

Exh. DRH-6

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BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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EXH. DRH-6

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## **AVISTA'S WILDFIRE RESILIENCY PLAN**

### **Communications Plan**

#### **Overview**

Wildfires pose a large and growing risk to millions of Americans. In recent years, public focus on this significant risk – and the role that power providers play – has intensified and the stakes for utilities have never been higher.

To that end, Avista is taking its role and responsibilities seriously and has developed a comprehensive Wildfire Resiliency Plan involving both strategic investments to mitigate risk, as well as a set of processes and responses that can be deployed in case of a wildfire.

Avista's comprehensive Wildfire Resiliency Plan builds on and enhances Avista's emergency operation preparedness; promotes public safety and protection of physical assets and property; and safeguards company assets to mitigate financial and liability risks. In addition, the Wildfire Resiliency Plan emphasizes collaboration with land-management and fire response agencies. It includes the following goals:

1. **Promote Public & Worker Safety:** Protect Avista employees and customers from the impact of wildfires.
2. **Emergency Preparedness:** Minimize service disruptions caused by wildfires and other extreme weather events.
3. **Financial Protection:** Protect the Company from financial and reputational liability.

To meet these goals, the plan's recommendations are focused in four key areas:

1. **Vegetation Management-** Implement actions above and beyond traditional, reliability-based approaches with the goal of reducing contact between vegetation and utility powerlines in targeted geographic areas.
2. **Situational Awareness-** Implement tools and systems that enhance Avista's capabilities and knowledge in weather forecasting, fire prediction, and equipment control to inform operational decision-making.
3. **Operations and Emergency Response-** Recognize wildfire as separate and distinct from other significant weather events, and utilize training and simulation for Avista personnel to better prepare them to work with fire professionals during an event.
4. **Grid Hardening-** Replace and strengthen infrastructure in fire-prone areas, reducing the likelihood of a spark-ignition source and protecting critical infrastructure from the impacts of fire.

A key element of this Wildfire Resiliency Plan is ensuring that Avista stakeholders know the plan is in place, buy into it, and take pride in the fact that the Company is taking the right precautionary steps to reduce the potential for and impact of wildfires. A strong and effective strategic communications campaign is critical to the Company to ensure broad awareness and demonstrate Avista's commitment to preventing wildfires—a plan directed at all of Avista's key

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stakeholders, including: customers, employees, state and local government officials and regulators, law enforcement/fire departments, local media, and shareholders.

The following is the framework for communicating about the Wildfire Resiliency Plan.

### **Communications Objectives**

- Ensure awareness among all key stakeholders of the significant actions and investment Avista is taking to prevent or mitigate the risk of wildfires.
- Instill confidence in Avista as a proactive and responsible corporate citizen.
- Get “buy-in” support and recognition from key stakeholders that Avista is taking wildfire safety seriously and has a Wildfire Resiliency Plan in place.
- Help generate support and recognition for Avista as a leader that is doing all it can to help avoid wildfires and has in place a strong wildfire prevention and safety program.
- Demonstrate Avista’s focus on prioritizing the safety and well-being of its customers and the communities it serves.

### **Phase 1 Communications**

The first phase of communications about the Wildfire Resiliency Plan will be focused on the plan’s launch and the communications objectives noted above. The timing and implementation of the tactics will be aligned with when the plan is finalized. No communications will begin until the organization is ready from an operational and regulatory standpoint.

The second phase of communications would support specific strategies included within the plan, such as enhanced vegetation management. Each initiative that requires customer or external stakeholder behavior change would have its own communications plan with objectives, tactics and timelines associated, as appropriate.

Recommended materials for development of phase one include:

Item	Description/Details
Fact sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overarching description of the Wildfire Resiliency Plan that is simple and easy to understand</li> <li>• Provides key highlights and elements of the plan</li> <li>• Designed piece that aligns with Avista brand</li> <li>• Can be used internally and externally</li> </ul>
News release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announces launch of plan</li> <li>• Sent nationally over the wire</li> </ul>

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Page on myavista.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve as home base for information about the plan</li> <li>• Provides information about Avista's approach and commitment to wildfire resiliency</li> <li>• Would include a link to the plan, the fact sheet, the news release, Avista's vegetation management and right tree right place web pages</li> <li>• Provide customers information they need about wildfire, including links to partners and community resources</li> </ul>
Customer email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use key messages</li> <li>• Educate customers about steps Avista is taking to keep them safe and provide reliable energy</li> </ul>
Customer handout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collateral piece that can be provided to customers to give them information on emergency preparedness and wildfire safety</li> </ul>
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell Avista's Wildfire Resiliency Plan story</li> <li>• Align with communications objectives</li> <li>• For use with media, community groups, business leaders, etc.</li> </ul>
Visual assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and/or develop visual assets that can be used in the fact sheet, on the web, on social, in customer communications, in media engagements, etc.</li> </ul>
Internal communications materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leader communication</li> <li>• Employee communication</li> <li>• E.view EXTRA</li> <li>• Additional TBD</li> </ul>

### **Public Relations Activities by Audience**

Below are the tactics per audience that should be put in place.

#### **1. Communications Targeted to All Audiences**

- Broadly issued press release
- Media outreach and coordination
- A dedicated section on Avista's website which will serve as a repository of resources on prevention, preparedness and support. Content should be continuously updated and eventually include content mentioned above:

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- Wildfire Plan fact sheet
- Advice on what customers can do to be prepared
- Social media posts with links to wildfire safety web page, content about upcoming inspections and repairs, tips during wildfire season, and other wildfire related announcements.
- Provide Avista wildfire links to state Commissions for use on state sites.

## **2. Employees**

- All leader communication, all employee communication, E.view EXTRA to align with news release distribution.

## **3. Customers (business and residential)**

- Communicate the Avista Wildfire Resiliency Plan through customer email(s).
- Highlight the plan and include timely information in customer newsletters.

## **4. Local communities**

- Identify appropriate/relevant opportunities for communications with key stakeholders, which could include newsletter articles, community leader meetings and/or presentations, town hall meetings, etc. in targeted communities served by Avista.
- Engage with media as appropriate in cities/towns across the service area to coincide with any community presentations or engagement.
- Add information and FAQs about wildfire safety related work to web page.
- Include tips on how to avoid wildfires, how to prepare for outages, what to put in an emergency kits, and other resources to help get people informed.