

Agenda Date: December 13, 2006  
Item Number: B1

**Docket:** TG-061736  
Company Name: Empire Disposal, Inc.

Staff: Nicki Johnson, Regulatory Analyst  
John Cupp, Consumer Program Specialist

### **Recommendation**

Take no action on this filing at this time.

### **Background**

Today's presentation is to allow customers or other parties to comment on the proposed rates in Docket TG-061736. No action is required by the commission. Staff will make its recommendation to the commission at the open meeting on December 27, 2006.

On November 15, Empire Disposal, Inc., (Empire or company) filed a general rate increase. The filing proposed to increase rates to customers in both Whitman and Spokane counties. Subsequent to the company's filing, Whitman County notified the company that effective February 1, 2007, disposal fees at the county solid waste disposal facility would increase from \$69 to \$95 per ton. On November 30, Empire filed substitute pages for Whitman County increasing the rates further due to the disposal increase. The company also filed a less than statutory notice request since it filed the substitute pages on less than 45 days notice to the commission. Customer notices went out on December 1, and included the revised proposed rates for Whitman County customers. The company serves about 4,100 customers in Whitman County and 1,100 customers in southern Spokane County.

In addition to the increased disposal fees, the proposed filing is to recover the higher costs of fuel, payroll and insurance since the company's last increase in 2002.

The revised proposed rates generate an additional \$281,500 (15.98 percent) per year.

The commission received one comment, from a customer opposed to the increase. The customer noted that the company's notice listed higher fuel costs as one reason for the increase, even though fuel prices have decreased during recent months and the high fuel surcharge has not dropped with the price at the pumps. The customer also feels the company is asking for more money while providing less service.

The current and proposed rates are:

	<u>Present Rates</u>	<u>Proposed Rates</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
<b>Whitman County</b>			
<u>Residential Weekly Service</u>			
1 can	\$11.95	\$13.78	15.31%
2 can	\$15.50	\$18.16	17.16%
65 gallon cart	\$16.75	\$19.51	16.48%
90 gallon cart	\$20.00	\$24.02	20.10%
Recycle	\$3.10	\$4.10	32.26%
 <u>Commercial Service</u>			
1 Yard container per pickup	\$9.75	\$11.67	19.69%
2 Yard container per pickup	\$19.50	\$23.34	19.69%
25 yard dropbox per pickup	\$112.60	\$152.60	35.52%
 <b>Spokane County</b>			
<u>Residential Weekly Service</u>			
1 can	\$14.05	\$14.65	4.27%
2 can	\$19.90	\$20.65	3.77%
65 gallon cart	\$21.15	\$22.00	4.02%
90 gallon cart	\$26.25	\$27.45	4.57%
 <u>Commercial Service</u>			
1 Yard container per pickup	\$13.05	\$13.65	4.60%
2 Yard container per pickup	\$25.80	\$27.00	4.65%
25 yard dropbox per pickup	\$124.15	\$164.15	32.22%

**Conclusion**

Take no action on this filing at this time.