

Agenda Date: June 15, 2023
Item Number: A1

Docket: UE-230287
Company Name: Puget Sound Energy

Staff: Joel Nightingale, Regulatory Analyst

Recommendation

Take no action, thereby allowing the tariff sheets filed by Puget Sound Energy on April 20, 2023, in Docket UE-230287 to become effective on June 16, 2023, by operation of law.

Background

On March 19, 2021, Puget Sound Energy (PSE or Company) filed its Transportation Electrification Plan (TEP), which outlined the Company's approach to offering related programs between 2021 and 2026. This filing is the latest in updates and new additions to the tariffs meant to implement PSE's TEP. In accordance with the Final Order in Dockets UE-220066 and UG-220067, these programs draw funding from PSE's Transportation Electrification Plan Adjustment Rider (Schedule 141TEP) established earlier this year under Docket UE-230040.

PSE shared the draft tariff sheets in this filing with the Joint Utility Transportation Electrification Work Group on February 23, 2023, requesting feedback by April 6. The Company filed tariff sheets on April 20, 2023, as well as summary of feedback received as an attachment. Substitute pages were filed on May 12, 2023, at the request of Commission staff (Staff).

This filing updates existing Schedules 583, 551, and 552, and introduces a new Schedule 557 for Electric Vehicle (EV) Technology Demonstration, including:

- Updates to Schedule 583 – which sets terms for the rest of the EV program tariffs – include adding a definition of “Open Network,” and new language about use of customer information.¹
- Updates to Schedule 551 – EV Non-residential Charging Products and Services – include extending the minimum term from 5 years to 10 years, and creating new sections that outline programs for host-owned and Company-owned EV supply equipment (EVSE) at workplaces, and a new program for host-owned public EVSE.
- Updates to Schedule 552 – EV Residential Charging Products and Services – include closing a pilot for Company-owned EVSE at single-family residences; creating a new program and incentive for customer-owned EVSE at single-family residences; and clarifying language and minor updates to both host- and Company-owned EVSE at multi-family residences.

¹ These changes also apply to Schedules 551, 552, and 557.

- Incentive levels for Schedules 551 and 552 are more generous for equity-focused customers, as defined in Schedule 583.²
- New Schedule 557 – EV Technology Demonstration – is a proposed, new schedule that outlines how PSE may “conduct limited-scale electric vehicle technology demonstration projects in order to evaluate innovative transportation electrification technologies or processes” to assess new technologies and their suitability for territory-wide new product and service offerings.

Discussion

Staff appreciates PSE’s proactive approach to engagement with external groups on this filing and believes this engagement has helped to limit issues. However, Staff requested the Company file substitute pages to address one issue described below; the Company responded and filed revisions May 12, 2023.

Schedule 551 and 552 tariff sheets filed on April 20, 2023, included language that limited the volumetric fee that a host could charge its EVSE users. This language impacted both host-owned and Company-owned EVSE at workplace and multi-family residential properties. While Staff notes the Commission’s discussion of low-income access to EVSE in its 2017 Policy Statement,³ we believe the specific language in the initially-filed tariff sheets would have conflicted with a statute that limits the Commission’s ability to regulate the rates of an entity offering battery charging facilities if that entity “is not otherwise subject to the Commission’s jurisdiction as an electrical company.”⁴ Because EVSE host sites under these schedules are likely to include mostly – if not exclusively – entities not otherwise subject to the Commission’s jurisdiction, Staff suggested PSE remove this language and replace it with language clarifying that the EVSE hosts will set the rates charged at their workplaces/multi-family residences. The substitute tariff pages, filed on May 12, appropriately reflect this change.

Input from Interested Persons

Eleven groups filed comments in this docket. Ten of those groups expressed their support for the filing, including:

- The Alliance for Transportation Electrification
- Skagit Conservation District
- City of Bellevue
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Skagit County
- Key Trucking Inc.

² Schedule 583: “Equity-Focused Customer is a Customer that is part of Named Communities or a Customer that shares demographic characteristics with Customers in Named Communities; and the Community Based Organizations (CBOs), government agencies and tribal entities that serve them.”

³ Policy and Interpretive Statement Concerning Commission Regulation of Electric Vehicle Charging Services, Docket UE-160799.

⁴ RCW 80.28.320

- Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce
- King County Library System
- City of Sedro-Woolley
- EverCharge
- SWTCH Energy Inc.

EVgo, an EVSE network operator, filed written comments on May 26, 2023, expressing concerns about the proposed portion of the filing concerning PSE-owned public EVSE (part of Schedule 551). These concerns include the different incentives for host- versus Company-owned EVSE, and more generally the potential for competition between – rather than complementary efforts of – PSE and private investment in the public charging space.

Staff followed up with the Company and EVgo and believes the incentives in this tariff update represent a reasonable balance between the different ownership models, but—consistent with the Commission’s policy statement—we also expect PSE to, “engage in adaptive management of the portfolio, monitor participation rates and propose changes when needed, and tailor outreach and education efforts to achieve broad participation across the portfolio.”⁵ Staff also encouraged EVgo to engage with the Joint Utility Transportation Electrification Work Group, as well as Staff, to discuss ways to address the question of competition versus complementary EVSE services that are compatible with the broad range of interests represented in that group.

After PSE filed its substitute tariff pages on May 12, the NW Energy Coalition (NVEC) expressed concerns related to the language in Schedules 551 and 552 concerning the volumetric fee charged to users of EVSE. Staff discussed this issue further with NVEC, but we maintain that the language in question is not consistent with statutory limits on Commission authority over certain battery charging facilities. As described above, the substitute tariff pages filed on May 12 reflect the removal of this language.

Conclusion

Take no action, allowing the substitute tariff pages filed on May 12, 2023, to go into effect by operation of law.

⁵ Policy and Interpretive Statement Concerning Commission Regulation of Electric Vehicle Charging Services, ¶77, Docket UE-160799.