

**AVISTA CORP.  
RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

JURISDICTION:	WASHINGTON	DATE PREPARED:	07/16/2021
CASE NO:	200900-901-894	WITNESS:	Heather Rosentrater
REQUESTER:	Bench	RESPONDER:	Heather Rosentrater
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**REQUEST:**

Avista witnesses Rosentrater, La Bolle, and DiLuciano testified to the progress Avista has made towards completing the roll out of advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) in its service territory. Please file a response to this request with the Commission by July 14, 2021.<sup>1</sup> Responses to the subparts of this request may be presented within a single document.

- a. Please provide the total number of Avista customers who have opted out of having an AMI meter and the portions of the total number who are gas-only customers, electric only, and combined electric and gas customers.
- b. Please provide the number of encoded receiver transmitter meters (ERTs) that have been installed for those gas-only customers who have opted-out of AMI.
- c. Please provide the number of advanced meter reading (AMR) meters in use, or that have been installed to replace older meters, and the number of AMR meters assigned to opt-out customers, if different, and separately identify the number of gas-only, electric-only, and combined electric and gas customers. Please clarify the numbers if there are any AMR meters in use that are not assigned to an opt-out customer.
- d. Please provide the percent of total customers, electric-only and combined electric and gas customers, who currently have AMI versus those who currently have AMR and those who have older, non-AMI or -AMR meters.
- e. If known, please provide Avista's total annual costs and the per opt-out customer annual costs to read the meters of customers who have opted out of AMI (for all customers, gas-only, electric-only, and combined electric and gas).
- f. If known, please also provide a breakdown identifying the annual costs for reading ERTs for gas-only customers, non-AMI meters for electric-only customers, and non-AMI combined electric and gas customers. Please explain if there is any difference between the annual costs for reading the different kinds of non-AMI meters.

**RESPONSE:**

During the hearing held on July 7, 2021, the Commissioners asked the Company what the completion percentage of the AMI project was. As stated during the hearing, and reaffirmed in this response, Avista has substantially completed AMI deployments (**99.9%**) in all areas where AMI is set to be deployed, including both electric and gas areas. As of July 14, 2021, Avista has installed 406,327 AMI meters or modules out of a possible 406,635. **Only 308 meters remain**, most of which are located in difficult to access portions of our system.

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<sup>1</sup>During the hearing held on July 9, 2021, the due date of this bench request was extended to July 16, 2021.

As discussed in Ms. Rosentrater’s revised testimony Exh. HLR-1 Tr, Avista made the decision to not install AMI in its “natural gas only” service areas, which now includes approximately 18,900 natural gas meters. Separate from AMI, the Company is refreshing its meter modules in the “natural gas only” service areas, which will allow for mobile field collection of meter reads. The Company is approximately 80% complete with this project. Note that there are some customers that are served natural gas only by Avista in areas outside of “natural gas only” service areas of which are considered “AMI”. Further, the costs associated with this “natural gas only” refresh project are NOT included in the case (the AMI business case was reduced by the estimated cost of converting the natural gas only areas when it was decided those areas should not be converted to AMI).

- a. The following table represents the number of premises or homes that have opted out of receiving an AMI meter. For the electric and gas combo customers, each customer would have two meters assigned to them, one electric and one gas.

<b>Customer Group</b>	<b>Opt-Out Premises</b>
Electric & Gas Combo	1,492
Electric Only	1,033
Gas Only	38
<b>Total Premises</b>	<b>2,563</b>

- b. To date, there are 24 gas only customers that have opted out of receiving an AMI meter that have an ERT.
- c. The following table represents the total number of AMR meters already installed or planned to be in use:

<b>Customer Group</b>	<b>AMR Meters</b>
Electric & Gas Combo	686
Electric Only	583
Gas Only	20,041
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,310</b>

The following table represents the number of AMR meters assigned to AMI opt-out customers. For the electric and gas combo customers, each customer would have two meters assigned to them, one electric and one gas. Note the 891 meters are a subset of the total AMR meters, rather than an addition to the total above.

<b>Customer Group</b>	<b>AMR Meters</b>
Electric & Gas Combo	556
Electric Only	311
Gas Only	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>891</b>

- d. The following table represents the percent of meters that are currently AMI versus other metering types.

<b>Group</b>	<b>AMI</b>	<b>AMR</b>	<b>OTHER</b>	<b>Total</b>
Electric & Gas Combo	49.6%	0.2%	0.7%	50.5%
Electric Only	39.0%	0.2%	0.3%	39.5%
Gas Only	3.0%	6.8%	0.1%	9.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>91.6%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

- e. At this time, the Company does not have an updated total annual cost or per opt-out customer cost for reading the meters of customers who have opted out of AMI. This is due to unfinished efforts to optimize meter reading routes, which is estimated to be completed later this year. Particularly, the Company has not been able to complete optimization of meter reading routes in the Colville area, which includes a substantial percentage of the total AMI opt-out customers. The cost of reading opt-out customers' meters has changed from prior forecasts as the Company is retaining meter readers rather than utilizing the Company's Meter Shop and/or electric Local Area Representatives to read meters. As soon as the meter module refresh in the "natural gas only" service areas is complete, as well as Network Mitigation<sup>2</sup> activities are complete, the Company will holistically optimize its meter reading routes for more efficient reading of meters. Once this process is complete, the Company will then be able to produce updated costs for reading non-AMI and AMI opt-out customer meters.

The Company will provide update meter reading costs when it submits its final AMI opt-out report in Docket UE-180418 and UG-180419, which is due on September 30, 2021.

- f. Please see the response to part e.

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<sup>2</sup> Network Mitigation is the act of improving meter reading performance post deployment by improving meter mesh communications by either moving or adding network infrastructure (Connected Grid Routers or Mesh Node Bases) in the field or in rural areas, using electric meters using cellular communications. In the event a meter cannot be read via AMI, the meter is excluded and is manually read.