

WUTC v. Avista Corporation d/b/a Avista Utilities

Docket No. UE-240006 - Vol. II

September 19, 2024



1325 Fourth Avenue, Suite 1840, Seattle, Washington 98101
Bellingham | Everett | Tacoma | Olympia | Yakima | Spokane
Seattle 206.287.9066 Tacoma 253.235.0111 Eastern Washington 509.624.3261

www.buellrealtime.com

email: audio@buellrealtime.com

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,)
Complainant,)
vs.) DOCKETS UE-240006 & UG-240007
AVISTA CORPORATION, d/b/a) AVISTA UTILITIES,)
Respondent.) PAGES 21-33

VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING - VOL. II
September 19, 2024

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

TRANSCRIBED BY: ELIZABETH PATTERSON HARVEY, WA CCR 2731

September 19, 2024

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COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Good evening, everyone. Today is September 19, 2024, and this is the public comment hearing of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission in Dockets UE-240006 and UG-240007, which is Avista Utilities' 2024 general rate case.

I'm Ann Rendahl, a commissioner here at the commission. I'm joined by my colleague, Commissioner Milt Doumit. Our chair, Dave Danner, is not available to be here tonight, but will be reviewing the transcript of the hearing when he returns.

On January 18 of this year, Avista filed with the commission seeking an increase in electric and gas rates over the next two years. The company is seeking rate increases within the context of a multiyear rate plan as allowed by state law.

Under the company's original proposed plan, it would seek an increase in electric revenues of 77.1 million dollars in the first year, and an additional increase of 53.7 million in the second year of the rate plan.

The company's initial filing sought an

APPEARANCES

FOR THE COMMISSION:
Commissioner Milt Doumit
Commissioner Ann Rendahl

FOR PUBLIC COUNSEL:
Tad Robinson O'Neill
Tad.Oneill@atg.wa.gov
Attorney General of Washington
Public Counsel Unit
800 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.464.6595

ALSO PRESENT:
Jean Marie Dreyer
Melissa Castaneda-Kerson

increase in natural gas rates of 17.3 million in Year 1 and 4.6 million in Year 2 of the rate plan.

In response to the testimony and evidence submitted by other parties, the company has modified its request for electric service. The company requests an increase in rates in the first year of 42.9 million and 69 point [sic] million for the second year.

For natural gas service, the company requests in rebuttal an increase of 16.8 million for the first year and four million for the second year of the rate plan.

A number of parties are participating in this proceeding, including the company: The UTC, the commission staff, participates like any other party in the proceeding; the Public Counsel Unit of the attorney general's office, the Alliance of Western Energy Consumers, Walmart, the Northwest Energy Coalition, the Sierra Club, and The Energy Project.

The parties that are formally participating in this proceeding are either acting as intervenors or have statutory authority to participate.

But in this hearing tonight, we also invite comments by members of the public on their views on the rate case before the commission.

The comments we receive from you this evening

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 25</p> <p>1 will be made part of the formal record in the case. For 2 that reason, there's a court reporter making a record of 3 tonight's hearing, and we're recording this proceeding. 4 Please be aware that the commissioners serve 5 as judges in this case, and for that reason, we cannot 6 answer questions from those commenting tonight. We're 7 here to listen to your comments. 8 By statute, the office of public counsel 9 represents the interests of residential and small 10 commercial customers of Avista, and I see in attendance 11 tonight we have Tad Robinson O'Neill for public counsel, 12 and also Jean Marie Dreyer. 13 If you have questions about the case, you can 14 also contact the Office of Public Counsel by emailing 15 them at Utility@ATG.Wa.Gov or writing to them at the 16 Attorney General's Office Public Counsel Unit, 800 Fifth 17 Avenue, Suite 2000, Seattle, Washington, 98004. And we 18 will put that information up on the screen so you can 19 copy that down. 20 The commission's public involvement staff is 21 also available if you have questions. Mel 22 Castaneda-Kerson of the commission's public involvement 23 staff is assigned to this case. And she can be reached 24 by emailing Comments@UTC.Wa.Gov or by calling 25 888-333-9882. And again, that information will be</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 27</p> <p>1 You will have the opportunity to provide your 2 comments related to this case directly to the 3 commissioners. The commissioners act as judges in formal 4 filings like this, and they cannot answer questions. 5 However, if you do have questions, please reach out to 6 me or to the representative of public counsel after the 7 comment session. 8 All of the comments given today will be 9 included in the formal record of this case. If you have 10 not signed up to comment and you wish to do so, please 11 put your first and last name into the chat. If you are 12 calling in, please press Star 9 to raise your hand, and 13 we will call on you for your name in a few minutes. 14 If you have already provided your name to us, 15 there is no need to provide it again. 16 Now for some meeting logistics: Please mute 17 your connection unless you are you are called upon to 18 speak. If you are participating via the Zoom 19 application, you can mute by clicking the microphone 20 icon. A slash will appear across the microphone, 21 indicating you have successfully muted your connection. 22 To unmute, click the microphone again. The slash will 23 disappear. Please remember to mute your connection again 24 after you are done speaking. 25 If you called in on the phone, press Star 6</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 26</p> <p>1 provided on the screen later. 2 For those of you who do not wish to speak 3 tonight, the UTC will continue to accept written comments 4 in this case. You may submit those via the form on our 5 website at UTC.Wa.Gov/consumers, or you can submit 6 comments to the public counsel's office. And we usually 7 continue to accept comments about about a week after the 8 hearing, and we'll determine that date at the end of 9 tonight's hearing. 10 So I'm now going to turn to Melissa 11 Castaneda-Kerson from our public information staff to go 12 over the logistics for this meeting. 13 Go ahead, Melissa. 14 MS. CASTANEDA-KERSON: Thank you, 15 Commissioner Rendahl. 16 Good evening, and welcome to the public 17 comment hearing on Avista's general rate case in Dockets 18 UE-240006 and UG-240007. 19 My name is Melissa Castaneda-Kerson. I am a 20 public involvement representative with the Utilities and 21 Transportation Commission. I'll be the moderator for the 22 comment hearing this evening. 23 Before we get started, I would like to cover 24 some background information and virtual meeting ground 25 rules.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 28</p> <p>1 on your phone to mute yourself. When you are called on 2 to speak, press Star 6 to unmute yourself. After you are 3 done speaking, please press Star 6 to mute yourself. 4 Please wait to be called on for comment, and 5 do not interrupt other speakers. 6 There are two options to report technical 7 difficulties. You can use the chat feature in Zoom, or 8 you can call Ryan Smith at 360-915-3646. 9 The chat feature should be used to report 10 technical difficulties and to ask to be added to the 11 sign-in sheet. We will not be accepting comments via the 12 Zoom chat feature. Please do not use the chat to provide 13 your comments. 14 Closed captioning is available via the 15 toolbar at the bottom of the Zoom application. 16 You will have two minutes to provide your 17 comment, and depending on the number of commenters, you 18 may get more time if needed. 19 If you have questions about the case, please 20 e-mail Comments@UTC.Wa.Gov or call 888-333-9882, and ask 21 to speak with Melissa Castaneda-Kerson. 22 You can also reach out to public counsel by 23 e-mailing Utility@ATG.Wa.Gov or calling 206-464-7744. 24 If you haven't provided your name yet and you 25 wish to speak, please put your first and last name into</p>

Page 29

1 the chat if you are using the Zoom application.
2 If you are calling in, please press Star 9 to
3 raise your hand, and we will call on you to provide your
4 name.
5 When we call your phone number, please
6 provide your first and last name with spelling after you
7 provide your name. Press Star 9 again to lower your
8 hand.
9 Thank you. I will now turn the time over to
10 Commissioner Rendahl and Commissioner Doumit.
11 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Thank you, Melissa.
12 Do we have any folks signed in to speak to us this
13 evening, to provide comments?
14 I'm not seeing anyone in the chat. But I
15 know you indicated that there were two people previously
16 before we started, that there were two people who had
17 signed up in advance to speak.
18 MS. CASTANEDA-KERSON: Yes.
19 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: And I don't know if
20 they're also there in -- on the call.
21 MS. CASTANEDA-KERSON: I do not see them on
22 the call.
23 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Okay. Is there anyone
24 on the call who wishes to provide comments to the
25 commission in this matter tonight?

Page 30

1 While we wait, this might be a good time to
2 have the conversation with public counsel.
3 Jean Marie Dreyer, are you present?
4 MS. DREYER: Yes, I am.
5 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Okay. Usually we set
6 a date for comments to be -- the filed comments to be
7 submitted to the commission as an exhibit in the case
8 about a week after the hearing. And our hearing is
9 currently scheduled for September 30 and October 1. So
10 by my calculation, that would be submitting those to the
11 commission on Tuesday, October 8. Is that your
12 understanding?
13 MS. DREYER: That is.
14 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: So that would be an
15 acceptable date for public counsel. And I see Tad
16 Robinson O'Neill nodding his head.
17 Is there anything further that public counsel
18 wishes to add tonight?
19 ATTORNEY O'NEILL: Only that we might want to
20 indicate that we'll accept comments until September 26,
21 written comments to be put into that exhibit.
22 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Okay. That's fine.
23 And so Melissa, I have not received the
24 sign-in sheet, but then I logged on -- I was stuck in
25 traffic and I just got on the call. So do you mind

Page 31

1 calling those names for me?
2 MS. CASTANEDA-KERSON: Just a moment. Chris,
3 can you call the names that are on the list, please?
4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sure.
5 MS. CASTANEDA-KERSON: Thank you.
6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Penny L. Gunther?
7 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Penny L. Gunther. I
8 am not seeing anyone signed in the Zoom with that name,
9 but there is a phone number of 509-309-6463. And I think
10 in order to unmute, you need to press Star 6; is that
11 correct, Melissa?
12 MS. CASTANEDA-KERSON: Yes.
13 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Okay. And who was the
14 next person who had signed up to speak?
15 MS. CASTANEDA-KERSON: They had signed up,
16 but they did not sign up to attend. They did not want to
17 speak.
18 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Okay. Thank you very
19 much.
20 Well, it appears there is no one signed in to
21 speak, and no one who's called in to speak to this
22 matter.
23 But we have received a number of public
24 comments, and we may continue to receive public comments.
25 And we do accept those comments as a public exhibit

Page 32

1 that's received in the case. And so we will consider
2 those comments as evidence in the case.
3 So I guess I will make one last call. Is
4 there anyone interested in making comments on Avista's
5 general rate case this evening?
6 All right. I am not hearing anyone.
7 I appreciate everyone who has called in for
8 this public hearing this evening. And I appreciate
9 everyone's time.
10 And I will say this would conclude the public
11 hearing in this case and that we are adjourned.
12 So thank you, everyone, for your attendance.
13 Good evening.
14 (Proceeding concluded at 6:15 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATE

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 2nd day of October, 2024.

Elizabeth Patterson Harvey



Elizabeth Patterson Harvey, CCR 2731

<p style="text-align: center;">A</p> <p>accept 26:3,7 30:20 31:25</p> <p>acceptable 30:15</p> <p>accepting 28:11</p> <p>act 27:3</p> <p>acting 24:20</p> <p>add 30:18</p> <p>added 28:10</p> <p>additional 23:22</p> <p>adjourned 32:11</p> <p>advance 29:17</p> <p>ahead 26:13</p> <p>Alliance 24:16</p> <p>allowed 23:19</p> <p>Ann 22:6 23:10</p> <p>answer 25:6 27:4</p> <p>appear 27:20</p> <p>appears 31:20</p> <p>application 27:19 28:15 29:1</p> <p>appreciate 32:7,8</p> <p>assigned 25:23</p> <p>attend 31:16</p> <p>attendance 25:10 32:12</p> <p>attorney 22:12 24:15 25:16 30:19 33:14</p> <p>authority 24:21</p> <p>available 23:12 25:21 28:14</p> <p>Avenue 22:14 25:17</p> <p>Avista 21:8,8 23:8 23:15 25:10</p> <p>Avista's 26:17 32:4</p> <p>aware 25:4</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">B</p> <p>background 26:24</p> <p>bottom 28:15</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p>C 22:1 33:1,1</p> <p>calculation 30:10</p>	<p>call 27:13 28:8,20 29:3,5,20,22,24 30:25 31:3 32:3</p> <p>called 27:17,25 28:1,4 31:21 32:7</p> <p>calling 25:24 27:12 28:23 29:2 31:1</p> <p>captioning 28:14</p> <p>case 23:9 24:24 25:1,5,13,23 26:4 26:17 27:2,9 28:19 30:7 32:1,2 32:5,11</p> <p>Castaneda-Kerson 22:21 25:22 26:11 26:14,19 28:21 29:18,21 31:2,5 31:12,15</p> <p>CCR 21:24 33:23</p> <p>Certified 33:7</p> <p>certify 33:10</p> <p>chair 23:12</p> <p>chat 27:11 28:7,9 28:12,12 29:1,14</p> <p>Chris 31:2</p> <p>click 27:22</p> <p>clicking 27:19</p> <p>Closed 28:14</p> <p>Club 24:18</p> <p>Coalition 24:17</p> <p>colleague 23:11</p> <p>comment 23:6 26:17,22 27:7,10 28:4,17</p> <p>commenters 28:17</p> <p>commenting 25:6</p> <p>comments 24:23,25 25:7 26:3,6,7 27:2 27:8 28:11,13 29:13,24 30:6,6 30:20,21 31:24,24 31:25 32:2,4</p> <p>Comments@UT... 25:24 28:20</p> <p>commercial 25:10</p>	<p>commission 21:2,4 21:15 22:4 23:7 23:11,16 24:14,24 26:21 29:25 30:7 30:11</p> <p>commission's 25:20 25:22</p> <p>commissioner 22:5 22:6 23:4,10,11 26:15 29:10,10,11 29:19,23 30:5,14 30:22 31:7,13,18</p> <p>commissioners 25:4 27:3,3</p> <p>company 23:17 24:4,5,8,13</p> <p>company's 23:20 23:25</p> <p>Complainant 21:5</p> <p>conclude 32:10</p> <p>concluded 32:14</p> <p>connection 27:17 27:21,23</p> <p>consider 32:1</p> <p>Consumers 24:17</p> <p>contact 25:14</p> <p>context 23:18</p> <p>continue 26:3,7 31:24</p> <p>conversation 30:2</p> <p>copy 25:19</p> <p>CORPORATION 21:8</p> <p>correct 31:11</p> <p>counsel 22:9,13 24:15 25:8,11,14 25:16 27:6 28:22 30:2,15,17 33:14</p> <p>counsel's 26:6</p> <p>COUNTY 33:5</p> <p>court 25:2 33:8</p> <p>cover 26:23</p> <p>currently 30:9</p> <p>customers 25:10</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">D</p>	<p>d/b/a 21:8</p> <p>Danner 23:12</p> <p>date 26:8 30:6,15</p> <p>Dave 23:12</p> <p>day 33:17</p> <p>depending 28:17</p> <p>determine 26:8</p> <p>difficulties 28:7,10</p> <p>direction 33:11</p> <p>directly 27:2</p> <p>disappear 27:23</p> <p>Dockets 21:6 23:7 26:17</p> <p>dollars 23:22</p> <p>Doumit 22:5 23:12 29:10</p> <p>Dreyer 22:20 25:12 30:3,4,13</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p>E 22:1,1 33:1,1</p> <p>e-mail 28:20</p> <p>e-mailing 28:23</p> <p>either 24:20</p> <p>electric 23:16,21 24:5</p> <p>electronic 33:12</p> <p>Elizabeth 21:24 33:7,23</p> <p>emailing 25:14,24</p> <p>employed 33:14</p> <p>employee 33:13</p> <p>Energy 24:16,17,18</p> <p>evening 23:4 24:25 26:16,22 29:13 32:5,8,13</p> <p>everyone's 32:9</p> <p>evidence 24:3 32:2</p> <p>exhibit 30:7,21 31:25</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">F</p> <p>F 33:1</p> <p>feature 28:7,9,12</p> <p>Fifth 22:14 25:16</p> <p>filed 23:15 30:6</p>	<p>filing 23:25</p> <p>filings 27:4</p> <p>financially 33:15</p> <p>fine 30:22</p> <p>first 23:22 24:6,9 27:11 28:25 29:6</p> <p>folks 29:12</p> <p>foregoing 33:10</p> <p>form 26:4</p> <p>formal 25:1 27:3,9</p> <p>formally 24:19</p> <p>format 33:13</p> <p>four 24:10</p> <p>further 30:17</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p>gas 23:16 24:1,8</p> <p>general 22:12 23:8 26:17 32:5</p> <p>general's 24:16 25:16</p> <p>given 27:8</p> <p>go 26:11,13</p> <p>going 26:10</p> <p>good 23:4 26:16 30:1 32:13</p> <p>ground 26:24</p> <p>guess 32:3</p> <p>Gunther 31:6,7</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">H</p> <p>hand 27:12 29:3,8 33:17</p> <p>Harvey 21:24 33:7 33:23</p> <p>head 30:16</p> <p>hearing 21:12 23:6 23:14 24:22 25:3 26:8,9,17,22 30:8 30:8 32:6,8,11</p> <p>hereto 33:14</p> <p>hereunto 33:16</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">I</p> <p>icon 27:20</p> <p>II 21:12</p>
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<p>included 27:9 including 24:13 increase 23:16,21 23:23 24:1,6,9 increases 23:18 indicate 30:20 indicated 29:15 indicating 27:21 information 25:18 25:25 26:11,24 initial 23:25 interested 32:4 33:15 interests 25:9 interrupt 28:5 intervenor 24:20 invite 24:22 involvement 25:20 25:22 26:20</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">J</p> <p>January 23:15 Jean 22:20 25:12 30:3 joined 23:11 judges 25:5 27:3</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">K</p> <p>KING 33:5 know 29:15,19</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">L</p> <p>L 31:6,7 Lacey 21:16 law 23:19 legal 33:10 list 31:3 listen 25:7 logged 30:24 logistics 26:12 27:16 Loop 21:15 lower 29:7</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">M</p> <p>making 25:2 32:4</p>	<p>Marie 22:20 25:12 30:3 matter 29:25 31:22 meeting 26:12,24 27:16 Mel 25:21 Melissa 22:21 26:10,13,19 28:21 29:11 30:23 31:11 members 24:23 microphone 27:19 27:20,22 million 23:22,23 24:1,2,6,7,9,10 Milt 22:5 23:12 mind 30:25 minutes 27:13 28:16 moderator 26:21 modified 24:4 moment 31:2 multiyear 23:18 mute 27:16,19,23 28:1,3 muted 27:21</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">N</p> <p>N 22:1 name 26:19 27:11 27:13,14 28:24,25 29:4,6,7 31:8 names 31:1,3 natural 24:1,8 need 27:15 31:10 needed 28:18 nodding 30:16 Northwest 24:17 number 24:12 28:17 29:5 31:9 31:23</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">O</p> <p>O'Neill 22:10 25:11 30:16,19 o0o- 23:2 October 30:9,11</p>	<p>33:17 office 24:16 25:8,14 25:16 26:6 Okay 29:23 30:5,22 31:13,18 opportunity 27:1 options 28:6 order 31:10 original 23:20 outcome 33:15</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">P</p> <p>P 22:1,1 p.m 32:14 PAGES 21:10 part 25:1 participate 24:21 participates 24:14 participating 24:12 24:19 27:18 parties 24:4,12,19 33:14 party 24:14 Patterson 21:24 33:7,23 penalty 33:10 Penny 31:6,7 people 29:15,16 perjury 33:10 person 31:14 phone 27:25 28:1 29:5 31:9 plan 23:19,20,24 24:2,11 please 25:4 27:5,10 27:12,16,23 28:3 28:4,12,19,25 29:2,5 31:3 point 24:7 present 22:19 30:3 press 27:12,25 28:2 28:3 29:2,7 31:10 previously 29:15 proceeding 24:13 24:15,20 25:3 32:14</p>	<p>Professional 33:8 Project 24:18 proposed 23:20 proprietary 33:12 provide 27:1,15 28:12,16 29:3,6,7 29:13,24 provided 26:1 27:14 28:24 public 21:12 22:9 22:13 23:6 24:15 24:23 25:8,11,14 25:16,20,22 26:6 26:11,16,20 27:6 28:22 30:2,15,17 31:23,24,25 32:8 32:10 put 25:18 27:11 28:25 30:21</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Q</p> <p>questions 25:6,13 25:21 27:4,5 28:19</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">R</p> <p>R 22:1 33:1 raise 27:12 29:3 rate 23:8,18,18,23 24:2,10,24 26:17 32:5 rates 23:17 24:1,6 reach 27:5 28:22 reached 25:23 reason 25:2,5 rebuttal 24:9 receive 24:25 31:24 received 30:23 31:23 32:1 33:12 record 25:1,2 27:9 recording 25:3 33:12 recordings 33:11 Registered 33:8 related 27:2 relative 33:13</p>	<p>remember 27:23 Rendahl 22:6 23:4 23:10 26:15 29:10 29:11,19,23 30:5 30:14,22 31:7,13 31:18 report 28:6,9 reporter 25:2 33:8 33:8 representative 26:20 27:6 represents 25:9 request 24:5 requests 24:5,8 residential 25:9 Respondent 21:9 response 24:3 returns 23:14 revenues 23:21 reviewing 23:13 right 32:6 Robinson 22:10 25:11 30:16 rules 26:25 Ryan 28:8</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">S</p> <p>S 22:1 scheduled 30:9 screen 25:18 26:1 SE 21:15 Seattle 22:15 25:17 second 23:23 24:7 24:10 see 25:10 29:21 30:15 seeing 29:14 31:8 seek 23:21 seeking 23:16,17 September 21:13 23:1,5 30:9,20 serve 25:4 service 24:5,8 session 27:7 set 30:5 33:16 sheet 28:11 30:24</p>
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<p> sic 24:7 Sierra 24:18 sign 31:16 sign-in 28:11 30:24 signed 27:10 29:12 29:17 31:8,14,15 31:20 slash 27:20,22 small 25:9 Smith 28:8 sought 23:25 speak 26:2 27:18 28:2,21,25 29:12 29:17 31:14,17,21 31:21 SPEAKER 31:4,6 speakers 28:5 speaking 27:24 28:3 spelling 29:6 Square 21:15 ss 33:4 staff 24:14 25:20 25:23 26:11 Star 27:12,25 28:2 28:3 29:2,7 31:10 started 26:23 29:16 state 23:19 33:3,9 statute 25:8 statutory 24:21 stuck 30:24 submit 26:4,5 submitted 24:4 30:7 submitting 30:10 successfully 27:21 Suite 22:14 25:17 Sure 31:4 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">T</p> <hr/> <p> T 33:1,1 Tad 22:10 25:11 30:15 Tad.Oneill@atg... 22:11 technical 28:6,10 </p>	<p> testimony 24:3 thank 26:14 29:9 29:11 31:5,18 32:12 think 31:9 time 28:18 29:9 30:1 32:9 today 23:5 27:8 tonight 23:13 24:22 25:6,11 26:3 29:25 30:18 tonight's 25:3 26:9 toolbar 28:15 traffic 30:25 transcribed 21:24 33:11 transcript 23:13 Transportation 21:2,4,15 23:7 26:21 Tuesday 30:11 turn 26:10 29:9 two 23:17 28:6,16 29:15,16 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">U</p> <hr/> <p> UE-240006 21:6 23:7 26:18 UG-240007 21:7 23:8 26:18 understanding 30:12 UNIDENTIFIED 31:4,6 Unit 22:13 24:15 25:16 unmute 27:22 28:2 31:10 use 28:7,12 usually 26:6 30:5 UTC 24:13 26:3 UTC.Wa.Gov/co... 26:5 Utilities 21:2,4,8,15 23:6 26:20 Utilities' 23:8 </p>	<p> Utility@ATG.W... 25:15 28:23 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">V</p> <hr/> <p> views 24:23 virtual 21:12 26:24 VOL 21:12 vs 21:6 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">W</p> <hr/> <p> WA 21:24 wait 28:4 30:1 Walmart 24:17 want 30:19 31:16 Washington 21:1,4 21:15,16 22:12,15 23:6 25:17 33:3,9 we'll 26:8 30:20 we're 25:3,6 website 26:5 week 26:7 30:8 welcome 26:16 Western 24:16 WHEREOF 33:16 wish 26:2 27:10 28:25 wishes 29:24 30:18 WITNESS 33:16 Woodland 21:15 writing 25:15 written 26:3 30:21 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <hr/> <p> year 23:15,22,23 24:1,2,6,7,10,10 years 23:17 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Z</p> <hr/> <p> Zoom 27:18 28:7 28:12,15 29:1 31:8 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">0</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	<p> 1 24:1 30:9 16.8 24:9 17.3 24:1 18 23:15 19 21:13 23:1,5 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <hr/> <p> 2 24:2 2000 22:14 25:17 2024 21:13 23:1,5,8 33:17 206-464-7744 28:23 206.464.6595 22:16 21-33 21:10 26 30:20 2731 21:24 33:23 2nd 33:17 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <hr/> <p> 30 30:9 360-915-3646 28:8 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <hr/> <p> 4.6 24:2 42.9 24:6 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <hr/> <p> 509-309-6463 31:9 53.7 23:23 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <hr/> <p> 6 27:25 28:2,3 31:10 6:15 32:14 621 21:15 69 24:7 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">7</p> <hr/> <p> 77.1 23:21 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">8</p> <hr/> <p> 8 30:11 800 22:14 25:16 888-333-9882 25:25 28:20 </p>	<p style="text-align: center;">9</p> <hr/> <p> 9 27:12 29:2,7 98004 25:17 98104 22:15 98504 21:16 </p>
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