



Puget Sound Energy

Meter and Billing Performance Annual Report

Annual Reporting Period:

January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020

Filed on January 29, 2021

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Introduction

This is Puget Sound Energy's ("PSE") eighth Meter and Billing Performance Annual Report under the revised Meter and Billing Performance Standards set forth in the Partial Settlement in Order 8 of consolidated Dockets. UE-111048 and UG-111049 ("Partial Settlement") for the period of January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. PSE met all standards for the identification and the correction of the stopped meters and the meters with unassigned energy usage.

The meter and billing performance standards per Partial Settlement paragraph 13 ("Meter and Billing Performance Standards" or "Meter and Billing Standards") are:

- PSE will identify and correct 98 percent of all stopped meter and unassigned energy usage meter problems for both natural gas and electric meters within 12 months from initial occurrence of the problem.
- PSE will identify and correct all stopped meter and unassigned energy problems for both natural gas and electric meters within 24 months from the initial problems report.

This report also discusses the results of the on-going zero Consumption 180-day customer notification requirement (per Partial Settlement paragraph 18).

The layout and elements of this report are consistent with the draft annual meter and billing report outline reviewed and discussed with the Commission Staff on September 27, 2013. Staff provided additional comments and suggestions via an e-mail on October 30, 2013, which have been incorporated in this report.



Summary Progress to Date

Meter and Billing Performance Summary

For the 2020 annual reporting period, PSE is in full compliance with both the 12-month threshold and the 24-month threshold for all stopped meter problems and all unassigned energy usage (“UEU”) meter cases. All meter and billing problems and cases were identified and corrected within the 12-month threshold.

One of the key factors affecting PSE’s 2020 meter and billing performance is the Commission-revised billing requirements and payment date rules that became effective on March 25, 2016. WAC 480-90-178¹ and 480-100-178² (the “Rules”), for the natural gas and electric utilities respectively, set forth more rigorous and detailed meter and billing correction requirements than that of PSE’s Meter and Billing Performance Standards. In particular, the subsection (a) of section (5) Corrected bills of the Rules prescribes the following:

The utility must issue the corrected bill within sixty days from the date the utility discovered that an account had been under billed or overbilled. Except as provided in subsection (7) of this section, when a utility’s investigation finds that it has under billed energy usage, it may not collect under billed amounts for any period greater than six months from the date the error occurred.

In 2016, PSE revised its meter and billing operation and monitoring processes in order to meet the requirements of the enhanced state Rules. In most cases, the Rules allow sixty days to investigate and correct a metering/billing issue and limit the billing correction to be no longer than six months. Both the sixty-day and six-month thresholds are much shorter than the 12-month and 24-month thresholds in PSE’s Meter and Billing Performance Standards.

Percentages shown in this report are rounded to the nearest whole percentages and reported to the accuracy of the decimal place of the Meter and Billing Performance Standards.

¹ <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=480-90-178>

² <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=480-100-178>

Resolution Results for Stopped Meters

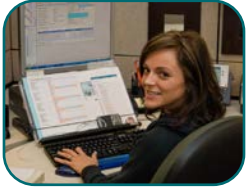
The table below provides the total number of stopped meters that had been identified and correctly back-billed between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2020. The time measure is based on the starting date of the billing adjustment (*i.e.*, the date when the commodity was accurately measured) to the end date of the billing adjustment (*i.e.*, the date that the customer's meter again accurately records usage) as prescribed in the paragraph 14 of the Partial Settlement.

	Within 6 Months	Within 12 Months	Within 24 Months	Above 24 Months	Total Meters	Within 12 Months	Within 24 Months	Exceeds 24 Months	Total Results
Electric	213	146	0	0	359	100%	0%	0%	100%
Natural Gas	750	493	0	0	1,243	100%	0%	0%	100%
Total	963	639	0	0	1,602	100%	0%	0%	100%

Resolution Results for Unassigned Energy Usage

The table below provides the total number of meters with Unassigned Energy Usage that had been identified and correctly billed between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2020. The time measure is based on the date the customer moved in to the location (*i.e.*, the date of the customer's initial unauthorized usage to the last billing-cycle date the adjustment (*i.e.*, the date that the back-bill was issued).

	Within 6 Months	Within 12 Months	Within 24 Months	Above 24 Months	Total Meters	Within 12 Months	Within 24 Months	Exceeds 24 Months	Total Results
Electric	2,043	13	0	0	2,056	100%	0%	0%	100%
Natural Gas	2,665	18	0	0	2,683	100%	0%	0%	100%
Total	4,708	31	0	0	4,739	100%	0%	0%	100%



Zero Consumption 180-Day Customer Notification Report

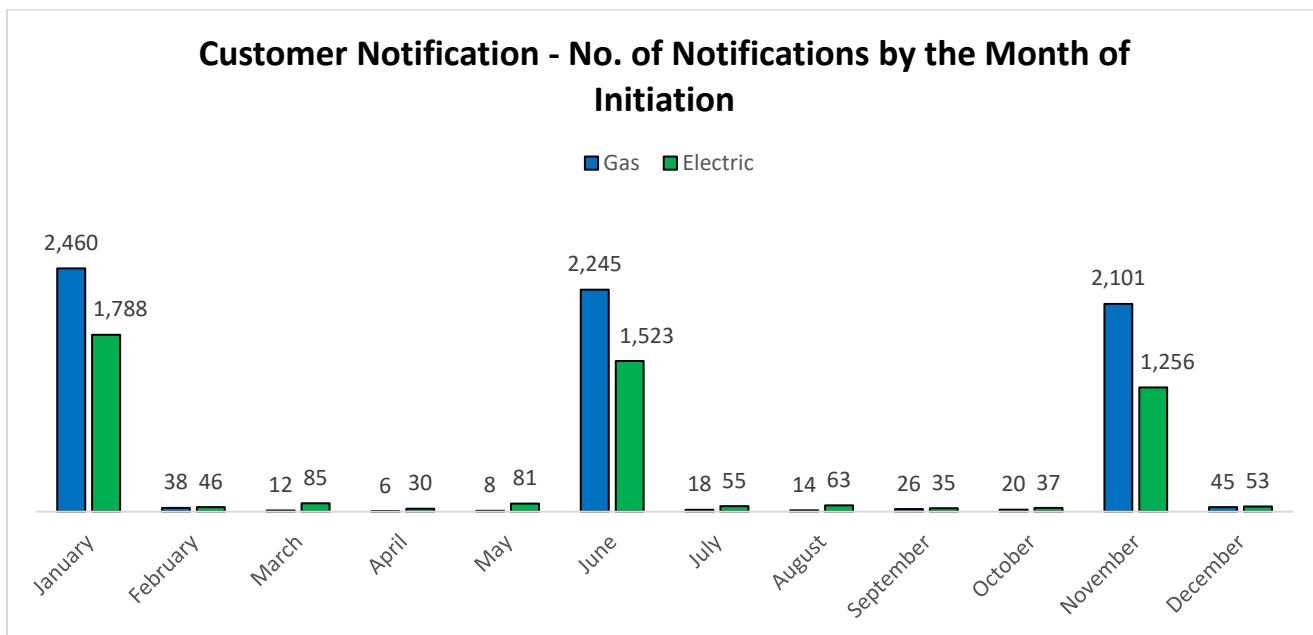
As part of the PSE’s Partial Settlement commitments, PSE has carried out an on-going process to notify each customer with a meter showing zero consumption for 180 consecutive days. This section of the report summarizes the results of the customer notification process for the period of January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020.

In the current customer notification process, started on October 1, 2014, a letter is sent to a customer whenever the 180-day zero consumption threshold is met. An example of the customer notification letter is included for reference in Appendix B: Zero Consumption 180-Day Customer Notice.

In 2020, PSE sent out 12,045 zero consumption 180-day notification letters; 5,052 electric cases and 6,993 natural gas cases. 12,029 of the 12,045 cases are customer confirmed valid zero usage cases and 2 resolved cases required a billing adjustment. One case is pending a resolution.

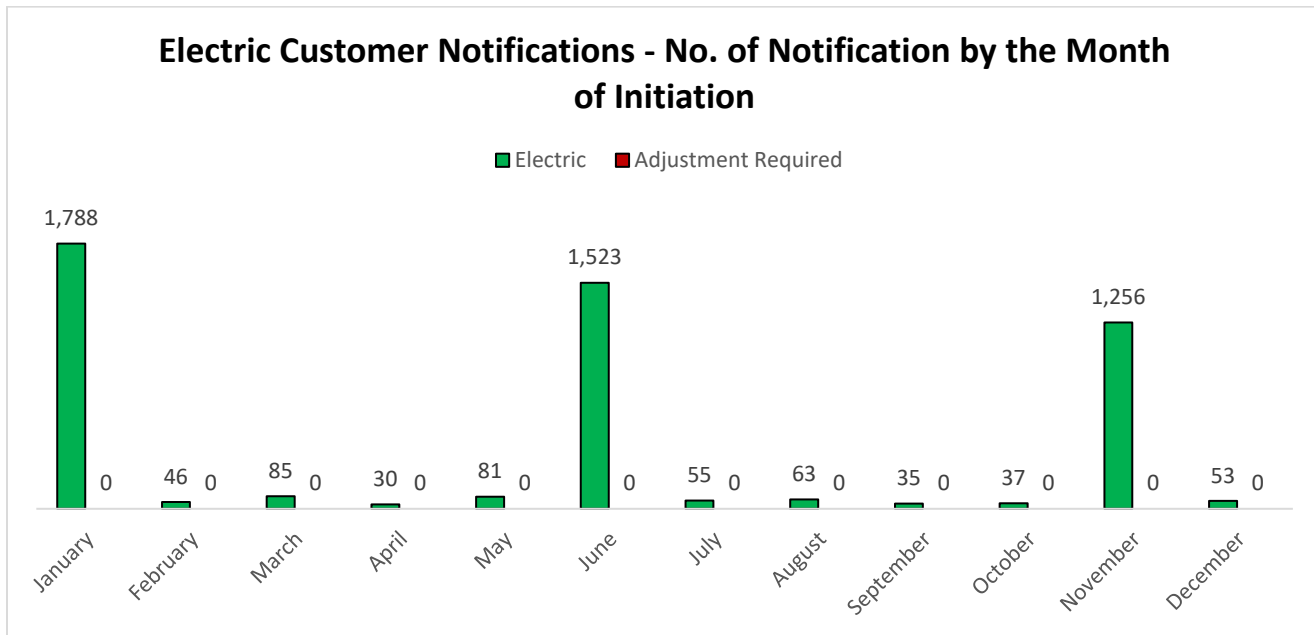
	Contact Cases Initiated	Confirmed Zero-usage Cases	Resolved Cases with Billing Adjustments	On Going Cases
Electric	5,052	5,051	0	1
Natural Gas	6,993	6,978	2	13
Total	12,045	12,029	2	14

The chart below shows the breakdown of customer notifications generated by fuel and by month:

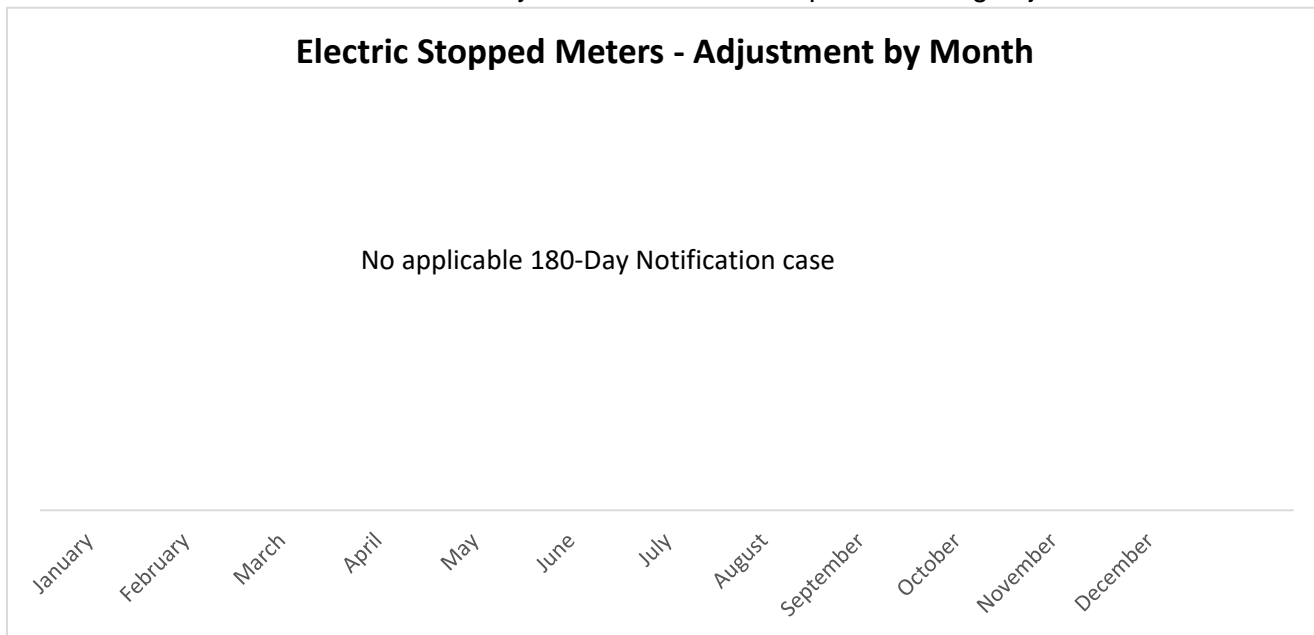


During the 2020 annual reporting period, 5,051 of 5,052 electric notification cases were resolved. One case is still pending for resolution. 5,051 resolved cases were customer-confirmed zero-usage meters. Outside of the pending case for resolution, there were no cases requiring billing adjustments.

The chart below shows the resolution status of the 2020 electric 180-day zero consumption notification cases by the month of completion. None of these electric cases required a billing adjustment.

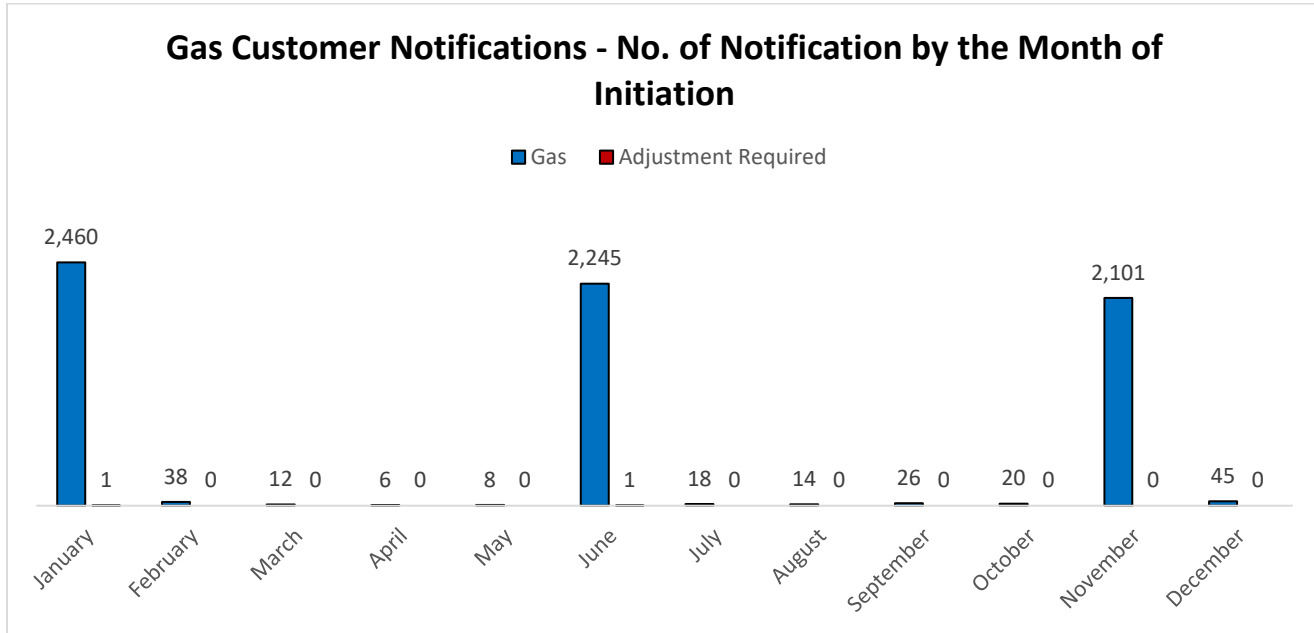


The chart for the length of back-bill and the back-bill dollar amount for the resolved electric is shown as blank as none of the resolved electric 180-Day notification cases required a billing adjustment.

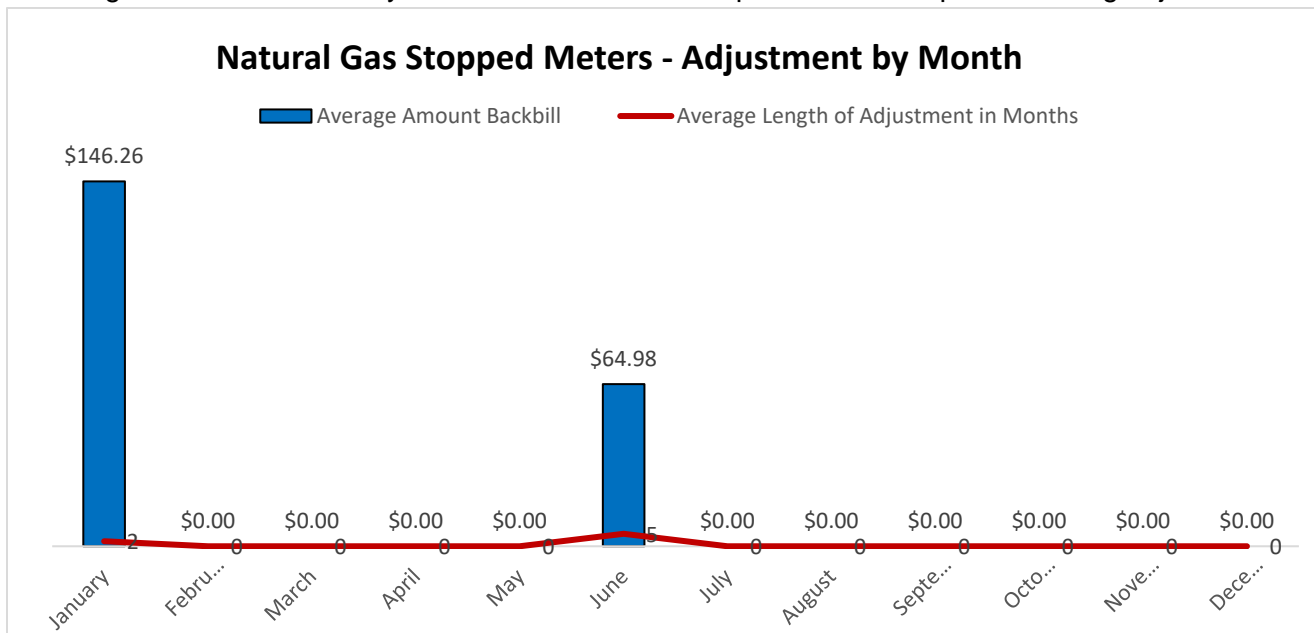


For the natural gas notification cases, 6,980 out of 6,993 were resolved during the 2020 reporting period. Thirteen cases are pending a resolution. 6,978 of the completed cases are customer-confirmed zero-usage meters. Two cases, or 0.03%, of the 6,980 resolved natural gas cases required a billing adjustment.

The chart below shows the resolution status of the 2020 natural gas 180-day zero consumption notification cases by the month of completion.



The chart below shows the average length of back-bill and the average back-bill dollar amount for the two natural gas cases identified by the customer notification process that required a billing adjustment.





Tracking and Reporting of Meter/Billing Issues

Issues Discussion

There were no cases that were corrected outside the Meter and Billing Performance Standards.

A reporting discrepancy was uncovered which resulted in a slight shift in monthly volumes of completed stopped meter cases. This discrepancy does not affect PSE's adherence to the Partial Settlement Meter and Billing Performance Standard for stopped meters, only the month in which some of the cases were reported as being completed.

Process Improvement

There were no processes implemented specifically during the 2020 reporting period to address cases that were corrected outside the Standards.



Appendix A: Background, Definitions, and Standards

Background

This meter and billing performance annual reporting is designed to meet the terms and requirements of the Partial Settlement RE: Meter and Billing Performance Standards (“Partial Settlement”) in consolidated Docket Nos. UE-111048 and UG-111049 Order 08 (“Order 08”) dated May 7, 2012. The layout and elements of this report are consistent with the draft annual meter and billing report outline reviewed and discussed with the Commission Staff on September 27, 2013. Staff provided additional comments and suggestions via an e-mail on October 30, 2013, which have been incorporated in the report. The annual report is due no later than January 31 for the preceding calendar year.

The Partial Settlement dictates both the meter and billing performance standards and reporting requirements for the quarterly reporting periods 2012 Q2 through 2013 Q2 and the annual reporting periods starting 2013. The quarterly performance standards were included 2012 Q2 through 2013 Q2 reports. The on-going annual Meter and Billing Performance Standards per Partial Settlement paragraph 13 are outlined in the Meter and Billing Performance Standards section of this appendix.

For the meter cases that are corrected outside of the Meter and Billing Performance Standards, PSE will retain the following information for these cases:

- Stopped meters: the last date when the commodity was accurately billed, the date the customer's meter again accurately records usage and the date PSE issues the back-bill.
- Unassigned energy usage meters: the date of the customer's initial unauthorized usage and the date that PSE issues the back-bill.

In addition, there are two meter and billing processes that PSE committed to in the Partial Settlement to carry out after June 1, 2012.

1. A one-time investigation process to identify and correct, if needed, meters with zero consumption for 365 consecutive days.
2. An on-going process to notify each customer with a meter that showing zero consumption for 180 consecutive days.

The results of the one-time investigation process were included in the *One Time Zero Consumption 365-Day Investigation Completion Report – Final Report* section of PSE’s first annual reporting filed with the Commission on January 31, 2014.

The results of the one-going process were included in the following section of this report: *Zero Consumption 180-Day Investigation Report*.

Definitions

For purposes of the Meter and Billing Performance Standards time measurement will be as follows:

- Stopped meters: The performance standard for stopped meters will be measured from the last date commodity was accurately measured (the "initial occurrence" for stopped meters) to the date the customer's meter again accurately records usage.
- Unassigned energy usage meters: The performance standard for meters with unassigned energy usage will be measured from the date of the customer's initial unauthorized usage (the "initial occurrence" for unassigned energy usage) to the date the back-bill was issued.

Meter and Billing Performance Standards

Effective starting June 1, 2013, and continuing until changed, the two Meter and Billing Performance Standards ("Meter and Billing Performance Standards") are:

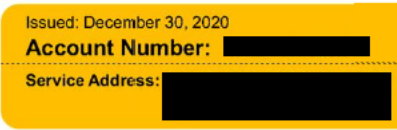
1. PSE will identify and correct 98 percent of all stopped meter and unassigned energy usage meter problems for both natural gas and electric meters within 12 months from initial occurrence of the problem.
2. PSE will identify and correct all stopped meter and unassigned energy problems for both natural gas and electric meters within 24 months from the initial problem.



Appendix B: Zero Consumption 180- Day Investigation Customer Notice

Customer Notice

The following is an example of the customer notice PSE is sending to any customer with a meter that did not register any usage for 180 consecutive days.



Dear [redacted]

Our records show unusually low, or no energy use from your electric meter. Please call us Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m., at **1-866-767-5853** and select option 1 (TTY **1-800-962-9498**) to confirm your continued use of a vacant structure. Or send us an email to customer care@pse.com. We appreciate the opportunity to provide you with safe, dependable and efficient energy.



Sincerely,

Customer Service
Puget Sound Energy