

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF THE RULEMAKING PROCEEDING } DOCKET NO.
RELATED TO PROPOSED CUSTOMER NOTICE RULES, } UT-991301

**COMMENTS of
SPOKANE NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PROGRAMS
LOW INCOME TELECOM PROJECT**

December 18, 2001

Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs' Low Income Telecommunications Project respectfully submits these comments pertaining to docket number UT-991301. We thank the commission for this opportunity to participate in this important rule making process. SNAP works with low income and vulnerable households by providing human services, and advocating for policies, that maximize individual capacities and promote strong communities.

We are writing to support the effort to require utilities in Washington to give their customers more effective notice of proposed rate changes and more effective notice before rate changes go into effect. We have read the comments submitted to date by Public Counsel and by Washington Public Interest Research Group on the customer notice issues and ardently endorse them. Often our low-income clients do not find out about rate increase until they receive the utility bill reflecting the new rates. Better notification requirements will allow low-income and vulnerable households to adjust their budgets accordingly and help prevent shut-offs. Better notice of proposed rate changes will allow our clients to participate to a greater degree in the rate setting process. SNAP believes it should be mandatory that utilities give their customers at least 30 days individual written notice before a rate

increase. The notice should be separate from the utility bill and should be designed in such as way as to draw the attention of the average customer.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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