

050 Law Department

Ms. Carole J. Washburn
Executive Secretary
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
P.O. Box 47250
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL AND U.S. MAIL

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November 16, 2001

Ms. Carole J. Washburn
Executive Secretary
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
P.O. Box 47250
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Re: Docket U-991301
Comments on Draft Revisions to WAC 480-80, Customer Notice Rules

Dear Ms. Washburn:

The City of Federal Way supports the proposed revisions to the Customer Notice Rules in the above docket. While we realize that the formal comment period has passed, the City feels it is extremely important to comment on the proposed rules and hopes that you will consider these comments.

The City, a major utility ratepayer, rarely receives notice of any kind from utilities proposing tariff changes, and if it does not receive notice, it cannot respond. Posting of notices at payment stations, as required by rule now, provides little or no notice to most customers. The City does not pay its bills in person at payment stations. It mails its payments to the utility as do a majority of utility customers. Additionally, the City does not have the staff available to routinely check bulletin boards at utility pay stations for potential notices. By requiring thirty (30) days notice to each customer or by published notice, the rules would be much more effective in providing actual notice to ratepayers of proposed tariff revisions. Additionally, the requirement for 45 days notice of a public hearing will substantially increase the ratepayer's ability to comment.

By way of example, Puget Sound Energy (PSE) recently proposed revisions to its Schedules 70 and 71 relating to underground conversions. The filing, dated February 7, 2001, was scheduled to take effect March 10, 2001, but the City received no notice of the proposal from PSE. It was only by accident that an attorney working on another matter for the City saw the posting on the WUTC website and notified the City on March 2, 2001 – one week before the revisions were to take effect. The City notified the WUTC and PSE that it intended to intervene at which point PSE did provide notice and then withdrew the filing. Had

the customer notice rules proposed in Docket No. U-991301 been in effect in February, the City would have had more timely notice of the filing and

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would not have had to scramble to respond. The current method is wholly inadequate to notify most ratepayers of potential tariff revisions, and if customers are unaware of proposed changes, they cannot object to them.

The City supports the proposed revisions to the customer notice rules and hopes that you will consider these comments, if not in this rule making then under a new docket number. If you have any questions regarding these comments or would like any additional information, please contact me at the above number.

Sincerely,

Karen Kirkpatrick
Assistant City Attorney