

**Exhibit No. GF-1T
Docket UE-170970
Witness: Glen Freiberg**

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. UE-170970

TESTIMONY OF

GLEN FREIBERG

NORTHWEST LABORERS-EMPLOYERS TRAINING TRUST

April 10, 2018

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I. INTRODUCTION

Q: State your name, affiliation, and address.

A: Glen Freiberg, Northwest Laborers-Employers Training Trust (“NWLETT”), 27055 Ohio Ave NE, Kingston, WA 98346.

Q: Please summarize your relevant background and professional expertise.

A: I am the assistant training director of NWLETT. In this role, I am responsible for the day to day operations of NWLETT, including scheduling classes, maintenance of the facilities, ordering supplies, approving videos and curriculum for our instructors, supervising and monitoring the instructors, setting up “train the trainers” training, hiring instructors, interfacing with the students, administering the Joint Apprenticeship Training Council, overseeing the apprenticeship program and the apprenticeship coordinators, assisting with NWLETT’s budget, and performing human resources functions for NWLETT’s 40 employees, etc.

I have also served as a NWLETT instructor and taught several classes, such excavating, trenching and shoring, pressure pipe classes and fusion welding, plan reading. I am also a flagging instructor, and one of only approximately 10 instructors certified in Washington to teach traffic control supervisor (“TCS”) class. Prior to working at NWLETT, I was a foreman with Granite Construction. Prior to that, I had approximately eight years of general construction and heavy highway construction for Tri-State.

Q: What is the purpose of your testimony?

A: My testimony will provide information regarding NWLETT, including how the training courses it offers help to train and prepare workers for careers in construction, particularly in the natural gas field. It will also focus on the ways in which the proposed

1 settlement, and in particular, its terms relating to NWLETT training, advances safety and
2 reliability and provides a net benefit to rate payers.

3 II. NWLETT'S OPERATIONS

4 **Q: Describe the Northwest Laborers-Employers Training Trust Fund's training**
5 **operations.**

6 NWLETT works with contractors and unions to produce employees trained in safe
7 utility operations. NWLETT provides training to more than 2,000 individuals each year.
8 NWLETT has two primary focuses – apprenticeship education and general training for
9 members of the Laborers' International Union of North America ("LIUNA").

10 NWLETT is an affiliate of the LIUNA Training and Education Fund. The LIUNA
11 Training and Education Fund develops high quality curriculum (including, where necessary,
12 Washington state-specific curriculum) for our training courses, coordinates the certification
13 of our instructors through the American National Standards Institute ("ANSI"), and supports
14 our program to train Construction Craft Laborers throughout Washington and Northern
15 Idaho.

16 NWLETT also runs an apprenticeship program that is registered with the
17 Washington Department of Labor and Industries, Washington State Apprenticeship and
18 Training Council ("WSATC"). The WSATC develops and regulates apprenticeship
19 standards, which our program must meet. The apprenticeship program consists of 6,000
20 hours of on the job training. Additionally, for every 1,000 hours of on the job training,
21 apprentices must complete 80 hours of in-classroom education, with a large focus on safety
22 training. This is referred to as "RSI," or required supplemental instruction. We currently
23 have almost 1,100 apprentices participating in the apprenticeship program.

1 We also provide training to all 11,400-plus LIUNA members in our jurisdiction,
2 primarily in Washington and Northern Idaho, including journeymen Laborers. We provide
3 classes on whatever topics our members require and are constantly assessing what training is
4 most needed by our members and signatory contractors. Much of our training is focused on
5 providing our members with certifications that Laborers need to work in various fields.

6 **Q: To what standards are NWLETT's training programs held?**

7 **A:** We take pride in offering the highest quality training for our members and
8 apprentices, and ensuring that we are offering the most comprehensive and up-to-date
9 training programs available in the construction industry.

10 Our instructors are accredited by the ANSI, which is a third-party entity that certifies
11 NWLETT's instructors. NWLETT's instructors are unique in this regard, as most training
12 programs in the construction industry are not certified by an independent third party.

13 All of our instructors participate in the ANSI-accredited "Instructor Certification
14 Program." This multiyear certification program ensures that our instructors are held to the
15 highest standards and use the most effective adult education techniques in a dynamic and
16 interactive learning experience. As part of the ANSI certification process, our instructors
17 complete exhaustive training on adult learning methods, and must demonstrate several
18 competencies. Eventually, instructors take a test to receive their ANSI certification.
19 Certified NWLETT instructors must conduct at least 160 hours of LIUNA Training and
20 Education Fund-approved training annually, and must also fulfill a biannual requirement of
21 completing a week of continuing education. Every NWLETT instructor must also maintain
22 certain certifications to teach certain subjects. They attend annual instructor conferences
23 and receive other ongoing training.

1 In addition to the ANSI certification requirement, the LIUNA Training and
2 Education Fund develops our curriculum, and NWLETT's program must comply with
3 LIUNA's standards as well. All LIUNA training programs must meet the International's
4 standards regardless of state. This ensures uniform certifications and the highest quality
5 training for our members. This translates into increased productivity and the highest caliber
6 skilled workforce for employers.

7 **Q: What subjects related to natural gas pipeline work does the Apprenticeship
8 Program cover?**

9 **A:** NWLETT's apprenticeship program covers several topics pertinent to the work
10 that a Laborer would perform in the natural gas industry, including: OSHA "10 and 30"
11 (OSHA 10 is a ten-hour safety course that covers basic awareness training on the
12 recognition, avoidance, abatement and prevention of workplace hazards; OSHA 30 is a 30-
13 hour safety course that provides greater depth and variety of training on an expanded list of
14 topics associated with workplace hazards), general pipeline safety, flagger certification/work
15 zone safety, trench and excavation safety, confined space awareness, environmental
16 remediation, hoisting/rigging and signaling, fencing, forklift, force mains/pressure
17 mains/gravity flow lines, work zone safety, repair work and repairing live lines, capping
18 water lines, pipe fusion/polyethylene, traffic control plans, Personal Protective Equipment,
19 tool operation and maintenance, site prep and maintenance, site layout, blueprint reading,
20 construction math, line and grade checking, concrete placement, cutting, and repair, material
21 handling, tending pumps, potholing.

22 **Q: What does the Pipeline Technology curriculum cover?**

23 **A:** Using a curriculum developed by the LIUNA Education and Training Fund, our

1 Pipeline Technology class provides workers with their required Operator Qualification
2 (“OQ”) training. . The focus of the curriculum is transmission pipeline work, but many of
3 the tasks are also performed in distribution work, and the safety training covers both
4 transmission and distribution work. NWLETT has ANSI-certified instructors qualified to
5 teach the Pipeline Technology class. We also have the capability to utilize Veriforce, which
6 is a third party agency that handles OQ testing. I note that the curriculum for the Pipeline
7 Technology class was revised by LIUNA Education and Training Fund in conjunction with
8 the Pipe Line Contractor’s Association.

9 **Q: What other training does NWLETT offer that is pertinent to gas distribution**
10 **or transmission work?**

11 **A:** There are several courses available to our members relevant to performing work
12 in the natural gas industry, including but not limited to basic concrete, first aid, OSHA 10
13 and 30, erosion control, plan reading and road excavation, asbestos abatement, AC pipe
14 removal, gravity sanitary sewer and storm installation, OSHA standard hoisting and rigging,
15 traffic control and traffic control supervisor courses, pressure pipe installation (ductile),
16 safety and hazard awareness for tunneling, utility installation for tunneling, rail installation
17 for tunneling.

18 **Q: How does NWLETT’s training compare to training offered to utility**
19 **employees by “in-house” contractors?**

20 **A:** Without a doubt, NWLETT’s training is superior to that offered in-house by
21 most contractors. NWLETT instructors are third party certified is in and of itself a
22 differentiating factor as well as a way to ensure that NWLETT training is held to an
23 objective, high standard. NWLETT itself holds its instructors to the highest standard. For

1 instance, we do not allow a flagging instructor to teach their own class until they have
2 shadowed another instructor for at least six lessons, co-taught at least two courses, and
3 become certified by the Evergreen Safety Council. I am not aware of any in-house traffic
4 control training that imposes similar requirements on its instructors, and I am generally
5 aware of the training offered by traffic control contractors in Washington and Idaho.

6 As a further indicia of the credibility of NWLETT's training, I note that as an outside
7 party, NWLETT has no stake in whether or not an individual is able to successfully pass the
8 training course—we will give passing grades only to those individuals who we conclude
9 have demonstrated the requisite skills and knowledge. There are different pressures that can
10 affect contractors that perform in-house training for utility employees. I've seen some
11 contractors who have cut corners because of financial pressures. For instance, I have seen
12 contractors that will simply sign everyone off and have 100% of their students pass because
13 they don't want to slow down work and feel pressure to get everyone signed off on safety
14 training even if someone doesn't necessarily demonstrate that they're proficient. NWLETT
15 has no similar self-interest that would lead us to take such actions. NWLETT's sole focus is
16 on imparting the information necessary to ensure that Laborers are able to work as safely as
17 possible.

18 Our OSHA instructors are dedicated to conducting OSHA training exclusively.
19 Accordingly, they are able to develop expertise in their field and to develop highly
20 specialized curriculum that is cutting edge. In fact, contractors frequently ask if they can use
21 NWLETT's OSHA curriculum and training materials for their people to use for in-house
22 training, recognition of its high caliber. Some contractors that perform their own in-house
23 OSHA training even send their instructors to NWLETT to attend the courses necessary to

1 obtain recertification as an OSHA instructor (the OSHA 502 class).

2 **III. SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

3 **Q: What commitments does the proposed settlement involve with respect to**
4 **NWLETT?**

5 **A:** The proposed settlement provides that Avista will require utilization of
6 WNIDCL members when work that is normally performed by WNIDCL on Avista's natural
7 gas work and for all flagging work. This means that Avista will utilize contractors that have
8 access to NWLETT's training resources. The proposed settlement also requires WNIDCL
9 to provide signatory contractors with laborers that have all applicable safety qualifications
10 and training, which NWLETT is often involved in providing. The proposed settlement also
11 requires Avista contractors to utilize NWLETT for required training where NWLETT offers
12 applicable courses in the locality where the work is to be performed.

13 **Q: Does the training NWLETT offers cost Avista ratepayers anything?**

14 **A:** No, all of NWLETT's training is available to our contractors at no additional
15 cost to ratepayers.

16 **Q: What are the benefits signatory contractors receive from NWLETT?**

17 **A:** NWLETT does everything in our power to help our signatory contractors
18 succeed by ensuring they have a skilled workforce, and that contractor training needs are
19 being met. For instance, contractors can and regularly do send all their workers to our
20 OSHA 10 and 30 classes. We offer traffic control classes at least once per quarter for
21 signatory contractor employees, and will also provide traffic control classes upon request of
22 a contractor. Signatory contractors have access to all of our training curriculum. Sometimes,
23 contractors will contact us to request special training. For instance, one contractor won a bid

1 that required it to have six Laborers with hazardous waste operations certification cards. We
2 set up offsite training to get our members certified so that the contractor had the personnel
3 they needed in a timely manner. And, if NWLETT does not have instructors to teach a
4 particular class a contractor requires, we can also bring in instructors from LIUNA Training
5 and Education Fund. We can even develop classes and curriculum to meet a contractor's
6 specific needs, offering the class wherever is convenient for the contractor.

7 NWLETT is committed to ensuring that our contractors, including natural gas
8 contractors, have a workforce that is skilled, qualified, and able to safely perform the work
9 that falls within the Laborers' scope of work.

10 **Q: How does utilization of the training you've described lead to increased safety**
11 **and reliability for natural gas utility customers?**

12 **A:** There is overwhelming evidence linking lower on the job injuries to high quality
13 safety training. Having a safer workplace with better trained employees will lead to fewer
14 injuries, less claims filed with the Department of Labor and Industries, and lower costs for
15 the contractor and utility.

16 **Q: What efforts does NWLETT undertake to recruit skilled, qualified Laborers**
17 **in the natural gas field?**

18 **A:** We undertake substantial outreach efforts to encourage Laborers to enter our
19 apprenticeship program and have been increasing our enrollment numbers each year, which
20 allows us to ensure that the next generation of skilled Laborers is getting trained and will be
21 available to work with our signatory contractors. We recruit Laborers into our
22 apprenticeship program through several different ways. Our biggest recruitment tool is
23 word of mouth – we rely on our members to spread the word about the fantastic career they

1 can have as a journeyman Laborer.

2 Additionally, NWLETT's apprenticeship coordinators do a lot of outreach to our
3 members to encourage them to reach out to potential candidates for the apprenticeship
4 program. We send people to speak at high schools, both to career counselors and to students
5 directly. We annually attend high school job fairs. NWLETT also uses social media
6 campaigns, and employs a social media specialist to focus on outreaching to potential
7 laborers through social media, and do outreach to Native American tribes. We also advertise
8 in various magazines and promote the apprenticeship program on our website. Finally, each
9 of the locals within the Northwest Region do their own recruitment work for the NWLETT
10 apprenticeship program.

11 **Q: How does NWLETT's apprenticeship program benefit signatory**
12 **contractors?**

13 **A:** NWLETT expends substantial resources to recruit and train apprentices who are
14 then available to perform work for signatory contractors. Our experience has been that
15 contractor utilization of Laborers apprentices promotes longevity and continuity of the
16 workforce. The workforce of Laborers is aging. Training new apprentices and bringing
17 them into the field helps ensure that the next generation will be ready to continue performing
18 the work. I have seen contractors who did not utilize apprentices and instead had crews who
19 had chosen to stay with that contractor for their career, and saw how that created challenges
20 when a large portion of that workforce hit retirement age or left for other reasons.
21 Apprenticeship utilization ensures that a contractor always has a fresh crop of new Laborers
22 being trained on its operations.

23 Apprenticeship utilization also saves contractors money because they pay them a

1 reduced rate as compared with what a journeyman Laborer would earn. There are ratios that
2 are strictly enforced to ensure that contractors do not use so many apprentices as could
3 compromise safety. Those ratios change, with less journeymen supervision being required,
4 as the apprentice gains more experience on the job.

5 **Q: Does this conclude your testimony?**

6 **A:** Yes, it does.