

Agenda Date: March 15, 2018
Item Numbers: B1 through B5

Dockets: TG-180190, TG-180191, TG-180192, TG-180193, TG-180194
Company Name: Waste Management of Washington, Inc., G-237

Staff: Mike Young, Section Manager, Water and Transportation Section
Greg Hammond, Regulatory Analyst
John Cupp, Consumer Protection Staff

Recommendation

Issue an order denying an exemption from WAC 480-70-271, customer notice requirements; and direct the company to provide customers with at least 30 days' notice of a proposed surcharge.

Discussion

On March 1, 2018, Waste Management of Washington, Inc. (North Sound/Marysville, South Sound/Seattle, WM Spokane, WM of Skagit County, and Brem Air Disposal, collectively the Company) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) a petition requesting an exemption from WAC 480-70-271(1)(a) customer notice requirements. The petition is a part of a request on behalf of each operation to add a surcharge to their recycling rates to mitigate the impact of volatile recyclable material markets due to the consequences of China's "National Sword" policy.

In accordance with WAC 480-70-271(1)(a) companies proposing an increase in recurring monthly rates must notify customers at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the proposed increase. The Company states in its petition that providing advanced notice to customers of the proposed surcharge would undermine the flexibility of the company to respond to the changes in the recycling market that are the cause for the surcharge. The company instead proposed to notice customers on their monthly billing statements, which would be in advance of the effective date for approximately two-thirds of their customers, but that some customers would first be made aware of the surcharge on the first bill they received.

Commission Staff (Staff) reviewed the request and does not support the Company's request for an exemption from customer notice requirements. Staff believes the proposed surcharge meets the definition of a rate increase requiring notice, and because the proposed surcharge will be a new charge on customers' billing statements.

Customer Comments

There have been no customer comments on this filing.

Recommendation

Issue an order denying an exemption from WAC 480-70-271, customer notice requirements; and direct the company to provide customers with at least 30 days' notice of a proposed surcharge.