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July 27, 2023

NWN WUTC Advice No. 23-04

**VIA ELECTRONIC FILING**

Amanda Maxwell, Executive Director and Secretary  
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission  
621 Woodland Square Loop SE  
Lacey, Washington 98503

**Re: Schedule J – Gas Residential Energy Assistance Tariff (GREAT)**

Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural (NW Natural or Company), herewith files the following revisions to its Tariff WN U-6, stated to become effective August 26, 2023.

Third Revision of Sheet J.1	Schedule J	Gas Residential Energy Assistance Tariff (GREAT)
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**Purpose**

The purpose of this tariff revision is to add flexibility in the funding for the Gas Residential Energy Assistance Tariff (GREAT) program by adding language to the GREAT tariff allowing for funding above the established \$500,000 cap as needed after consultation with the GREAT Advisory Group (GREAT AG).

**Background**

NW Natural's GREAT program provides energy assistance to customers with income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. GREAT has been helping low-income customers since May 2009. NW Natural works collaboratively with the GREAT AG to address issues related to the GREAT program and other low-income programs and topics.

Currently the GREAT program tariff Schedule J includes a \$500,000 program funding cap that includes customer grants and administrative and delivery costs.

**Proposed Changes**

NW Natural proposes to add funding flexibility for the GREAT program by allowing spending above the \$500,000 cap as needed after consultation with the GREAT AG. The GREAT AG has discussed this proposal and is supportive of this filing.

As reported in the GREAT Annual Report per the table below, program costs have only recently begun to reach the \$500,000 cap. For the October 2022 – September 2023 program year, the GREAT program has reached the \$500,000 cap and the Company, along with the GREAT AG want to make GREAT funding available for the remainder of the program year.

The enclosed proposed changes will enable the additional funding for this program year and any future program years as needed. In the future, whenever funding levels are expected to approach the \$500,000 cap, NW Natural will discuss the need for additional funding with the GREAT AG so

that program benefits can continue to be provided for customers in need without interruption in availability.

*Program Year	Number of Participants	GREAT Benefits Disbursed	Avg GREAT Benefit	GREAT Admin Fees	Total Annual Expense
2017/18	632	\$322,470	\$510.24	\$64,494	\$386,964
2018/19	583	233,869	401.15	46,774	280,643
2019/20	706	332,965	471.62	66,593	399,558
2020/21	811	399,849	493.03	79,970	479,819
2021/22	794	383,232	482.66	76,646	459,878

\* The GREAT Program Year is October 1 through September 30.

### **Conclusion**

NW Natural respectfully requests that the Commission allow this tariff change to become effective on August 11, 2023, with less than statutory notice, to mitigate any interruption of the GREAT 2022-2023 program year funding and enable additional GREAT benefits to occur during this program year.

The enclosed tariff sheets reflect an issue date of July 27, 2023, and an effective date of August 26, 2023, as required by WAC 480-80-122(2).

In accordance with WAC 480-90-193 and WAC 480-90-195(3), copies of this letter and the attached filing are available in the Company's main office in Portland, Oregon, and on its website at [www.nwnatural.com](http://www.nwnatural.com).

As requested by WAC 480-80-103(4)(a), I certify that I have authority to issue tariff revisions on behalf of NW Natural.

Please address correspondence on this matter to me with copies to the following:

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Respectfully submitted,

*/s/ Natasha Siores*

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Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission  
NWN WUTC Advice No. 23-04  
July 27, 2023; Page 3

Attachments:

NEW-NWN-WUTC-Advice-23-04-Trf-Sheet-J-1-07-27-2023

NEW-NWN-WUTC-Advice-23-04-LSN-07-27-2023