

EXHIBIT NO. __ (SML-6)
DOCKET NO. PG-041624
WITNESS: SUSAN MCLAIN

**BEFORE THE
WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,**

Complainant,

v.

PUGET SOUND ENERGY, INC.,

Respondent.

Docket No. PG-041624

**FIFTH EXHIBIT TO THE PREFILED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF
SUSAN MCLAIN (NONCONFIDENTIAL)
ON BEHALF OF PUGET SOUND ENERGY, INC.**

AUGUST 15, 2005



PUGET SOUND ENERGY

September 29, 2004

Dear Puget Sound Energy Customer,

You may be aware that a Spiritridge home was destroyed in early September after an apparent buildup of natural-gas ignited. Tragically, the home's resident later died from injuries she sustained in the fire. Puget Sound Energy and investigators from the Bellevue Fire Department and the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) are working hard to determine the fire's cause as quickly as possible. Just as importantly, until we know what caused the incident, PSE will continue to inspect its gas-distribution system in southeast Bellevue – block by block, house by house – to ensure that your gas service remains safe and reliable.

Please know that nothing is more important to PSE than maintaining the safety of our energy system. To that end, PSE tested its entire gas-distribution system in southeast Bellevue immediately after the September 2 event – and again this past week. And while the inspection verified the system's integrity and safety, we will continue to survey the whole area's system in coming days and weeks until answers to the fire are found. Once a cause is established we will take additional steps, if necessary, to ensure the continuing safe operations of our system in your area.

Besides your safety, your peace of mind is also very important to us. We will do our best to keep you informed – by mail, phone messages, the Internet, and the news media – about the progress of the fire investigation. PSE representatives also will be on hand at the next **Spiritridge Neighborhood Association meeting on October 6** to answer questions about natural-gas safety. The meeting is set for **7 to 9 p.m. at Spiritridge Elementary School, 16401 SE 24th St.**

In the meantime, we've attached a status report from PSE that summarizes what is known, so far, about the incident's possible cause. We're also providing you with answers to some "Frequently Asked Questions" about natural-gas safety. In addition, you can find information about gas safety and the steps being taken in response to the house fire by going to PSE's Web site (www.pse.com); just click on the gas-safety link at the top of our home page. Also, if you have specific questions or comments on this matter, please send an e-mail to feedback@pse.com and a PSE representative will get back to you as quickly as possible.

Again, let us restate that nothing is more important to PSE than maintaining a safe and efficient energy-delivery system that provides you with the confidence and peace of mind you deserve as our customer.

Sincerely,

Steve Reynolds
President
and Chief Executive Officer

Sue McLain
Senior Vice President, Operations



Status Report on Sept. 2 Natural-Gas Fire in Bellevue

Sept. 29, 2004

Investigators with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC), Bellevue Fire Department, and Puget Sound Energy (PSE) are continuing to search for the cause of the September 2 natural-gas explosion and fire that destroyed a home in southeast Bellevue.

Investigators now are focused on determining what caused the home's ¾-inch steel service line to corrode and leak. They believe that gas vapors from the buried line seeped into the home. A number of possible factors are being investigated, but so far, no conclusions have been reached as to the leak's underlying cause or causes.

The contributing factors that are being investigated include the possibility that the pipe had earlier been damaged or nicked, allowing for corrosion to occur; that ground conditions were conducive to corrosion; and that the "cathodic protection" system PSE uses for this area of Bellevue to prevent corrosion on its steel gas lines was not configured correctly. More will be known after metallurgical tests are conducted on the damaged pipe.

Concern over the cathodic protection system is the reason why PSE, in coordination with the WUTC and City of Bellevue, is implementing a commission-ordered "Action Plan" to regularly and thoroughly inspect the condition of the gas-pipeline system covered by that system. The affected Bellevue area of 2,600 homes is located west of Lake Sammamish, north of I-90, east of 156th Avenue, and south of Southeast Eight Street. Under the Action Plan, PSE has conducted and will continue to conduct monthly leak surveys on every main and service line in this area. All leaks found have been repaired. Meanwhile, an outside consultant is conducting a review of the construction and maintenance practices in this area and is developing a testing procedure to determine the condition of the steel pipe's protective coating.

In addition to the ongoing surveillance of its gas system in southeast Bellevue, PSE will implement a public-communications plan, including a public meeting, to inform Bellevue customers about the investigation and efforts being taken to ensure safety.

For More Information:

Puget Sound Energy
www.pse.com
1-888-831-7250
e-mail: feedback@pse.com

Bellevue Fire Department
www.ci.bellevue.wa.us
425-452-6995

WUTC
www.wutc.wa.gov
1-800-562-6150