

WUTC v. Washington Water Supply, Inc.

Docket No. UW-240079 - Vol. III (February 18, 2025)



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BEFORE THE WASHINGTON

UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND)
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,)
Complainant,)
vs.) DOCKETS UW-240079
) and UW-230598
) (Consolidated)
WASHINGTON WATER SUPPLY, INC.,)
Respondent.)

PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING - VOL III

PAGES 30 - 44

BEFORE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE

CONNOR THOMPSON

Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
621 Woodland Square Loop SE
Lacey, Washington 98504

DATE HELD: February 18, 2025

TRANSCRIBED BY: ELIZABETH PATTERSON HARVEY, FAPR, RPR,

WA CCR 2731

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A P P E A R A N C E S :

FOR PUBLIC COUNSEL:

Robert D. Sykes
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Office of the Attorney General
Public Counsel Unit
800 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000
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ALSO PRESENT:

Melissa Castaneda-Kerson
Morgana Manley
Satomi Miyakawa

1 February 18, 2025 6:00 p.m.

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4 JUDGE THOMPSON: Thanks, Ryan. Currently, I
5 see representatives for staff, public counsel, and the
6 company online, but I do not see any customers at this
7 time. So at this time, why don't we go ahead and wait a
8 few minutes and see if anybody joins us.

9 MELISSA CASTANEDA-KERSON: Sounds good.

10 JUDGE THOMPSON: And hello to the individual
11 who just joined us. It appears your name might be
12 Morgana. Are you here for the public comment hearing?

13 (No audible response)

14 JUDGE THOMPSON: And to the two individuals who
15 just joined us, names Morgana or Morgana and Satomi, are
16 you two here for the public comment hearing for
17 Washington Water Supply?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes. I don't know that
19 I really have anything to say. If I hear something that
20 I want to respond to, I'll raise my hand.

21 JUDGE THOMPSON: Okay. Wonderful.

22 MELISSA CASTANEDA-KERSON: Sorry. Hi. My name
23 is Melissa Castaneda-Kerson, and I'm with public
24 involvement.

25 If either of you or anyone on the line would

1 like to speak, please go ahead and put your first and
2 your last name into the chat so we can get you signed in
3 for this meeting.

4 Of course, if you don't want to speak, you're
5 welcome, you know, to say you don't want to. But we
6 definitely would like to get you signed in to the
7 meeting.

8 JUDGE THOMPSON: Okay. And at this time, I'll
9 give it two more minutes, and then I'll go ahead and
10 introduce the case. And we can see if anyone wants to
11 speak at that time, if that's okay with everybody.

12 MELISSA CASTANEDA-KERSON: Sounds good to me.

13 JUDGE THOMPSON: Okay. I don't see anybody
14 else joining us. So let's go ahead and get started.

15 Melissa, did you have anything to add before I
16 get started with the introduction?

17 MELISSA CASTANEDA-KERSON: No. It looks like
18 Morgana went ahead and put her first and last name in the
19 chat.

20 And then Satomi, if you would like to speak, or
21 if you could put your first and last name into the chat
22 as well, that would be great so we can get you signed in.
23 And I will let you go ahead.

24 JUDGE THOMPSON: Okay. Thank you.

25 Good evening, everyone. Today is Tuesday,

1 February 18, 2025. And this is a public comment hearing
2 of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
3 in Dockets UW-240079 and UW-230598, which involve
4 Washington Water Supply's general rate case and request
5 for a surcharge which is related to the well
6 rehabilitation on the Echo Glen well.

7 I am Connor Thompson, an administrative law
8 judge here at the commission. I am the presiding officer
9 assigned to this matter.

10 As in a court of law, I am not able to answer
11 questions or engage in a dialogue tonight, but I am here
12 to listen to your comments, which will become part of the
13 record in this case.

14 I appreciate you joining us for this public
15 comment hearing tonight. I will provide a brief overview
16 of the case and the process for this hearing, and then
17 turn it over to Melissa Castaneda-Kerson, public
18 involvement specialist for the commission, to provide
19 some logistics about the hearing and further instructions
20 for those who wish to speak.

21 We have a scheduled public comment hearing for
22 this proceeding. Anyone who wishes to speak will have an
23 opportunity to do so, but you're certainly not obligated
24 to do so.

25 A brief overview of the case: Washington Water

1 Supply filed with the commission a proposed surcharge on
2 January 22, 2024. The commission suspended that request
3 and ordered the company to file a general rate case while
4 consolidating the request with Docket UW-230598.

5 Subsequently, the commission filed a complaint
6 on May 30, 2024, against the company, alleging five
7 counts.

8 And on June 28, 2024, Washington Water Supply
9 filed documents seeking to amend rates in the form of a
10 surcharge or general rate request, and the commission set
11 this matter for adjudication on March 18, 2025.

12 Washington Water Supply's June 28, 2024, filing
13 requests a surcharge of \$3.18 over 15 years or until
14 costs related to rehabilitation are recovered, or
15 customers may opt into a one-time payment of \$571.43.

16 Washington Water Supply requests these
17 increases due to increased expenses incurred from
18 rehabilitating the Echo Glen well.

19 Washington Water Supply's last general rate
20 increase became effective on January 1, 2001.

21 The following parties are participating in this
22 proceeding: Washington Water Supply, Incorporated;

23 Commission staff: The commission staff looks
24 to ensure rates are fair, just, and reasonable and in the
25 public interest, and participate like any other party to

1 the proceeding;

2 And the Public Counsel Unit of the Attorney
3 General's Office, representing residential and small
4 commercial customers.

5 Following the hearing in this matter, the
6 Commission will enter an order based on the record,
7 including all public comments and testimony from this
8 public hearing.

9 In addition to the testimony, evidence, and
10 comments made tonight, we invite customers and members of
11 the public to share their views in this matter pending
12 before the Commission.

13 The comments we receive from you this evening
14 will be made part of the formal record in this case. For
15 that reason, we are recording tonight's hearing, and I am
16 here tonight to listen to your comments.

17 By statute, the Office of Public Counsel
18 represents the interests of Washington Water Supply's
19 residential and small commercial customers.

20 And I see that Robert Sykes, representing
21 public counsel, is attending the meeting this evening.

22 If you have questions about this case, you can
23 contact the commission's public involvement staff,
24 Melissa Castaneda-Kerson, who is assigned to this case.
25 Melissa can be reached by emailing comments@utc.wa.gov,

1 or calling (888) 333-9882.

2 You can also reach out, if you have questions,
3 to the Office of Public Counsel by emailing them at
4 utility@atg.wa.gov, or writing to them at the Attorney
5 General's Office, Public Counsel Unit, 800 Fifth Avenue,
6 Suite 2000, Seattle, Washington, 98104.

7 When Melissa provides logistics for the hearing
8 tonight, she will repeat this information and it will be
9 included on a slide for you to see.

10 For those who do not wish to speak tonight, you
11 may submit written comments in this case. You may submit
12 those via the form on the commission's website at
13 UTC.WA.gov/consumers/, and you will see a link you can
14 click that says "Submit a comment."

15 Or you can submit comments to the public
16 counsel's office.

17 At the conclusion of tonight's proceeding,
18 we'll determine a final date for submitting comments.

19 And at this time, I'll now turn to Melissa
20 Castaneda-Kerson, from our public counsel -- our public
21 information staff, to go over the logistics for this
22 meeting. Melissa?

23 MELISSA CASTANEDA-KERSON: Thank you.

24 Good evening. My name is Melissa
25 Castaneda-Kerson, and I'm a public involvement

1 representative with the Utilities and Transportation
2 Commission. I will be the moderator for the comment
3 hearing this evening.

4 If you did not sign up in advance to provide a
5 comment at this evening's hearing and you wish to do so,
6 please go ahead and put your first and last name into the
7 chat.

8 If you're calling in, please press Star 9 to
9 raise your hand, and we will call on you for your name in
10 a few minutes.

11 If you have already provided your name to us,
12 there is no need to provide it again.

13 Now for some meeting logistics: Please mute
14 your connection unless you're called on to speak.

15 If you're participating via the Zoom
16 application, you can mute by clicking the microphone
17 icon. A slash will appear across the microphone,
18 indicating you have successfully muted your connection.

19 To unmute, click the microphone again. The
20 slash will disappear. Please remember to mute your
21 connection again after you are done speaking.

22 If you called in with your phone, press Star 6
23 on your phone to mute yourself.

24 When you are called on to speak, press Star 6
25 to unmute yourself.

1 And after you're done speaking, please press
2 Star 6 to mute yourself.

3 Please wait to be called on for comment, and do
4 not interrupt other speakers.

5 There are two options to report technical
6 difficulties. You can use the chat feature in Zoom, or
7 you can call Ryan Smith at (360) 915-3646.

8 The chat feature should be used to report
9 technical difficulties and to ask to be added to the
10 sign-in sheet.

11 We will not be -- we will not be accepting
12 comments via the Zoom chat feature, so please do not use
13 the chat to provide your comments.

14 Closed captioning is available via the toolbar
15 at the bottom of the Zoom application.

16 If you do not wish to speak tonight and you
17 want to provide your comments in writing, you can submit
18 written comments through the following ways: You can
19 email comments@utc.wa.gov; call toll free,
20 1-888-333-9882; or you can write the UTC at P.O. Box
21 47250, Olympia, Washington, 98504-7250.

22 Judges in formal filings like this cannot
23 answer questions. However, if you do have questions, you
24 can email comments@UTC.wa.gov, or call (888) 333-9882 and
25 ask to speak with Melissa Castaneda-Kerson.

1 You can also contact public counsel by emailing
2 utility@ATG.wa.gov or calling (206) 464-7744.

3 Before I turn the time over to Judge Thompson,
4 if you wish to speak tonight and haven't provided your
5 name yet, please put your first and your last name into
6 the chat if you're using the Zoom application.

7 If you're calling in, please press Star 9 to
8 raise your hand, and we will call on you to provide your
9 name. When we call your phone number, please provide
10 your first and your last name with spelling. After you
11 provide your name, press Star 9 again to lower your hand.

12 I will now turn the time over to Judge
13 Thompson. Thank you.

14 JUDGE THOMPSON: Thank you very much, Melissa.

15 Okay. We will go ahead and take comments, if
16 anybody is wanting to speak tonight, in the order that
17 you've provided your name.

18 So, here in just a moment, I'll turn to you,
19 Morgana, and then you tell me -- to ask if you would like
20 to provide any comments this evening.

21 But before I do, I'm just going to proactively
22 swear you in so that your comments can become part of the
23 official record.

24 So at this time, I can't see you, but if you
25 would please raise your right hand and respond to the

1 following oath: Do you swear or affirm that the
2 statement you provide tonight is the truth and nothing
3 but the truth?

4 And I hope that you answered in the
5 affirmative.

6 And at this time, I would just turn to Morgana
7 Manley to ask if you would like to provide any comments
8 tonight. And if not, that is certainly okay.

9 And you can respond "no" in the chat if you
10 don't feel like coming off of mute.

11 MORGANA MANLEY: No, I don't have any comments
12 at this time.

13 JUDGE THOMPSON: Okay. Thank you.
14 And Satomi Miyakawa?

15 SATOMI MIYAKAWA: I don't have comments at this
16 time.

17 JUDGE THOMPSON: Okay. Thank you very much.

18 Is there anybody else who wishes to comment on
19 Washington Water Supply's rate case and surcharge at this
20 time?

21 Okay. Hearing nothing, let's please determine
22 the final date for comments and for submitting those
23 comments into evidence.

24 Mr. Sykes, would March 18, the date of the
25 hearing, be the date for submitting comments, the

1 deadline for submitting comments?

2 ATTORNEY SYKES: Uh, yes. That is what we
3 would request.

4 JUDGE THOMPSON: Okay. I believe that should
5 work for everybody.

6 ATTORNEY SYKES: Your Honor, as far as the
7 public comment exhibit, can we have an extra week after
8 the deadline to put that together?

9 JUDGE THOMPSON: March 25, 2025?

10 ATTORNEY SYKES: Yep.

11 JUDGE THOMPSON: Okay. That works as well.
12 And we will go ahead and probably reiterate that at the
13 hearing as we typically do.

14 But let's go ahead and plan on March 18 being
15 the deadline for submitting comments and March 25 for
16 submission of the exhibit.

17 Okay. At this time, I will make one last call.
18 Is there anyone else interested in making comments
19 tonight?

20 Okay. Hearing nothing, and unless anybody
21 disagrees, I'm prepared to adjourn the meeting.

22 And hearing nothing, I want to thank everyone
23 for appearing tonight. And thank you for your time. I
24 hope you all have a good rest of your evening and a good
25 rest of your week.

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This concludes the public comment hearing in
this case, and we are adjourned.

(Proceedings concluded at 6:18 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER)
STATE OF WASHINGTON)
) ss
COUNTY OF KING)

I, Elizabeth Patterson Harvey, a Certified Court Reporter and Registered Professional Reporter within and for the State of Washington, do hereby certify under penalty of perjury that the foregoing legal recordings were transcribed under my direction; that I received the electronic recording in the proprietary format; that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially interested in its outcome.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 4th day of March, 2025.

Elizabeth Patterson Harvey

Elizabeth Patterson Harvey
CCR 2731
Certified Court Reporter in
The State of Washington

My license expires December 21, 2025