

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of

PACIFICORP, d/b/a
PACIFIC POWER & LIGHT COMPANY'S

Clean Energy Implementation Plan

Docket UE-210829

PacifiCorp's Petition for Exemption of
WAC 480-100-650(4)(a)(i)

1 PacifiCorp d/b/a Pacific Power & Light Company (PacifiCorp) respectfully petitions for exemption from the requirement to provide hourly retail sales information in the Company's inaugural 2023 Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) clean energy progress report (Annual Progress Report). As discussed below, until the Company installs Automatic Metering Infrastructure (AMI) or another similar system, an exemption is necessary given the Company's technological inability to report hourly Washington retail sales with current metering equipment.

I. Standard of Decision

2 Under WAC 480-100-650(4)(a)(i), PacifiCorp must report hourly Washington retail sales in its annual clean energy progress report unless otherwise ordered by the commission. The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) may exempt utilities from this requirement if it is consistent with the public interest, the purposes underlying the regulation, and applicable statutes.¹ When determining whether a petition is in the public interest, the Commission can consider whether the rule imposes

¹ WAC 480-100-008, 480-07-110(1).

an undue hardship on the person that filed the petition that is different in degree or kind from similarly situated persons.²

II. Argument

3 The Company updated its legacy metering infrastructure in the early 2010s, and currently close to 100 percent of PacifiCorp’s Washington customer base have automatic meter reading (AMR) systems. However these systems lack the ability to store and transmit hourly energy volumes. The Commission should grant PacifiCorp’s Petition due to this technological inability, because PacifiCorp is not similarly situated to other Washington utilities, and because reporting monthly retail sales information is nonetheless consistent with the goals of CETA.

A. **The public interest supports granting the Petition, because the Company lacks the appropriate technology to report hourly Washington retail sales.**

4 In the early 2010s, PacifiCorp began replacing its legacy utility meters with AMR infrastructure for its Washington customers.³⁴ These legacy meters included physical, and in some circumstances digital, meters that recorded each customer’s volumetric electricity consumption. Each customer’s meter was manually read by a PacifiCorp employee each month, then compared to the customer’s consumption in the previous month, to inform that customer’s bill for the current month.

5 In contrast, AMRs greatly reduce the time and labor that is required to measure each customer’s electricity usage. The Company’s AMRs operate on the 900 megahertz (MHz) radio frequency (the same frequency that the Federal Communications

² WAC 480-07-110(2)(b).

³ *In re PacifiCorp’s 2020 Rate Case*, Docket Nos. UE-191024, -190750, 190929, 190981, 180778, Final Order 09/07/12, ¶¶ 115–121 (Dec. 14, 2020).

⁴ Ex. No. RMM-1T, at 31 (Dec. 2019).

Commission allocated for cordless phones), and transmit a continuous one-way radio signal that includes two pieces of information: the AMRs identification number and the volume of electricity consumed. This signal is broadcasted across an approximate one quarter-mile, line-of-sight radius. The Company reads these meters by driving within this broadcasting radius, and an AMR receiver records the AMR ID number and volume of electricity consumed. Similar to legacy meters, this monthly figure is then compared to the previous month usage to inform the current monthly bill.

6 Besides eliminating the need for a meter reader, AMR systems also allow the Company to create a centralized interface for reading, monitoring, billing, and maintaining PacifiCorp's distribution network. Currently, close to 100 percent of the Company's service area is served by AMRs, and these efforts complement the Company's work in other states to install similar AMR smart meters.⁵

7 However, AMRs are similar to legacy meters in one important respect: neither store nor record the volume of electricity consumed in any specific time interval. The only usage information that could be recorded at any given time for both meters is the customer's aggregate consumption. This means that, while an improvement from legacy meters, AMRs lack the full functionality of AMI: the Company's AMRs have one-way communication and lack on-board memory that stores information, where AMIs have two-way communication capabilities that send and stores information through a secured wireless network. Relevant here, AMIs allow utilities to track the volume of electricity consumed in any given hour, in any given day, the Company's AMR systems do not. And as the Company noted in 2019, the Company did not have current plans to deploy AMI in

⁵ See generally <https://www.pacificpower.net/my-account/energy-usage/smart-meters.html>.

Washington.⁶ The Company represents that this technological inability to report hourly retail sales supports granting the Petition.

B. The public interest supports granting the Petition, because the Company’s technological capabilities are different in kind from Puget Sound Energy and Avista.

8 PacifiCorp is not similarly situated to other Washington utilities that must file Annual Progress Reports under WAC 480-100-650(3). For example, both Puget Sound Energy and Avista have recently upgraded their existing AMR technologies with AMI, and have the power to record and report hourly retail sales information.⁷ This is different in kind from PacifiCorp’s AMR systems, and supports an exemption from this reporting requirement.

C. The public interest supports granting the Petition, because reporting monthly Washington retail sales is consistent with CETA’s reporting requirements.

9 One of the many purposes of Washington’s annual clean energy progress report is to track the Company’s progress towards meeting CETA’s decarbonization requirements. However these requirements (not considering interim targets) are not binding until 2026 when the Company must eliminate coal-powered resources from the electricity that serves Washington customers, and until 2030 and 2045 for the greenhouse gas neutrality and 100 percent carbon free requirements.⁸ And while the ban on coal-fired resources becomes effective in 2026, this statute does not require hourly retail sales to verify compliance, because it will be accomplished through removing coal-fired resources

⁶ *In re PacifiCorp’s 2020 Rate Case*, Docket Nos. UE-191024, -190750, 190929, 190981, 180778, Ex. No. RMM-1T, at 61 (Dec. 2019).

⁷ See generally, <https://www.pse.com/en/pages/meter-upgrade>, <https://www.myavista.com/about-us/smart-meters>.

⁸ RCW 19.405.030–19.405.050.

completely from the allocation of energy that serves Washington. To these ends, the Company must file clean energy compliance reports beginning in 2026.⁹

10 Putting aside the issue of how the Commission will determine whether utilities are complying with CETA’s decarbonization requirements “using” a combination of non-emitting and renewable generation, these statutes are not operative until after 2025, and do not require a specific temporal reporting requirement. Because these statutes do not require hourly reporting, the Company represents that monthly as opposed to hourly reporting is consistent with both Commission regulations and statutes: Monthly increments will still safeguard the Commission’s ability to determine the percentage of PacifiCorp’s electricity that is comprised of non-emitting and renewable resources in any given year, and track the Company’s progress towards the 2026, 2030, and 2045 targets. This ensures that monthly reporting is still consistent with the purposes of WAC 480-100-650(4)(a)(i), and supports granting the Company’s Petition.

III. Conclusion

11 PacifiCorp requests the Commission exempt the Company from reporting hourly annual Washington retail sales information, due to the current technological inability to do so.

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⁹ WAC 480-100-650(1).