

Hartman, Brice C (ATG)

From: Suzanne Hensler <pomskymomsky@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 30, 2024 2:03 PM
To: ATG WWW E-mail Public Counsel
Cc: comments@utc.wa.gov
Subject: Docket UE-240004 (Puget Sound Energy Proposed Rate Increases in 2025 and 2026)

[EXTERNAL]

Dear Sir/Madam:

It is my understanding that the Public Counsel Unit of the Washington Office of the Attorney General represents residential customers of Puget Sound Energy. I am writing to OPPOSE Puget Sound Energy's proposed rate increases in 2025 and 2026.

We had a new energy efficient furnace and heat pump installed in July 2023. We have double pane windows. We had our attic insulation replaced. We use Energy Star appliances. We have replaced all lightbulbs with LEDs. We keep our thermostat on a schedule at reasonable temperatures and we routinely wear sweaters, robes, and/or jackets in the house trying to keep warm. We try to utilize off-peak hours whenever we can for doing laundry, etc. In winter months, we spend anywhere from \$800.00 to \$1,000.00+ per MONTH when heating our home, which uses a combination of PROPANE and ELECTRIC, which is already ASTRONOMICAL!

Additionally, PSE's "Overall Average Bill Impact" (Electric only) is based on only 800 kWh per month usage. We used nearly 3x that according to our December 2023 statement, which showed we used 2,353.475 kWh between 11/10/2023 and 12/11/2023. Our bill was \$313.47 that month. Our propane bill was over \$700. Total cost for heating + electric that month was over \$1,000.00!

If PSE's proposed rate increases are approved, by January 2026, the **ELECTRIC ONLY** "Basic Charge" would increase \$5.17. The cost for 0-600 kWh would increase \$10.40, and the cost for 600+ kWh would increase \$3.47. Based on their "average," that's an increase of \$19.04 for an "average" customer (800 kWh used per month). For us, we would have to multiply that by roughly 3, which would raise the rates to a minimum of \$60+ more per month since other charges and taxes would also increase accordingly. And that doesn't include propane expenses.

Thankfully, we do NOT use NATURAL GAS, although we do use PROPANE, which also has increased astronomically in recent years – especially during the winter months.

Overall, for PSE customers using **both** ELECTRIC **and** NATURAL GAS, these proposed rate increases could be devastating for many. PSE is proposing to increase residential NATURAL GAS by January 2026 nearly 20% -- not including ELECTRIC! This is absolutely RIDICULOUS and unfair to middle class individuals, many of whom are struggling with the high cost of gas, food, medical, education, insurance, and utilities expenses. Most people do NOT get wage increases to sustain these massive increases imposed by greedy corporations and utility companies.

Utility companies should not be able to price gouge their customers and they have been. There is no competition. We have no choice. We should be able to vote on this; unfortunately, that's not how this works. We have to trust Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) to examine the proposed rates and either approve these rates at either a lower (or higher) rate than PSE's request. I request that you do NOT approve such a drastic increase.

I oppose these extreme increases and have taken two hours out of my busy day to prepare and send this email to you. Unfortunately, most people will not be able to find the extra time in their busy schedules to oppose these increases proposed by PSE. I believe I speak for many who may not have the time to oppose these increases.

Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion, and I sincerely hope you take my opinion into consideration when deciding whether or not to approve the proposed rate increases by PSE.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Hensler