

STOEL RIVES LLP

ATTORNEYS

STANDARD INSURANCE CENTER 900 SW FIFTH AVENUE, SUITE 2600 PORTLAND, OREGON 97204-1268

Phone (503) 224-3380 Fax (503) 220-2480 TDD (503) 221-1045 Internet: www.stoel.com

March 15, 2000

GEORGE M. GALLOWAY

Direct Dial

(503) 294-9306

gmgalloway@stoel.com

Filed via Overnight UPS

Ms. Carole J. Washburn, Secretary Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission 1300 S Evergreen Park Drive, SW PO Box 47250 Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Re:

Application of PacifiCorp re Sale of Centralia

WUTC Docket No. UE-991262

Dear Ms. Washburn:

Enclosed for filing in this docket are the original and nineteen copies of PacifiCorp's Petition for Reconsideration.

Very truly yours,

George M Galloway

GMG:dc Encls.

cc w/encls: Service List

SEATTLE

PORTLAND

VANCOUVER, WA

BOISE

SALT LAKE CITY

Washington, D.C.

1	BEFORE THE		
2	WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION		
3			
4			
5	In the Matter of the Application of) PACIFICORP for an Order Approving the) Sale of its Interest in (1) the Centralia Steam) Electric Generating Plant, (2) the Ratebased)		
7 8 9	Portion of the Centralia Coal Mine, and (3) Related Facilities; For a Determination of the amount of and the Proper Ratemaking Treatment of the Gain Associated with the Sale; and for an EWG Determination PACIFICORP'S PETITION FOR RECONSIDERATION		
11			
12	Pursuant to RCW 34.05.470 and WAC 480-09-810, PacifiCorp (or "the Company")		
13	hereby petitions for reconsideration of the Second Supplemental Order of the Washington		
14 15	Utilities and Transportation Commission ("Commission") entered in this docket on March 6,		
16	2000 ("Order").		
17	PacifiCorp believes that the Order was erroneous in the following respects:		
18	1. The Order conditioned approval of the sale of PacifiCorp's interest in the Centralia		
19	Plant and Mine upon PacifiCorp agreeing to hold harmless its customers, Puget Sound Energy,		
20 21	Inc. and Avista Corporation and their respective customers from any future liability for Centralia		
22	Mine reclamation. There is no basis in the record for this requirement. Moreover, it is contrary		
23	to the contractual arrangements among the Centralia owners.		
24	2. The Order contains a number of mysterious numerical references and calculations		
25 26	which have no apparent basis in the record.		

1	3. While it appears the Commission intended that PacifiCorp's shareholders receive some
2	of the gain from the sale of the Centralia Plant, substituting correct numbers in the Commission's
3	proposed allocation formula would result in no gain being available to be allocated to
4	PacifiCorp's shareholders.
5	PacifiCorp respectfully requests that, upon reconsideration, the Commission amend the
6 7	Order as follows:
8	1. Delete the condition associated with PacifiCorp holding its customers and other
9	parties harmless in respect to Mine reclamation costs.
10	2. To the extent numerical references are used, they should be explained and have a basis
11	in the record so that the Parties are able to divine the Commission's intentions.
12 13	3. The "depreciation reserve" method for allocating gain between customers and
14	shareholders should be adopted in lieu of the method set forth in the Order.
15	ARGUMENT
16	1. Mine Reclamation Costs. The Order states (at page 21) that the Commission noted
17	"that PacifiCorp has indicated a willingness to indemnify its ratepayers" from future reclamation
18	costs beyond the balance currently accumulated in the reclamation trust following the sale of the
19 20	Plant and Mine. The Order (at page 21) goes on to "assume" that PacifiCorp is also willing to
21	extend this indemnification to the ratepayers of "other owning utilities".
22	The record in this proceeding contains absolutely no basis for a conclusion that
23	
24	PacifiCorp indicated a willingness to indemnify its own customers and absolutely no basis for
25	the Commission to "assume" this indemnification would extend to other Centralia owners or
26	

1	their customers.		
2	PacifiCorp witness Alex Miller took great (but apparently insufficient) pains to		
3	distinguish between costs of future environmental remediation at the Plant and Mine and futur		
4	reclamation costs at the Mine. He testified that in the event the Commission accepted		
5	PacifiCorp's proposal to establish reserves for <i>environmental remediation costs</i> at the Plant and		
6 7	Mine, PacifiCorp would agree to hold its Washington customers harmless in respect to costs in		
8	excess of such reserves. He stated that the Company had not yet determined what ratemaking		
9	treatment it would propose for any reclamation costs that PacifiCorp might be required to pay.		
10	His testimony in these respects was as follows:		
11	17 Q. Looking at your rebuttal testimony, Exhibit		
12	18 215, at Page 8, Lines 15 and 16, you state that 19 PacifiCorp's proposal effectively caps the customer		
13	20 borne monetary risk associated with existing21 environmental liabilities. Could you just expand on		
14 15	that for me on any potential risks that would remain?Would those just be the risks to the Company and not to		
16	24 the shareholder because of this statement, or what 25 would that mean?		
17	TR Vol. III, p388		
18	1 A. I'm sorry, I didn't find your site.		
19	Q. I'm sorry. I'm looking at this is Page 3 of3 your rebuttal testimony, Lines 15 and 16.		
20	4 A. The environmental liabilities associated with 5 the plant are separate and apart from the reclamation		
21	6 <u>liabilities</u>, so these are a traditional environmental7 liabilities, such as fuel spills and other things that		
22	8 can occur at basically any industrial facility. What 9 we are saying here is that if our gain sharing proposal		
23	10 is accepted, and we are allowed to deduct these amounts		
2425	11 from the calculation of the gain, then we would not 12 look back to ratepayers in the future if preexisting		
26	13 conditions are determined and found and work there way14 through and come back to PacifiCorp.		

1	15 If those amounts are not included in the
	16 calculation of the gain, preexisting conditions are17 determined, then we would come back to seek recovery
2	18 from customers, so essentially, if the two and three
3	19 million are deducted, then it's shareholder
4	20 responsibility going forward. It's part of our whole
	21 gain sharing proposal. If not and we're not reserving 22 in any sense for those potential liabilities in the
5	23 future, then we wouldn't come back and look to
6	24 customers.
7	25 Q. This again is just environmental liability
8	1 and not reclamation liability; is that correct?
	2 A. That is correct.
9	TR Vol. III, p389-90 (Emphasis added.)
10	REDIRECT EXAMINATION
11	20 BY MR. GALLOWAY:
11	Q. Mr. Miller, I want to make sure that the
12	22 record is crystal clear as to the difference between
13	23 what you refer to as environmental liability associated
	24 with the mine and reclamation liability and how that is 25 going to be handled. As I understand your testimony,
14	25 going to be nandied. This I understand your testimony,
15	1 environmental liability as it relates to both the plant
16	2 and the mine has to do with soil and water
	3 contaminating that may have occurred while the plant 4 and mine were in the hands of the current owners.
17	5 A. That's correct.
18	
19	17 Q. And the reserves that have been talked about
	18 for the plant and mine are reserves that PacifiCorp 19 proposes to book as a contingency against these sorts
20	20 of claim for preexisting liability.
21	21 A. That is correct.
	Q. And if these reserves are permitted and if
22	23 PacifiCorp is permitted to retain one third of the gain
23	24 from the sale as it's proposed, PacifiCorp would hold
24	25 customers harmless against any such environmental
∠4	1 liabilities.
25	2 A. That's correct.
26	3 Q. You separately testified in respect to the

1	4 reclamation liability associated with the mine; do you		
1	5 recall that?		
2	6 A. Yes.		
•	7 Q. And there has been no reserve in the		
3	8 transaction accounting for that sort of secondary		
4	9 liability for reclamation; is that correct?		
	10 A. That is correct, there has been no reserve.		
5	11 Q. You testified that under current law,		
6	12 PacifiCorp does not believe that that secondary		
6	13 liability exists.14 A. That is correct.		
7	15 Q. Has PacifiCorp made a determination in the		
2000	16 event that the secondary liability arose and the law		
8	17 was changed or somehow the liability was visited upon		
9	18 PacifiCorp, how it would treat that matter for		
,	19 regulatory purposes, for ratemaking purposes is what I		
10	20 mean?		
	21 A. No.		
11	TR Vol. III, p391-93		
12			
13	Even the Company's proposed commitment with respect to environmental remediation		
14	costs, which Mr. Miller clearly stated had nothing to do with Mine reclamation costs, was		
15	mooted by the Commission's unwillingness to accept PacifiCorp's proposal to reserve a portion		
16	of the sales proceeds to cover such liabilities (Order at page 24). ¹		
17	(1 m) 1 m)		
17	No Party to these proceedings suggested that PacifiCorp indemnify its customers in		
18			
19	respect to Mine reclamation costs. No Party mentioned the possibility of PacifiCorp		
20	indemnifying other Centralia owners or their customers.		
20			
21	Other than the testimony of Mr. Miller referenced above, testimony related to		
22	, and the second		
22	responsibility for future Mine reclamation costs (that are for some reason not paid by TransAlta		
23			
24	The Order also fails to acknowledge that 52.5 percent of PacifiCorp's proposed \$ 3 Million		
	reserve for environmental remediation at the Mine relates to the portion of the Mine not in		
25	ratebase and therefore should not figure into an adjustment of the amount of gain allocated to		
26	the Company's customers. (See Exhibit T-215 at page 4.)		

1	consistent with its contractual obligations) came from witnesses for Staff and ICNU. Both		
2	witnesses testified that (assuming all of the gain from the sale of the Plant were allocated to		
3	customers, consistent with their recommendation) PacifiCorp's customers should be responsib		
4	for prudently-incurred reclamation costs for the 47.5 percent of the Mine that is in PacifiCorp's		
5	ratebase. (See Transcript Volume III, pages 512 and 466.)		
6	The record is also clear that the Centralia owners had established by contract how		
7 8	responsibility for Mine reclamation should be apportioned among them. Mr. Miller testified as		
9	follows in this regard:		
0	8 Q. I want to leave this exhibit but stick with		
1	9 the reclamation issue, and that is, under the proposed 10 sale agreement to TransAlta, is there any and I mean		
2	11 the word "any" in its literal sense liability that		
3	12 it stays with the current owners if that sale goes13 through?		
4	14 A. Yes.		
5	15 Q. Would you please explain what that liability 16 is?		
	17 A. That liability is that TransAlta for some		
6	18 reason cannot fulfill its obligation to reclaim the		
7	19 mine, and that somehow that that falls back on20 PacifiCorp as a previous owner.		
8	21 Q. Would that risk be only to PacifiCorp, or		
	22 would that be to all of the owners?		
9	23 A. It would fall first to PacifiCorp.		
0.0	Q. Because you are the owner of the mine?		
21	25 A. That's correct, and the permanent holder. TR Vol. III, p368		
22	1 Q. Do you have agreements between the respective		
23	2 owners that would allow PacifiCorp to seek recovery		
24	3 from the other owners?4 A. Yes, we do.		
	TR Vol. III, p369		
25			
26	Q. I believe in response to a question you		

1	23 responded that the owners were contractually			
	24 responsible to PacifiCorp in respect to that secondary25 reclamation liability?			
2	TR Vol. III, p393			
3	The volume person			
4	 1 A. Yes, for their portion of the mine. 2 Q. 52-and-a-half percent? 			
5	3 A. That's correct.			
6	4 Q. And the balance would have to be borne in 5 some manner by PacifiCorp?			
Ü	6 A. That's correct.			
7	TR Vol. III, p394			
8	Thus, there is absolutely no basis in the record for the Commission's "assumption" that			
9				
10	PacifiCorp was prepared to indemnify the other Centralia owners in respect to reclamation costs.			
11	2. Mysterious numbers and calculations. The Order contains several charts which			
12	purport to demonstrate the financial impact of the sale on the three Applicants. Most of these			
13	numbers are not accompanied by citations to the record and PacifiCorp is not able to find several			
14	of the numbers in the record or otherwise derive them from numbers that are in the record.			
15				
16	PacifiCorp understands that these figures are intended to be "estimates" included to illustrate the			
17	principles to be implemented by the Commission "when the final allocations are determined in			
18	ratemaking" (See Order at page 22). Nonetheless, from the numbers that are used, PacifiCorp is			
19	unable to discern what principles the Commission intends to implement. PacifiCorp believes			
20	that the principles and methodology are best resolved in this docket and should be based on the			
21	that the principles and methodology are best resolved in this docket and should be based on the			
22	record in this docket. Although the actual accounting can and should occur in the pending rate			
23	case, clarity in this docket will eliminate controversy and extensive record-building in the rate			
24	case. Specifically, PacifiCorp's concerns are as follows:			
25				
26	• Allocated Sales Proceeds: Each owner is receiving a share of the Plant proceeds equivalent to its ownership share. One would assume that all owners would start from the same point			

with respect to the overall sales proceeds on a total Plant basis. However, this is not the case in the numbers presented in Table 2. If one takes each utility's ownership share and divides that into the allocated sales proceeds, it shows that the Commission has essentially chosen a different starting point for each of the utilities.

	PacifiCorp	Avista	PSE
Ownership Share	47.5%	15%	7%
Allocated Sales Proceeds	199.4	68.2	33.6
Implied Total Allocated	,		
Sales Proceeds	420	454	480

Order, p. 23, Table 2

The Commission needs to clarify its starting point for the methodology in order for the Applicants to quantify the expected result. For example, if the Commission were to apply PSE's starting point to PacifiCorp, there would be \$50 million of appreciation rather than \$20 million – a significant difference. Likewise, if the Commission were to apply PacifiCorp's starting point to PSE, there would be appreciation of \$2 million instead of \$6 million.

PacifiCorp believes that the discrepancy between the values may be due, at least in part, to an adjustment in PacifiCorp's sales proceeds to reflect the fact that the reclamation trust fund balances will be transferred to TransAlta because the reclamation fund is subtracted from the original bid amount (see line 9 of Exhibit 207). PacifiCorp seeks Commission verification that the \$199.4 million value is derived from Exhibit 207, by subtracting line 16, "Cash to PacifiCorp for Mine," from line 20, "Net Cash From Sale." It appears reasonable to PacifiCorp that the net cash proceeds from the sale reflect the reduction of the reclamation balance. But, as discussed below, if this amount is deducted here, it should not also be deducted in other parts of the calculation.

• Accumulated Depreciation: PacifiCorp is unable to verify the \$122.6 million amount listed in Table 2 as accumulated depreciation. Referring to Exhibit 214, subtracting the \$64.2 million of net plant from the \$179.2 million of gross plant derives an estimated

- accumulated depreciation of \$115 million. PacifiCorp believes that the \$115 million figure is the appropriate figure and seeks clarification as to how the Commission arrived at the \$122.6 million estimate. Because of the various components that make up the book basis of the plant, accumulated depreciation is not, in this case, the mathematical equivalent of subtracting net book value from gross plant.
- Net Book Value: Although there are no details of how the Commission derived the \$56.6 million amount listed in table 2 as Net Book Value, it appears that the Commission subtracted the Total Basis of the Mine shown on line 15 of page 2 of Exhibit 207 from the Total Basis shown on line 41 of page 1 of Exhibit 207. If this is not the case, some explanation is required.

PacifiCorp does not agree that this is an appropriate derivation of the shareholder's net book value of the Plant for these purposes. As discussed above, the Commission's approach subtracted from the net proceeds of the sale an amount equal to the reclamation fund balance. In return, TransAlta assumes responsibility for the reclamation of the Mine and the associated liability is removed from PacifiCorp's books. However, by virtue of the calculation described in the paragraph above, the Commission again apparently subtracts the reclamation fund balance, this time from the net book value. The Commission then allows shareholders to recover net book value - but has underestimated this amount by the \$25.3 million reclamation fund balance. This may be part of the reason why there is a shortfall between the amount of actual after tax gain derived from the methodology shown in Exhibit 207 and the amount allocated to customers and shareholders under the Commission's formula. This also appears to be in direct conflict with the portion of the Order (page 25) that rejects Staff's proposal to assign all of the reclamation trust balances to customers in the event that the gain is shared. Subtracting the reclamation fund balance from the net proceeds of the sale and then also subtracting the same amount from the net book value that has been allocated to shareholders, appears to be double counting at the expense of shareholders. All parties in this case agreed that, as a result of the sale, shareholders should at least be made whole for their net investment in the Plant and Mine. The Order does not appear to accomplish this.

- Other Costs and Adjustments: There is no indication of what this category on Table 3
 relates to or where the numbers came from. PacifiCorp seeks clarification as to this category represents and the source of the numbers. To the extent that this category is intended to capture the additional components other than Net Plant that go into the determination of the Company's book basis in the Plant, this appears to be reflected in the calculation of the Net Book value discussed above.
- Other comments on Table 2

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

24

One significant omission from this table is a line that shows the book gain after tax. For PacifiCorp, this value is \$82.6 million as shown on line 50 of Exhibit 207. The reason that this omission is significant is that, if included, it reveals a significant flaw in the

1		methodology that follows in Tables 3, 4 and 5.		
2	•	Table 3		
3		Again the omission from this table of a line that shows book gain after tax is significant. For PacifiCorp, this value is \$12.7 million which is derived by multiplying the \$82.6 million		
		by 15.4%.		
5	•	Table 5		
6 7		As can be shown on Table 5, the Commission's methodology derives a PacifiCorp Washington customer total allocation of sale proceeds of \$13.29 million. This table also		
8		assigns \$1.01 million of appreciation to shareholders. This results in a total of \$14.30 million of after tax gain that is to be allocated between customers and shareholders.		
9 10	to be a critical flaw in the adopted methodology. If one adheres to the Commission's statement that shareholders are entitled to recover their net book value, there is insufficient			
11				
12 13	If	these numbers are updated for the removal of the accruals for environmental contingencies, the		
14	tot	al before tax gain is \$84.8 million with \$13.0 allocated to Washington. There is still		
15	ins	sufficient gain to implement the adopted methodology.		
16		Another way to evaluate the Commission's methodology is to compare the \$82.3 million		
17	of	net book value (without subtracting reclamation) plus \$122.6 million of accumulated		
18 19	de	preciation (a total of \$204.9 million) to the \$199.4 million of allocated sales proceeds. This		
20	res	sults in a deficit of \$5.5 million, or approximately \$850,000 for Washington. This explains		
21	ab	out a third of the shortfall between the amount of after tax net gain allocated to customers and		
22	sha	areholders and actual amount of gain allocated to Washington.		
23		g ·		
24				
25				
26				

1			
2	•	Taxes	
3		The Order states (at pages 30-31):	
4		"The amount of income tax assignable to the appreciation should be split in half,	
5	with each half deducted from the respective share of appreciation assigned to ratepayers and shareholders. The remainder of the income tax should be deducted		
6	from the remainder of the gain; this is the portion assigned to ratepayers."		
7		PacifiCorp is unclear on the Commission's intentions with this statement and requests a	
8	nu	merical example of what it intended with respect to taxes.	
9	2		
10		3. The Commission's proposed formula will not result in any portion of the gain being	
11	<u>all</u>	ocated to PacifiCorp's shareholders. Apparently, because of its erroneous numerical	
12	ass	sumptions outlined above, the Commission reached the conclusion that its proposed formula	
13	for	sharing gain between PacifiCorp's customers and shareholders would result in some portion	
14	of	the gain being allocated to shareholders. As indicated above, based upon the numbers that are	
15			
16	in	the record, PacifiCorp believes that the Commission's formula will not result in any amount of	
17	ga	in available for allocation to PacifiCorp's shareholders and in fact could require PacifiCorp's	

PacifiCorp questions whether the Commission's proposed formula is appropriate, even if it accomplished its apparent outcome. "Returning" all historic depreciation expense to customers before any sharing occurs, would appear to ignore the fact that customers effectively had the beneficial use of the Plant for which depreciation expense is appropriate compensation.

If it was indeed the Commission's intention to provide for an equitable sharing between PacifiCorp's customers and shareholders, the only mechanism for accomplishing that result that

shareholders to sustain a loss on the sale.

1	has any basis in the record is the "depreciation reserve" method sponsored by PacifiCorp. That		
2	method, discussed at length in PacifiCorp's Brief, would result in approximately two-thirds of the		
3	gain being allocated to customers and one-third allocated to shareholders. On rehearing, it		
4	should be adopted by the Commission.		
5	DATED: March 15, 2000.		
6	Respectfully submitted,		
7	Respectivity submitted,		
8			
9	George M. Galloway		
10	Stoel Rives LLP Of Attorneys for PacifiCorp		
11 12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
2425			
25 26			
20			

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

2	I hereby certify that I served the foregoing document on the following named person(s)			
3	on the date indicated below by mailing with postage prepaid to said person(s) a true copy			
4	thereof, contained in a sealed envelope, addressed to said person(s) at their last-known			
5	address(es) indicated below:			
6				
	Michael T. Brooks	Robert Lavitt		
7	Melinda J. Davison	Elizabeth Ford		
0	Duncan Weinberg, et al	Schwerin Campbell Barnard LLP		
8	1300 SW Fifth Ave., Suite 2915	18 West Mercer St., Suite 400		
9	Portland, OR 97201-5636	Seattle, WA 98119		
	Lincoln Wolverton	John Bishop		
10	East Fork Economics	[IBEW Local 125]		
1 1	35011 North Fork Road	Bennett, Hartman & Reynolds		
11	PO Box 620	851 SW Fifth Ave.		
12	La Center, WA 98629	Portland, OR 97204		
13	Robert Cedarbaum	Nancy Hirsh		
	Assistant Attorney General	NW Energy Coalition		
14	Washington Utilities and	219 First Ave., South, Suite 100		
	Transportation Commission	Seattle, WA 98104		
15	1400 S. Evergreen Park Drive, SW			
	PO Box 40128	Christy Omohundro		
16	Seattle, WA 98504-0128	Director of Regulation		
	,	Puget Sound Energy, Inc.		
17	Simon J. ffitch	411 108th Avenue NE, Suite 300		
18	Assistant Attorney General	Bellevue, WA 98004		
10	Public Counsel Section	3		
19	Office of the Attorney General	Ronald L. McKenzie		
.,	900 Fourth Ave., Suite 2000	Sr. Rate Accountant		
20	Seattle, WA 98164-1012	Avista Corporation		
	,	1411 East Mission		
21	* .	PO Box 3727		
	•	Spokane, WA 99220-3727		
22		The second secon		
23		a sel		

24

25

1

	9	
1	Matthew Harris Summit Law Group	Matthew Wright Vice President, Regulation
2	1505 Westlake Avenue N, Suite 300 Seattle, WA 98104	PacifiCorp 825 NE Multnomah, Ste. 800
3	*	Portland, OR 97232
4	Gary R. Dahlke R. Blair Strong	
5	Paine, Hamblen, Coffin, Brooke & Miller, LLP	
6	717 West Sprague Ave., Suite 1200 Spokane, WA 99201-3505	
7		
8	DATED: March 15, 2000.	
9		7(/)
10		orge M. Galloway
11 .		nes C. Paine Attorneys for PacifiCorp
12		
13		
14		
15	•	
16		
	*	
17		
18		
19	*	·