Service Date: May 30, 2019

## BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,

Complainant,

v.

AVISTA CORPORATION, d/b/a AVISTA UTILITIES,

Respondent.

DOCKETS UE-190334, UG-190335, and UE-190222 (Consolidated)

ORDER 03

ORDER OF CONSOLIDATION; SUSPENSION; NOTICE EXTENDING TIME TO INTERVENE

PREHEARING CONFERENCE ORDER; NOTICE OF HEARING

(Set for Wednesday, December 11, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.)

- NATURE OF PROCEEDING. On April 30, 2019, Avista Corporation, d/b/a Avista Utilities (Avista or Company) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) revisions to its currently effective Tariff WN U-28, Electric Service, in Docket UE-190334 and revisions to its currently effective Tariff WN U-29, Natural Gas, in Docket UG-190335.
- Avista proposes a two-year rate plan effective April 1, 2020, through March 31, 2022. For the first year of the rate plan, Avista proposes an increase in electric revenues of \$45.8 million, or 8.8 percent on a billed revenue basis, and an increase in natural gas revenues of \$12.9 million, or 10.1 percent on a billed revenue basis. For the second year of the proposed rate plan, Avista proposes an increase in electric revenues of \$18.9 million, or 3.3 percent on a billed revenue basis, and an increase in natural gas revenues of \$6.5 million, or 4.6 percent on a billed revenue basis, effective April 1, 2021.
- On May 8, 2019, the Commission entered Order 01, consolidating Dockets UE-190334 and UG-190335, suspending the tariffs, and setting the matters for adjudication.

- On March 29, 2019, Avista filed with the Commission tariff revisions designed to rebate to customers approximately \$34.4 million in Docket UE-190222. This filing was made pursuant to the Multiparty Settlement Stipulation in Docket UE-120436, subsection 10, related to the Energy Recovery Mechanism (ERM) rate adjustment trigger, and in accordance with Docket UE-011595, which requires Avista to file annual testimony and support work papers on or before April 1 of each year.
- On May 2, 2019, Avista filed a Motion for Consolidation of Proceedings Pursuant to WAC 480-07-320 (Motion) for the purposes of consolidating Docket UE-190222 with Dockets UE-190334 and UG-190335. The Commission extended the time for any responses to Avista's Motion. On May 15, 2019, Commission staff (Staff), the Public Counsel Unit of the Attorney General's Office (Public Counsel), and the Alliance of Western Energy Consumers (AWEC) filed responses opposing the Motion.
- 6 CONSOLIDATION. Pursuant to WAC 480-07-320, the Commission determines that the facts and principles of law in Dockets UE-190334, UG-190335, and UE-190222 are related. The Commission, therefore, grants Avista's Motion to consolidate Docket UE-190222 with Dockets UE-190334 and UG-190335. The Commission is also persuaded that consolidation of these dockets is appropriate because it will allow the Commission, as well as the parties, to more efficiently direct their resources. Additionally, consolidation will create greater rate stability for customers because the rate impact, if any, of Avista's general rate case will align with the commencement of the return of the ERM balance, thereby avoiding additional and frequent rate fluctuations.
- SUSPENSION. The Commission finds that Avista's requested tariff revisions in Docket UE-190222 might injuriously affect the rights and interests of the public, and Avista has not demonstrated that the revisions would result in rates that are fair, just, reasonable, and sufficient. The Commission, therefore, suspends the tariff filing, will conduct an adjudicative proceeding, and hold public hearings, if necessary, to determine whether the proposed revisions are fair, just, reasonable, and sufficient.
- 8 **CONFERENCE**. The Commission convened a prehearing conference at Olympia, Washington on May 24, 2019, before Administrative Law Judge Andrew J. O'Connell.
- APPEARANCES. David J. Meyer, Vice President and Chief Counsel for Regulatory and Governmental Affairs, Spokane, Washington, represents Avista. Jennifer Cameron-Rulkowski, Nash I. Callaghan, Joe M. Dallas, and Daniel J. Teimouri, Assistant

Attorneys General, Olympia, Washington, represent Staff. Lisa W. Gafken and Nina Suetake, Assistant Attorneys General, Seattle, Washington, represent Public Counsel. Tyler Pepple and Riley Peck, Davison Van Cleve, P.C., Portland, Oregon, represent AWEC. Simon J. ffitch, Attorney at Law, Bainbridge Island, Washington, represents The Energy Project. Jessica Yarnall Loarie and Gloria D. Smith, Attorneys at Law, Oakland, California, represent Sierra Club. Irion Sanger and Marie Barlow, Sanger Thompson P.C., Portland, Oregon, represent NW Energy Coalition (NWEC). Michael R. Bell, Treasurer of Northwest Citizens Power Coalition (NWCPC), Nine Mile Falls, Washington, represents NWCPC. Contact information for the representatives of those granted party status is attached as Appendix A to this Order.

- 10 **PETITIONS FOR INTERVENTION**. AWEC, The Energy Project, Sierra Club, NWEC, and NWCPC filed petitions to intervene. No party objected to the intervention of AWEC, The Energy Project, Sierra Club, and NWEC. The Commission finds that these petitioners have established a substantial interest in this proceeding and that their participation will be in the public interest. Accordingly, the Commission grants those petitions.
- Avista objected to NWCPC's petition to intervene. No other party or intervenor took a position on NWCPC's proposed intervention. We deny NWCPC's petition to intervene for the reasons discussed below.
- 12 **Standard of Review.** The Administrative Procedure Act (APA) states that a presiding officer may grant a petition to intervene in an adjudication "upon determining that the petitioner qualifies as an intervenor under any provision of law and that the intervention sought is in the interests of justice and will not impair the orderly and prompt conduct of the proceedings." Commission rules provide the presiding officer with discretion to grant intervention "[i]f the petition discloses a substantial interest in the subject matter of the hearing or if the petitioner's participation is in the public interest." In addition, "the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In formal proceedings such as this, the Commission's regulatory staff participates like any other party, while the Commissioners make the decision. To assure fairness, the Commissioners, the presiding administrative law judge, and the Commissioners' policy and accounting advisors do not discuss the merits of this proceeding with the regulatory staff, or any other party, without giving notice and opportunity for all parties to participate. *See* RCW 34.05.455.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> RCW 34.05.443(1).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> WAC 480-07-355(3).

presiding officer may impose conditions upon the intervenor's participation in the proceedings." To determine whether a petitioner has a substantial interest in the proceeding, the Commission applies a "zone of interest test" that requires the petitioner to demonstrate that there is a nexus between the stated purpose of its intervention and an interest protected by a Washington statute within the Commission's jurisdiction. 5

- NWCPC. Mr. Bell appeared at the Prehearing Conference on behalf of NWCPC and provided greater context for NWCPC's proposed intervention. NWCPC is an incorporated, non-profit association comprised of approximately 61 residential Avista ratepayers. In its petition, NWCPC argues that its members have a substantial interest in these proceedings because the proposed rate changes would substantially and directly affect its members, who purchase electricity or natural gas from Avista, and also because in their view the parties and intervenors to the recent case before the Commission concerning the acquisition of Avista by Hydro One Limited (Hydro One)<sup>6</sup> did not adequately safeguard Avista's consumers and the broader public interest. NWCPC states that, as a result of those failures, it has taken it upon itself to fulfill that role.
- NWCPC states that its interest in this proceeding will not be adequately represented by any other party. At the prehearing conference, NWCPC stated it would not cause disruption to the proceedings and would cooperate with the other parties. It also raised several concerns with Avista's general rate case (GRC) filing. NWCPC clarified further, however, that its interest in the proceeding was not limited to a specific issue or set of issues, but would focus on the broader public interest. NWCPC stated that it may raise issues in addition to those it had already identified.
- The Company explained that it appreciated its customers' interest as represented by NWCPC, but ultimately argued that NWCPC should not be granted party status. Staff had several concerns about the intended participation of NWCPC and noted that, if NWCPC were granted intervention, the Commission should give instructions to help

<sup>5</sup> In Re Joint Application of Verizon Communications, Inc. and Frontier Communications Corporation for an Order Declining to Assert Jurisdiction Over, or, in the Alternative, Approving the Indirect Transfer of Control of Verizon Northwest, Inc., Docket UT-090842, Order 05, ¶ 14 (Sep. 10, 2009) [hereinafter Docket UT-090842].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> RCW 34.05.443(2); accord WAC 480-07-355(3).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> *In Re Joint Application of Hydro One Limited and Avista Corp.*, Docket U-170970, Final Order 07, Denying Joint Application for Transfer of Property (December 5, 2018).

guide and focus NWCPC's participation in discovery. While Public Counsel took no position on NWCPC's petition, Public Counsel explained that NWCPC did not have an interest separate and distinct from Public Counsel, the statutorily appointed representative for the people of the state of Washington in proceedings before the Commission such as GRCs.<sup>7</sup> In other words, Public Counsel represents Avista's residential customers, including the 61 residential customers who comprise NWCPC.

- We agree with the Company and find that NWCPC has failed to show it has a substantial interest in this proceeding that is not already adequately represented by another party, or that its participation is in the public interest. By law, Public Counsel represents ratepayers in proceedings before the Commission. Although the Commission has granted intervention to parties with a particular interest and expertise in areas not traditionally represented by Public Counsel, NWCPC has failed to identify or explain any such area of interest or expertise.
- NWCPC's argument in support of its petition to intervene rests entirely on its dissatisfaction with Public Counsel's and other intervenors' roles in the proceeding concerning Avista's acquisition by Hydro One, which was denied by the Commission. NWCPC's dissatisfaction with Public Counsel and others' representation of the interests of Washington citizens is not sufficient to establish a substantial interest justifying intervention in this proceeding. Neither has NWCPC provided any basis demonstrating that its intervention would provide any particular benefit to the public interest or aid the Commission's decision-making. Further, we determine that NWCPC's intervention would be burdensome in this proceeding. Any benefits of intervention to safeguard

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> RCW 80.04.510.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> See In Re Joint Application of Puget Sound Energy, Alberta Investment Management Corp., British Columbia Investment Management Corp., OMERS Admin. Corp., and PGGM Vermogensbeheer B.V., Docket U-180680, Order 03, Prehearing Conference Order; Notice of Hearing, 7-8, ¶¶ 25-29 (November 21, 2018).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> RCW 80.04.510.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> For example, low-income advocates (*e.g.* The Energy Project), large industrial customers (*e.g.* AWEC and its predecessors, Industrial Consumers of Northwest Utilities and Northwest Industrial Gas Users), and environmental organizations (*e.g.* Sierra Club, NW Energy Coalition).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> In Re Joint Application of Hydro One Limited and Avista Corp., Docket U-170970, Final Order 07, Denying Joint Application for Transfer of Property (December 5, 2018).

Avista's residential customers and the broader public interest – are traditionally represented by Public Counsel pursuant to statute.

- We invite NWCPC to express its concerns by submitting public comments. In the event that NWCPC provides public comments that have exceptional probative value, the Commission may decide to admit those comments into evidence. NWCPC should also communicate with Public Counsel to identify the issues it believes Public Counsel should pursue. NWCPC's participation in this manner will allow it to address its specific concerns, while avoiding duplicative representation of interests and potential procedural burdens in these proceedings.
- NOTICE EXTENDING TIME FOR INTERVENTION. This Order consolidates Docket UE-190222 with Dockets UE-190334 and UG-190335. Because the tariff revisions in Docket UE-190222 are suspended by this Order, the Commission finds good cause to extend the time for interested persons to file petitions to intervene. Persons interested in intervening in Dockets UE-190334, UG-190335, and UE-190222, as consolidated, must submit a petition to intervene by 5 p.m. on June 19, 2019. Any responses to such petitions to intervene must be in writing and submitted to the Commission by 5 p.m. on June 25, 2019.
- PROTECTIVE ORDER. The Commission entered a Protective Order, Order 02, in Dockets UE-190334 and UG-190335 on May 9, 2019. The Commission issued Order 02 (Modified) on May 30, 2019, incorporating Docket UE-190222 as consolidated with Dockets UE-190334 and UG-190335. For information marked as confidential in Docket UE-190222, any parties or witnesses must submit the required agreement found in Order 02 (Modified).
- 21 **DISCOVERY**. Discovery will be conducted according to this Order, the procedural schedule attached to this Order as Appendix B, the Protective Order, and the Commission's discovery rules, WAC 480-07-400 425. The Commission urges the parties to work cooperatively to avoid having to bring discovery matters forward for formal resolution.
- No party objects to the Commission making the exchange of data requests and responses with all parties a requirement for discovery in this case. Accordingly, the Commission requires the parties to share every data request and response with all parties, subject to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> WAC 480-07-498(1).

- any confidentiality limitations contained in Commission rule or the protective order issued in these dockets.
- Any data requests that have already been issued in Docket UE-190222, and the responses thereto, should be shared with all parties as soon as practical and in accordance with the Protective Order and the Commission's discovery rules, WAC 480-07-400 425.
- All data requests issued in these consolidated dockets should continue numbering and marking at the lowest number not already identified in Docket UE-190222. Any data requests submitted in Docket UE-190222 that have duplicative or overlapping numbering with any in these consolidated dockets will be referred to with the addition of the suffix "(ERM)" after the appropriate identification. For example: "UTC Staff Data Request No. 1 (ERM)" for an overlapping data request from Docket UE-190222, and "UTC Staff Data Request No. 1" for an overlapping data request from Dockets UE-190334 or UG-190335. No suffix is necessary for data requests that do not have duplicative or overlapping numbering or markings with these consolidated dockets.
- Similarly, for exhibits and testimony already filed in Docket UE-190222, any exhibits or testimony in UE-190222 that have overlapping numbering or marking will be referred to with the addition of the suffix "(ERM)" after the appropriate identification. For example: "Ehrbar, Exh. PDE-2 (ERM)" for an overlapping exhibit from Docket UE-190222, and "Ehrbar, Exh. PDE-2" for an overlapping exhibit from Dockets UE-190334 or UG-190335. No suffix is necessary for testimony or exhibits that do not have duplicative or overlapping numbering or markings with these consolidated dockets.
- **PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE**. The parties presented an agreed procedural schedule at the prehearing conference. The Commission adopts this procedural schedule, with minor additions, which is attached to this Order as Appendix B.
- **DOCUMENT FILING AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS**. Parties must file and serve all pleadings, motions, briefs, and other prefiled materials in compliance with all of the following requirements:
  - (a) Parties must submit electronic copies of all documents by 5 p.m. on the filing deadline established in the procedural schedule (or other deadline as applicable) unless the Commission orders otherwise. Parties must comply with WAC 480-07-140(6) in formatting, organizing, and identifying electronic files. Documents that include information designated as confidential must comply with the requirements in WAC 480-07-160 and the Protective Order in these dockets.

- (b) The Commission accepts only electronic versions of documents for formal filing. The Commission requires electronic copies to be in searchable .pdf format (adobe acrobat or comparable software), or to otherwise comply with WAC 480-07-140(6)(a). Parties must submit documents electronically through the Commission's web portal (<a href="www.utc.wa.gov/e-filing">www.utc.wa.gov/e-filing</a>). If a party is unable to use the web portal to submit documents for filing, the Commission will accept a submission via email to records@utc.wa.gov provided the email: (1) explains the reason the documents are not being submitted via the web portal, and (2) complies with the requirements in WAC 480-07-140(5)(b).
- (c) Parties must also file an **original and three (3) paper copies** (with original signatures, if applicable) of all unredacted documents with the Commission by 5 p.m. on the next business day following the filing deadline established in the procedural schedule (or other deadline as applicable) unless the Commission orders otherwise. If any of the exhibits contain information designated as confidential, parties must file an electronic copy, only, of the redacted version in searchable .pdf (adobe acrobat or comparable software) of each such exhibit. All hard copy filings must be mailed or otherwise delivered to the Executive Director and Secretary, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, P.O. Box 47250, Olympia, Washington 98504-7250.<sup>13</sup>
- (d) Documents filed with the Commission must conform to the formatting and other requirements in WAC 480-07-395 and WAC 480-07-460, and must comply with the requirements in WAC 480-07-160 and the Protective Order in these dockets for documents that include information designated as confidential.
- (e) Parties must electronically serve the other parties and provide courtesy electronic copies of filings to the presiding administrative law judge (andrew.j.oconnell@utc.wa.gov) by 5 p.m. on the filing deadline unless the Commission orders otherwise. If parties are unable to email copies, they may furnish electronic copies by delivering them on a flash drive only.
- EXHIBITS FOR CROSS-EXAMINATION. Parties are required to file with the Commission and serve all proposed cross-examination exhibits by **5 p.m. on**December **5, 2019**. The Commission requires electronic copies in searchable .pdf (adobe

<sup>13</sup> While the Commission is moving its headquarters to a new location in the coming months, its P.O. Box mailing address will remain the same as indicated in this Order.

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acrobat or comparable software), an original, and three (3) paper copies of the exhibits. If any of the exhibits contain information designated as confidential, parties must file an electronic copy, only, of the redacted version in searchable .pdf (adobe acrobat or comparable software) of each such exhibit. The exhibits must be grouped according to the witness the party intends to cross examine with the exhibits. The paper copies of the exhibits also must be organized into sets that are tabbed and labeled.

- EXHIBIT LISTS. With each submission of prefiled testimony and exhibits, the party making the submission must include a preliminary exhibit list that identifies each submitted exhibit in the format the Commission uses for exhibit lists it prepares for evidentiary hearings. The Company will prepare and file its preliminary exhibit list for their initial filing in these dockets. Each party must file and serve a final list of all exhibits the party intends to introduce into the evidentiary record, including all prefiled testimony and exhibits, as well as cross-examination exhibits by **5 p.m. on December 5**, **2019**.
- 30 **CROSS-EXAMINATION TIME ESTIMATES**. Each party must provide a list of witnesses the party intends to cross-examine at the evidentiary hearing and an estimate of the time that party anticipates the cross-examination of that witness will take. Parties should not file witness lists or cross-examination time estimates but must provide them to the administrative law judge (andrew.j.oconnell@utc.wa.gov) and the other parties by **5 p.m. on December 5, 2019**.
- NOTICE OF HEARING. The Commission will hold an evidentiary hearing in these dockets on December 11, 2019, at 1:30 p.m. and continuing on December 12-13, 2019, if necessary, in the Commission's Hearing Room, 621 Woodland Park Square Loop SE, Lacey, Washington.
- 32 **ALTERNATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION**. The Commission supports the informal settlement of matters before it. Parties are encouraged to consider means of resolving disputes informally. The Commission has limited ability to provide dispute resolution services. If you wish to explore those services, please contact Rayne Pearson, Director, Administrative Law Division (<a href="mailto:rayne.pearson@utc.wa.gov">rayne.pearson@utc.wa.gov</a> or 360-664-1136).
- NOTICE TO PARTIES: A party who objects to any portion of this Order must file a written objection within ten (10) calendar days after the service date of this Order, pursuant to WAC 480-07-430 and WAC 480-07-810. The service date appears on the first page of the order in the upper right-hand corner. Absent such objection,

this Order will control further proceedings in these dockets, subject to Commission review.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective May 30, 2019.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

1st Andrew 9.06 Connell

ANDREW J. O'CONNELL Administrative Law Judge

## APPENDIX A PARTIES' REPRESENTATIVES DOCKETS UE-190334, UG-190335, UE-190222

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## APPENDIX B PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE DOCKETS UE-190334, UG-190335, UE-190222

EVENT	DATE
Prehearing Conference	May 24, 2019
Modified Protective Order (Order 02 (Modified))	May 30, 2019
Prehearing Conference Order (Order 03)	May 30, 2019
Deadline for Petitions to Intervene	June 19, 2019
Deadline for Responses to Petitions to Intervene	June 25, 2019
Initial Settlement Conference <sup>14</sup>	September 19, 2019
Staff, Public Counsel, and Intervenor Response Testimony and Exhibits <sup>15</sup>	October 3, 2019
Avista Circulates Joint Issues Matrix	October 10, 2019
Settlement Conference	October 29, 2019
Avista Rebuttal Testimony and Exhibits; Staff, Public Counsel, and Intervenor Cross-Answering Testimony and Exhibits <sup>16</sup>	November 21, 2019
Notice Issued for Public Comment Hearing	At least 30 days prior to Public Comment Hearing
Public Comment Hearing	TBD
Discovery Deadline – Last Day to Issue Data Requests <sup>17</sup>	November 26, 2019

<sup>14</sup> Per WAC 480-07-700(3)(a), parties may reschedule a settlement conference included in the procedural schedule without seeking to modify the schedule if all parties agree, but the parties must provide notice to the presiding officer of the rescheduled date.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Response time to data requests relating to this testimony will be 7 business days.

 $<sup>^{16}</sup>$  Response time to data requests relating to this testimony will be 5 business days.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Response time to data requests will be 5 business days.

Avista Files Joint Issues Matrix	December 3, 2019
Exhibits List, Cross-Examination Exhibits, Witnesses List, Time Estimates, Exhibits Errata	December 5, 2019
Evidentiary Hearing	December 11, 2019 at 1:30 p.m. (December 12-13, 2019, if necessary)
Post-Hearing Briefs and Updated Joint Issues Matrix	February 5, 2020
Suspension Date	April 1, 2020