

**Total Comments: 29**

**In Favor: 0**

**Opposed: 25**

**Undecided: 4**

Filing Support	Commenter	Source	Comments
No			
	Tom Shaffer	Web	They want to increase cost to the public which in turn increase the return to Corp. If it should get approved will the Corp Exec take a cut in pay or is it getting added to the rate? VERY OLD SAYING " If you are not willing to give do not ask for anything in return". The big company's cost goes up because Exec want more money but the employees wages stay the same or get lower

Case: 152286

Title: CNGC GRC

PI Coordinator: Roberts, Andrew

Staff Lead: Betty Erdahl

## Public Comments by Case

Filing Support	Commenter	Source	Comments
	Edward Mason	E-mail	<p>I am opposed to any rate increase for Cascade Natural Gas. The consumers' only reward for reducing their use of gas is higher prices. As we use less gas collectively, the gas company "requires" higher rates to provide high profits and ever increasing operational expenses. Why should any energy company concern itself with reducing wages or costs when they possess the political influence to simply pass the bill onto American consumers. That is only one of the reasons why energy resources which are limited must finally be declared the nation' property. It is not just the obvious unfairness involved. The present free market system just won't work. The inherent waste, misapplication, and environmental destruction negatively impacts our national competitive ability and does not provide sound programs for increasing our reserves or expanding alternative energy sources.</p> <p>This present proposal to increase gas rates is indicative of a failing program to continue supporting a company that "rewards" those who save with even higher rates! We can note too that these companies are starting to create systems to monitor each consumer and actively compare him to his neighbor. All this is done in an effort to shift blame and responsibility to the consumer. We have already dropped our thermostats so low that many older citizens and children suffer health challenges.</p> <p>I suspect that most of us do not even the letters, reports, and comparisons provided by Pacific Power. I took my name off the list. Why waste the money which is ultimately paid by the poor consumer. I mention that particular program here to show how all these energy companies can "afford" to sponsor these expensive propaganda initiatives. Why not? They believe they have an open check book!</p> <p>Someone somewhere must stand up and say "enough is too much". I believe it will be a hard battle. The rich power barons create different companies and control systems to manage sale of gas from the fields to our appliances. Very talented people insure high profits and see the natural resource through variety of tax laws and controls. Citizens are fortunate to at leased have you there to help us. I hope you can stop a rate increase. I believe you are dealing with people who possess a high sense of just plain entitlement. Thank you.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Edward Mason</p>

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	Wayne Wilcox	Web	I am upset that Cascade Natural Gas has proposed to increase their residential rates by 9%. This was just announced in the Tri-City Herald. This is a complete turnaround from a separate notice contained in our August billing statements stating that "Based on projected gas costs, Cascade Natural Gas is anticipating a decrease to rates in its PGA filing". Why is there such a big turn-around in just a few months? Not only has natural gas gone down more than expected from last summer, but from all energy analysts, the price should be this low, or even lower for years to come. CNG sure didn't give us notice that they might have to increase our rates! And why is it the residential customers, and not the commercial customers, that always get shafted?!! Thanks for letting me vent.
	Gerald Alexander	Web	Not in favor of rate increase and have four specific issues; 1.The proposed 10 % return on shareholder equity in todays world seems excessive. 2.The issue of decoupling proposal: The inequity of the proposed change does not seem justified. 3.Allocation only to residential customers: Why are not all customers considered in this proposal change. 4.The increase in rates: Due to market price of Natural Gas being at least 33% less, why do they require an almost 9% increase?
	Thomas Bonnington	Web	In reviewing the proposal submitted to me through the mail, they are proposing an increase in their revenue by 4.17%. However, that is a misleading number. The actual increase to my household monthly bill would be 10% to 22% depending seasonal usage. I am currently on a fixed monthly payment and this cost would be very burdensome. Also, and more importantly, part of their justification is to create a return on shareholder investment of 10%. That is an unreasonable rate of return, especially with the national economy in its current state. I think the reality of increasing business costs should be partly placed on the shoulders of the company, not always passed through to the consumer along with an exorbitant "raise" for the company.   I am very firmly opposed to this increase as proposed.

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	Thomas Malicki	Web	CNG is requesting to increase residential per therm rates 8.93%. This increase is so their shareholders will receive a 10% return. Sure wish I could get an increase in my retirement equal to CNG's request.
	Evelyn Williams	E-mail	the state of Washington people should not have to pay for California gas leaks. and you can not tell me that is not what we are doing. I leave in that state to long to know how the gas company work the customer pays for there mistake and that is what you is asking us to do, if gas price goes up this high we will think about going all electric. I really do not like gas anyway because it doe leave a smell in the house after you use the stove.
	Karin Jones	Web	People are struggling, wages are not increasing with the cost of living, unemployment is at an all time high, and yet you choose this time to make customers pay more so your investors can get a fabulous pay out!!! The people are finally speaking up through Bernie Sanders, Donald Trump & Ted Cruz - we have had enough of being used so wall street and the rich can make loads of money on the backs of struggling workers. Your increase is an example of this horrible, unfair practice - -- raise the rate on customers that have no choice on utilities since this is a monopoly and give their money to investors. Very Sad! ---but I guess to be expected....I imagine you all paid the \$200,000 a plate to have dinner with Hillary? Those are my comments, but I imagine you will pander to the rich and pass this anyway.....little faith left in our government officials.

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	Karin Jones	Web	<p>I tried to share my comments regarding the proposed Cascade Gas Rate Increase and was unable to process any information via the website provided in the brochure included in my last bill (the utc.wa.gov) I do not believe that a utility should increase rates on its customers so that its shareholders can make a huge profit. A utility should respect its customers and we already pay a high rate. Given the current tough economic times and the way people are trying to make themselves heard regarding big wallstreet investors payouts rather than taking care of the people that pay money to agencies I am surprised that you are choosing this time to increase rates. Bad advice, bad planning - why not use your profit to invest in better equipment and policies to make money for investors.&lt;br /&gt;&lt;br /&gt;Let the customers actually be heard instead of setting up a website that does not work. Have more public comment hearings closer to customers rather than 50 min or 7 hours away.</p>
	Phil Printz	E-mail	<p>To WUTC,</p> <p>Cascade Natural Gas does have a problem.</p> <p>A historical plunge in commodities has driven Natural Gas spot prices under \$2.00 which was last seen in 1999, 17 years ago. At the same time, climate change seems to be creating milder weather in the winters reducing heating needs. This has lead to reduced revenues for Cascade Natural Gas.</p> <p>The company is asking for a large 10% rate increase to make up for the lost revenue. Is this reasonable?</p> <p>No, for several reasons:</p> <p>First, commodities prices are volatile and at present are at or near the lows of the cycle in prices and have a high probably that they will rise substancially in the future. From 1999 to 2005 Nat Gas rose from under \$2.00 to reached \$13.50 and traded generally above \$6.00 until 2009 when they</p>

fell sharply to \$3.00 due to the Great Recession. Although, the cost of production figures vary from various drilling companies the average cost of producing 1000 BTUs is around \$4.50. With the price today at \$1.98 it seem extremely likely that prices before long will rise above the cost of production. If that occurs that would be huge 125% increase in prices and still be at the lower end of the 20 year range. It is also important to note that the factors pushing down Nat Gas prices are also pushing down all of the other commodities as well. Just look at Oils, Metals, Grains and Soybeans. We are currently witnessing a historic lows across the board of commodity prices.

It doesn't make sense to me to raise retail Nat Gas prices at the bottom of the commodity price cycle. Since it would certainly be followed by huge commodity price increase sometime in the near future as prices recover to more normal price levels.

Second, milder weather, clean water and air are going to attract more people and businesses to relocate to the Pacific Northwest, assuming Nat Gas and electric prices don't rise to much. This should mean a lot more customers for Cascade Natural Gas to grow their business and profitability in the future.

I understand management has a responsibility to its shareholders to continue to grow profits, which starts with finding ways to increase revenue. But, this is hard to do, when you sell a product that is being conserved and cost less. Never the less, in a commodity business like Cascade Natural Gas, the company must adjust to lean times create by the commodity cycle without turning to their customers to pay higher prices to maintain profits.

Yes, the company is not making as much money as they did in the past and wants an rate increase to "bail them out" of this low profit predicament.

If in the future if we see Oil, and the other commodities recover in price while Nat Gas remains under \$3.00, I would be willing to reconsider. But, not now. I see no reason to believe that Nat Gas will stay at these incredibly low prices.

As a senior living on social security and other income, I stretch to pay my utilities bills each month. Natural Gas is a necessity. I can only buy it from Cascade Natural Gas. At this time their request for a rate increase should be denied.

			<p>"Profit Bail Outs" are not right and will be strongly opposed by me and the other customers of Cascade Natural Gas.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Philip Printz Leslie Clark 2619 Walnut St. Bellingham, WA 98225 (360) 756-9226</p>
	Joel Tiller	Web	Enough is enough with the increases in rates at every opportunity. Until wages start going up it needs to stop. Just to make sure of a 10% return to stakeholders is not acceptable. Start working to the people and not the large corporations!!
	Tony Printz	Web	Their proposed rate hike requested Dec. 1, 2015 shouldn't be allowed. With the wholesale cost of energy production and supply falling since the glut of supply on the market does not warrant a rate hike. According to the USEIA (U.S. Energy Information Administration) which released pricing data 2/29/2016 on US Natural Gas Industrial Pricing in Dollars per thousand cubic feet. the average 12 month price for 2012 \$3.848, 2013 \$4.638, 2014 5.515, and 2015 \$3.813 and the trend shows is continuing to decline. So with the price expected to stay flat or decline over this year there is no need for an increase since their buying price will stay level or decrease and the selling price they have established is steady and will give them a larger margin (profit) than they experienced for 2013 & 2014. They are a public utility and don't need a war chest of funding available to them by hiking the price for heating, cooking, and cleaning fuel to their customers! If this was a luxury item being purchased by those that could afford it say high end car fuel or something like that, then yes, they could seek a price increase since the end purchaser would better be able to afford it! But at this time a price increase is not warranted and should not be granted!

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	Lois Poppema	Web	<p>PHONE/RS</p> <p>The flyer the company sent to its customers said the company is increasing their rates 4.7 percent but it will result in 8.93 increase for residential customers. That sounds bad and the company misrepresented what the increase will be to their customers. The company is not honest in their proposal.&lt;br /&gt;&lt;br /&gt;They also state they are requesting 10 percent on shareholder equity which is a fair return on their shareholder investment. The consumer cannot get 10 percent return on her investments and doesn't believe these shareholders should get 10 percent and why the company is allowed to request so much. The bottom line is that the company is requesting an increase to provide a bigger profit to their investors.&lt;br /&gt;&lt;br /&gt;Cascade Natural Gas is also stating they need the increase for their decoupling proposal and the energy usage. The company wants to break the barrier of how much the customers pay instead of for how much they actually use. She would like the commission to look at the company's flyer and see that what the company is asking is outrageous.</p>

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	Mark Vuchetich	E-mail	<p>I believe the consumer is getting ripped off with this increase request! The leaders of Cascade Natural Gas should be tied up and egged by the consumer for failing to have a sinking fund saved all these years from previous payments from its customers to make all necessary updates. What the heck kind of business operates like this besides a public funded biz like our government? They say it will be \$4.87 per month increase for the average consumer who uses 54 therms per month. Well heck, I have not really heated our home in March and our therms were 45. What will it be in Nov/Dec/Jan/Feb?</p> <p>Please deny their request for increase and do an audit on their books, find the waste and please cut out that waste. If a new CEO is needed, Cascade should clean house.</p> <p>Regards, Mark Vuchetich</p> <p>Mark A Vuchetich 1074 Mercita Drive Walla Walla, Wa. 99362 509-525-9092 or 800-326-4377 Fax 208-902-1206 www.vuchetichinsurance.com mark@vuchetichinsurance.com</p> <p>Securities offered through Parkland Securities, LLC Member FINRA/SIPC Vuchetich Insurance is Independent of Parkland Securities, LLC</p>

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	ROBERT GREENO	Web	THIS COMPANY IS DOING A GREAT THING IN KEEPING THE UTILITY FACILITIES MODERN AND SAFE. I JUST HAVE AN OBJECTION TO THEIR 10% RATE OF RETURN BASIS, AND BELIEVE THE PRESENT INTEREST RATES WHAT THEY ARE, THAT THE RATE SHOULD BE AT THE MOST 8%, ESPECIALLY FOR A UTILITY WHOSE STOCK IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED SAFER INVESTMENTS THAN OTHER STOCK INVESTMENTS. SO, I RECOMMEND THE 8% RATE BE SUBSTITUTED FOR THEIR 10% RATE AND THEREFORE REDUCE THE PROPOSED RATE INCREASE BY THE 20% REDUCTION, OR REDUCE THE 8.93% PROPOSED REDSIDENTIAL RATE TO 7.15%. THANK YOU.
	Louis Klusmeyer	E-mail	<p>From: Louis Klusmeyer [mailto:louis.klusmeyer@gmail.com]  Sent: Thursday, April 07, 2016 2:12 PM  To: customerservice@cngc.com  Cc: Public Involvement (UTC)  Subject: Proposed Rate Increase</p> <p>I understand that CNGC is proposing a 4.17% rate increase and proposing to decouple revenues from usage. There are several different methods used for decoupling. I could not find the proposed method on any material.</p> <p>Please provide the exact method proposed for decoupling and the justification for annual adjustments instead of more frequently to account for seasonal variations in usage.</p> <p>Thanks  Louis</p> <p>Andrew:</p>

Thank you for caring that I was not ignored by the company. I did hear back from them and read through the information referenced in their link. Frankly, the information was extremely difficult to follow and did not provide all the information I was looking for. It described the process but without concrete examples it was not understandable to me. I have submitted comments on this proposed rate increase to the WUTC. My comments are also attached for your information.

Louis

Cascade Natural Gas Corporation

Docket UG-152286

object to the rate increase and rate decoupling proposed by Cascade Natural Gas. My reasons are provided below.

1. I can not find a factual justification for their increase in costs. They state that they are spending 156 million more than they spent 10 years ago. I should hope so, the cost of living has also jumped by a large amount. They also have significantly more customers than 10 years ago which should be bringing in significantly more revenue. They should provide a listing of their costs and revenues so that customers and regulators can determine if they are justified in requesting a rate increase.
2. I do not believe that rate decoupling benefits customers. Rate decoupling in its purest sense is to decouple the amount each person pays from the amount of energy that person uses so that the utility company can earn their proposed rate of return without risk. In other words each person pays the same amount as everybody else each month so that the company has no risk and they have a guaranteed rate of return. There is no incentive on the part of the company to conserve since they have a guaranteed rate of return and no incentive on the part of the consumer because their costs are fixed.
3. I also do not believe that rate decoupling as proposed by CNG benefits the customers. CNG is proposing an annual adjustment for decoupling and CNG states that their proposal will reduce the peaks and valleys. That means customers pay slightly higher rates during low usage and slightly lower rates during high usage times. However the proposed annual adjustments mean that there is no attempt to limit the increase in bills resulting from high usage during the winter. Therefore there is no "smoothing" happening for the customers.
4. I believe that residential and corporate customers should share the cost of any rate increase. Residential customers are the hardest hit since they will bear the full cost of the increase, 8.93% for residential customers only. Residential customers have no recourse to paying the higher bills.

			<p>Business customers can and will add this increase to their operating costs by passing them along to their customers. Why are residential customers helping out the companies, particularly when bulk customers, companies, typically receive reduced rates for quantity discounts. I agree that residential customers do cost more on a per unit basis than large companies, however large companies also get lower rates. There is also a larger community good served by reducing the impact on individual residential customers.</p> <p>Thanks Louis Klusmeyer CNG residential customer 2452 NE Kevos Pond Dr Poulsbo, WA 98370</p>
	Tom Smith	Web	<p>If you need additional funds for increased operating expense or to recover increased investment cost - i have no argument, however, additional cost to your customers to insure a 10% return to shareholders is not acceptable.</p> <p>Allowing a yearly 1 to 3% rate adjustment combined with the yearly % average increase of the NYSE with a 10% cap would be more reasonable. Also are your investors income from you tax free?</p>
	Christina Mathiasen	Phone	I do not support this increase because of the state of the economy. Especially when reading about the 10% proposed rate to stock holders.
	Diana Torrico	Phone	The increase is excessive beyond the cost of living increase. It would be better to spread the increase over a period of four years. I think it would be better to spread the increase out over a four year period and keep the increase in line with the cost of living increase per year.

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	Loren Williams	E-mail	<p>Dear WUTC,</p> <p>I guess the question is: would we want to get paid more and should we get pay increases as a general natural part of doing business if the business is running well and basically the answer is yes.</p> <p>Good Conduct and running a business should be rewarded.</p> <p>Bad conduct should not be rewarded if there is mismanagement, waste, inappropriate or no planning and poor administration.</p> <p>Also if the rest of the economy and the particular area where the utility is at is in an economic downturn or stagnant that is a major factor as to whether there should be a rate increase. The utility should seek to curb its spending and do cutbacks if necessary without sacrificing quality.</p> <p>Just because they are a general public utility servicing the public doesn't mean they're on the gravy train and having a budget which goes to the sky with no accountability because they manage their company poorly and we will always pay for their mismanagement because we are held hostage due to the fact that we all need their service. This would be a terrible Injustice.</p> <p>Thank you for listening my thoughts may you have wisdom in making the appropriate decision.</p> <p>Regards, Loren W Williams 509 710 6223</p>
	Kim	Web	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I am writing in opposition of the proposed rate hike. &lt;br /&gt;My reason is this....the company made a profit last year, there fore, increasing the cost to the consumer, so that the investors can make more money, is not a valid reason for an increase.</p> <p>Thank you very much.</p> <p>Kim Washington State Resident</p>

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	Sharon A. Pelfrey	E-mail	<p>I am opposed to the Cascade Natural Gas proposed rate increase. The 8.93 percent increase for residential customers is too much! Especially those of us who are on Social Security. It would be different if Social Security would give us an increase every year. It just means that we have less and less to live on.</p> <p>I think allowances should be made for those of us not out in the working world who get pay increases from their employers.</p> <p>Thanks for your consideration, Sharon A. Pelfrey</p>
	Cassandra Chambers	Web	
	John and Ida VanderMolen	Mail	<p>A copy of the customer's letter is attached.</p> <p>This customer attended, but did not speak at the 6/14/16 Public Comment Hearing in Mount Vernon.</p>
	Tom Dodgson	In person	Customer spoke at the 6/14/16 Public Comment Hearing in Mount Vernon.

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	Robert Gantenbein	E-mail	<p>WUTC:</p> <p>I have read the March 2016 Notice of Proposed Rate Increase brochure forwarded by Cascade Natural Gas and have the following comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CNG has indicated that the main reason for the rate increase request is to recover costs of increased investment in NG facilities and increased operating expenses - without giving any detail about what those costs were. Also, the brochure fails to indicate what the impact of lower natural gas costs are or will be. It is difficult for me to support increased rates if these questions are not answered.</li> <li>2. CNG's description of the decoupling proposal is nebulous, and needs a thorough explanation that can be understood by users.</li> </ol> <p>Robert L. Gantenbein Richland, WA</p>
	Dwyer Dale	In person	Customer spoke at the 6/14/16 Public Comment Hearing. This customer mainly had clarifying questions that were answered by the company and Public Council.
	Misty Fayette	In person	Misty spoke on behalf of Community Action of Skagit at the 6/14/16 Mount Vernon Public Comment Hearing. She supported assistance provisions included in this proposal but recognized that the proposed increase would be difficult for the customers that she and her agency serves.
	Greg Winter	In person	Greg spoke on behalf of Opportunity Council at the 6/14/16 Public Comment Hearing. His comments are attached.