted commission staff to ask why Waste Management's rates are three times higher than Republic Services'. They question the validity of Waste Management's rates, believing that someone is pocketing or racketeering the money. They requested that the commission not renew Waste Management's contract unless it is comparable with other competitors.

Staff explained to the complainant that a company's rates are set on operating expenses and since each company has different operating expenses, each company's rates differ. Staff also explained that the commission does not have contracts, that solid waste companies apply for and may be

Kathy Hunter
Dec. 29, 2023
Page 2

granted a certificate of public need and necessity to provide solid waste services in the state of Washington. Certificates are good until canceled by either party. The commission would not seek to cancel a permit unless it determined through a formal hearing process that a company wasn't providing service to the commission's satisfaction. The law prohibits more than one garbage company from providing service in any one area. Garbage service can be provided through a municipality providing the service itself, a municipality contracting with a garbage company, or a company providing service on a certificate issued by the commission.

Garana was not satisfied with staff's response and still insisted the commission do something to make the rates fair, just, and reasonable. Staff provided Garana with a fact sheet on how to file a formal complaint. Garana filed a formal complaint on Dec. 20, 2023.

Summary

During the informal investigation staff found that quoted rates provided by Waste Management were within the company's commission approved tariff and did not violate any laws, rules, or tariff. Tony Garana does not believe the commission approved rates for Waste Management are fair, just, and reasonable because they are three times higher than Republic Services' rates. There is no further assistance consumer protection staff can offer Tony Garana.

If you have any questions, please contact me at Bridgit.feesser@utc.wa.gov or (360) 664-1111.

Sincerely,

Bridgit Feeser
Director, Consumer Protection

enclosure: Consumer complaint record CAS-44740-L3P1H6