

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES & TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,

Complainant,

v.

PUGET SOUND ENERGY

Respondent.

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DOCKET NOS. UE-190529 and UG-190530 (*Consolidated*)

**SUSAN M. BALDWIN ON BEHALF OF PUBLIC COUNSEL UNIT**

**EXHIBIT SMB-21**

Puget Sound Energy Response to Public Counsel Data Request Nos. 122

November 22, 2019

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**Dockets UE-190529 & UG-190530  
Puget Sound Energy  
2019 General Rate Case**

**PUBLIC COUNSEL DATA REQUEST NO. 122:**

**Re: Get to Zero – Billing, Payment, Credit, and Collections; Direct Testimony of Joshua J. Jacobs, Exh. JJJ-1T at 31:16 – 32:21.**

Please reference Mr. Jacobs' testimony, regarding the Billing, Payment, Credit & Collections (BPCC) program, and describing the BPCC program as "improving and expanding payment options for customers, assisting low-income customers with new ways of seeking payment assistance, and improving PSE's collections processes to provide a consistent and timely approach to handling delinquent accounts."

- a) Describe in detail how the BPCC assists low-income customers with seeking payment assistance.
- b) Does the BPCC include any elements for customers lacking English proficiency? If so, in which languages and how does the Company determine which languages to include?
- c) Does the Company evaluate the success of the BPCC? If so, identify and describe the metrics that will be used for evaluate and success of the program. Also, describe the Company's associated objectives for these standards and metrics.

**Response:**

- a) The Energy Assistance Project, within the Billing, Payment, Credit & Collections ("BPCC") program, which is planned to go into service later this year in Q4 2019, improves the customer's experience and streamlines the agency's processes when a Puget Sound Energy ("PSE") customer seeks payment assistance through the following new capabilities:
  - Enables the customer to complete an application for payment assistance on-line;
  - Identifies an agency that will facilitate the customer's request for assistance;
  - Allows the customer to schedule an appointment for review of the application with some agencies;
  - Provides visibility of the status of their application and potential grant;

- Allows the customer to establish a dunning lock on their account once an appointment has been scheduled;
- b) Yes, customers seeking energy assistance have a dedicated call tree that utilizes the interactive voice response (“IVR”) system. This system supports English, Spanish, Russian, Korean and Vietnamese. PSE’s main IVR system supports both English and Spanish.
- c) PSE measures the success of the projects implemented by BPCC through several different internal and external metrics. These metrics include, but are not limited to:
- Call Reduction;
  - Usage of Self-Serve Options;
  - Third Party Surveys- Customer Satisfaction;
  - Financial Benefits: Helping agencies distribute all available funds to customers and reductions to bad debt write offs.

Please reference PSE’s Response to Public Counsel Data Request No. 105(f) for target objectives.

The BPCC program expects to reduce the number of calls received and reduce the amount of bad debt incurred by providing better self-service tools for the customer seeking assistance. The amount of bad debt will be reduced by enhancing the ability of customers to receive assistance timely, and increase the number customers that can secure assistance. This will also result in better utilization of the funds set aside to aid these customers given that in recent years not all funds have been distributed to customers.