

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of

PUGET SOUND ENERGY,

Petitioner,

Seeking Exemption from the Provisions
of WAC 480-100-198 Relating to Notice
Verification and Assistance

DOCKET UE-200897

ORDER 01

GRANTING EXEMPTION FROM
RULE; ALLOWING TARIFF
REVISIONS TO BECOME
EFFECTIVE BY OPERATION OF
LAW

BACKGROUND

- 1 On October 30, 2020, Puget Sound Energy (PSE or Company) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) revisions to its Tariff Schedule 95A, Federal Incentive Tracker, with a stated effective date of January 1, 2021. The purpose of the filing is to true-up rates to reflect the Company's disbursement of Treasury Grant credits.
- 2 With its proposed tariff revision, PSE also petitioned for an exemption from WAC 480-100-198 (Petition). WAC 480-100-198(1) provides that, for company filings necessitating customer notice under WAC 480-100-194, -195, or -197, the company must file a statement with the Commission within ten days of the initial filing affirming that the company has provided the required customer notice. As PSE's proposed revisions to Schedule 95A represent a rate increase, the Company is required under WAC 480-100-194 to provide notice to customers at least 30 days in advance of the stated effective date of January 1, 2021.
- 3 PSE explains that the exemption will enable the Company to issue a single customer notice on or around December 1, 2020, for the multiple rate revisions going into effect on January 1, 2021, including the proposed revisions to Schedule 95A. Absent an exemption from WAC 480-100-198, PSE would be required to file a notice verification with the Commission for its Schedule 95A revisions on or before November 10, 2020.
- 4 On December 1, 2020, pursuant to WAC 480-100-194, PSE provided notice to its customers of the various rate changes going into effect on January 1, 2021. On December 2, 2020, PSE filed with the Commission a copy of the consolidated customer notice.

5 Commission staff (Staff) has reviewed PSE's filing and recommends the Commission grant the Company's request for an exemption from WAC 480-100-198. Staff believes that allowing PSE to delay notice verification will allow the Company to avoid providing multiple notices to customers for various rates going into effect on January 1, 2021, which could be confusing for customers. Staff therefore believes that allowing PSE to file a single, consolidated customer notice on December 1, 2020, and to provide the Commission with notice verification shortly thereafter, is consistent with the public interest.

DISCUSSION

6 We grant PSE's Petition for an exemption from WAC 480-100-198. Pursuant to WAC 480-100-008, the Commission may grant an exemption from the provisions of any rule in WAC 480-100 if doing so is consistent with the public interest, the purposes underlying the rule, and any applicable statutes.¹ Here, the Company requested an exemption from WAC 480-100-198 so that it can issue a single customer notice explaining multiple rate changes in lieu of issuing multiple notices over a period of two months. We agree with Staff that issuing multiple customer notices for various rate changes is likely to create customer confusion. We find in this instance that the benefit of providing a copy of PSE's proposed customer notice to the Commission within 10 days of its initial filing is outweighed by the benefit of customers receiving a single, consolidated notice. Accordingly, we conclude that issuing one notice to address multiple, concurrent rate changes better protects consumers, which is both consistent with the purpose of the rule and in the public interest.

7 Pursuant to RCW 80.28.060(1), the Commission may, for good cause shown, enter an order to allow tariff changes to go into effect without requiring 30 days' notice. Given the circumstances of this case, we find good cause for allowing PSE's revisions to Tariff Schedule 95A to take effect on January 1, 2021.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

8 (1) The Commission is an agency of the State of Washington vested by statute with the authority to regulate the rates, rules, regulations, practices, accounts, securities, transfers of property and affiliated interests of public service companies, including electric companies.

¹ Accord WAC 480-07-110.

- 9 (2) PSE is engaged in the business of providing electric services within the state of Washington and is an electric company and a public service company subject to Commission jurisdiction.
- 10 (3) PSE is subject to WAC 480-100-198, which requires electric companies to file a statement with the Commission commensurate with the requirements specified in WAC 480-100-198 within ten days of the original filing.
- 11 (4) Under WAC 480-100-008, the Commission may grant an exemption from the provisions of any rule in WAC 480-100 if doing so is consistent with the public interest, the purposes underlying regulation, and applicable statutes. See also WAC 480-07-110.
- 12 (5) This matter came before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on December 23, 2020.
- 13 (6) After review of the Petition filed in Docket UE-200897 by PSE on October 30, 2020, and giving due consideration, the Commission finds that granting the Petition for exemption is in the public interest, and is consistent with the purposes underlying the regulation and applicable statutes.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 14 (1) Puget Sound Energy's Petition for exemption from WAC 480-100-198 relating to Notice Verification and Assistance is granted.
- 15 (2) Puget Sound Energy's revisions to Tariff Schedule 95A, filed on October 30, 2020, will become effective by operation of law on January 1, 2021.
- 16 (3) The Commission retains jurisdiction over the subject matter and Puget Sound Energy to effectuate the provisions of this Order.
- 17 The Commissioners, having determined this Order to be consistent with the public interest, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective December 23, 2020.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MARK L. JOHNSON
Executive Director and Secretary