

WA UTC
P.O. Box 47250
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August 16th, 2016

To whom it may concern,

I am writing about the rate increase that Avista is requesting in my area Dockets UE-160228/UG-160229. The UTC should only allow Avista to raise electrical rates and natural gas prices and not raise the Basic Rate charge.

It makes sense to increase rates when the costs for providing services rise. It is perfectly understandable to charge people for services that they use. However a higher Basic Charge forces an unfair burden onto poor customers during a time that they are already struggling financially. The basic rate has steadily increased over the past ten years. While the pay of working families has not been increasing at all, making budgets tighter and tighter. While the proposed rates do not sound like much to people with decent incomes, each incremental increase like this forces people in difficult circumstances to make hard choices about whether to buy food or pay the electric bill.

Avista is requesting that people pay just to be hooked up to the electric and gas grid, and raising that cost adds insult to injury. A one-time hook up fee I can understand but to continually charge every month just to have access to the grid--a charge that grows bigger and bigger every year? That is not acceptable. Most of us have no other options, and so must pay this extra fee--whether or not we can afford it.

If Avista needs to recover costs of meters, service drops, meter readings and billings, they could charge for those services on an itemized bill or add those costs into the rates charged for the actual gas and electricity. The poor should not be burdened with an enormous "Basic Charge." By using less gas and electricity, those who cannot afford extra charges can still make ends meet.

I'm hoping that the UTC will make the correct decision about this and not allow an increase in the basic charge for gas and electricity.

Thank you,



Celina Thomas

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