

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,

DOCKETS UE-220066 and UG-
220067 (*Consolidated*)

Complainant,

v.

ORDER 35

PUGET SOUND ENERGY,

Respondent.

DOCKET UG-210918

In the Matter of the Petition of

PUGET SOUND ENERGY

For an Order Authorizing Deferred
Accounting Treatment for Puget Sound
Energy’s Share of Costs Associated with
the Tacoma LNG Facility

ORDER 21

APPROVING PAYMENTS

BACKGROUND

- 1 On May 16, 2024, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) entered Order 32/18 Granting Petition to Amend Final Order 24/10, Subject to Condition, resolving a petition filed by Puget Sound Energy (PSE or Company) in Docket UE-210795. This Order was subsequently amended by Order 33/19 and clarified by Order 34/20.
- 2 Earlier on April 4, 2024, the Commission entered Order 31/17, Approving Proposed Budgets and Fund Grants from TEP and the Alliance of Western Energy Consumers (AWEC).

3 On June 5, 2024, The Energy Project (TEP) filed a Request for Payment of Fund Grant, requesting payment from the Customer Representation Sub-Fund in the amount of \$30,000. The request for payment was consistent with the approved budget.

DISCUSSION

4 On February 9, 2023, the Commission entered Order 02, Approving Agreement Subject to Condition, Requiring Refiling of Modified Agreement (Order 02).¹ The Commission approved the Revised Agreement submitted by the parties, subject to the removal of paragraph 7.9, which authorized deferred accounting treatment.² The Commission also clarified that it was not bound by the timelines set forth in the Revised Agreement.³

5 As relevant here, the Revised Agreement carried forward the same requirements for requests for payments of fund grants.⁴ It also makes clear that “[e]ligible expenses” may include costs for eligible proceedings incurred prior to the approval of the Revised Agreement.⁵

6 Pursuant to the Revised Agreement, a Request for Payment must:

(a) Itemize the expenses, payees, and hourly rates for amounts to be reimbursed, including billing details, and including separately identified amounts for consultant or expert witness fees and travel expenses;

(b) Demonstrate that the expenses are reasonable and are directly attributable to issues and positions pursued on behalf of customers and consistent with the intervenor’s proposed budget;

(c) Provide information sufficient to show that the Participating Organization has complied with any condition or requirement of the Fund Grant; and

(d) Specify whether the request for payment is for interim funding, in the case of Prioritized Organizations only, or final payment in full, and indicate whether any

¹ *In the Matter of the Petition of Puget Sound Energy, et al.*, Docket U-210595 Order 02 (February 9, 2023).

² *Id.* ¶ 20.

³ *Id.* ¶ 21.

⁴ Revised Agreement § 7.1.

⁵ Revised Agreement § 7.3. *See also* Interim Agreement § 9.3 (providing that the Commission will require a participating utility to pay eligible expenses incurred under an approved fund grant that was awarded before the date of the termination of the Interim Agreement).

approved budget amount may be released back to the applicable Sub-Fund because the Participating Organization does not intend to request payment for the full approved budget amount.”⁶

- 7 The Commission may disallow, in whole or in part, a Request for Payment if it determines that the request seeks reimbursement for (a) expenses that are not Eligible Expenses,⁷ or (b) expenses that are inconsistent with the Participating Organization’s Consumer Access Fund Grant or any conditions placed on the Consumer Access Fund Grant.⁸ Upon authorization of payment, the Commission will make a determination on how to recover the Fund Grants from the various customer classes of the affected Participating Public Utility.⁹ Additionally, the Commission may determine whether Fund Grants that were used to advocate positions on behalf of a broad cross-section of customers should be assessed against all customers or multiple classes of customers, to fairly align the costs of the advocacy with the intended potential beneficiaries of the advocacy.
- 8 In this case, one of the case-certified parties filed Requests for Payment of Fund Grants.
- 9 **TEP.** On June 5, 2024, TEP filed a Request for Payment of Fund Grant and Eligible Expenses Report for a payment of \$30,000 from the Customer Representation Sub-Fund.
- 10 After considering the requirements set forth in Sections 7.1, 7.3, and 7.7 of the Interim Agreement, we determine that TEP’s request for payment of \$30,000 should be approved. TEP investigated and participated in multiple issues in this proceeding, including but not limited to: filing testimony, participating in settlement conferences, and appearing at the evidentiary hearing. TEP submitted a timely Request for Payment. It describes its attorney fees in sufficient detail for the Commission to determine that they are reasonable, and it maintains that this time is directly attributable to participating in the case. TEP’s request represents only a portion of its costs for participating in this proceeding.
- 11 Because TEP focuses on issues affecting low-income customers, these costs should be assigned proportionally between electric and natural gas customers based on total billed revenue, and it is appropriate to assess TEP’s costs against the residential customer class.

⁶ Revised Agreement § 7.1.

⁷ Revised Agreement § 7.3.

⁸ Revised Agreement § 7.6.

⁹ Revised Agreement § 7.7.

12 PSE must pay the above Requests for Payment as directed within 30 days of the entry of this Order.¹⁰

ORDER

13 **THE COMMISSION ORDERS That:**

14 (1) The Energy Project's Request for Payment from the Customer Representation Sub-Fund in the amount of \$30,000 is **APPROVED**.

Dated at Lacey, Washington, and effective October 22, 2024.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DAVID W. DANNER, Chair

ANN E. RENDAHL, Commissioner

MILT DOUMIT, Commissioner

¹⁰ Revised Agreement § 7.8.