

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION STAFF
RESPONSE TO DATA REQUEST

DATE PREPARED: May 20, 2016
DOCKET: UE-152253
REQUESTER: Bench

WITNESS: Jason L. Ball
RESPONDER: Jason L. Ball
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REQUEST NO. 10: At hearing on May 2, 2016, Mr. Brad Purdy, on behalf of the Energy Project, indicated that some contested issues affecting low-income customers may be resolved. If the following issues have been resolved, please provide a description of the resolution:

1. Staff recommends that the Company be required to commit at least \$50,000 in shareholder funding to its low-income conservation program as a condition of the Commission approving a decoupling mechanism. (Ball, Exh. JLB-1T at 42:23-24)

RESPONSE: Staff's proposal remains in dispute. Staff's proposal to increase shareholder funding by \$50,000 for low income weatherization proceeds directly from the Commission's policy statement on decoupling:

4. *Low-income.* A utility proposing a full decoupling mechanism must demonstrate whether or not its conservation programs provide benefits to low-income ratepayers that are roughly comparable to other ratepayers and, if not, it must provide low-income ratepayers targeted programs aimed at achieving a level of conservation comparable to that achieved by other ratepayers, so long as such programs are feasible within cost-effectiveness standards.¹

This issue of additional funding for low income weatherization is appropriately addressed inside the present proceeding. Staff, however, does not oppose discussing how such a program may operate with the additional funding in the stakeholder group discussed by The Energy Project. To be clear, Staff is not the originator of the stakeholder group proposal involving low income weatherization. Staff witness Tiffany Van Meter did propose convening a collaborative, but Ms. Van Meter's proposal relates to an entirely separate collaborative, which would discuss cost-of-service and rate design issues only. Staff continues to believe, however, that it is most appropriate to explicitly require the Company to increase shareholder funding in conjunction with approving decoupling.

¹ *In the Matter of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission's Investigation into Energy Conservation Incentives*, Docket U-100522, Report and Policy Statement on Regulatory Mechanisms, Including Decoupling, to Encourage Utilities to Meet or Exceed their Conservation Targets, 17-19, ¶ 28 (Nov. 4, 2010).