

Graciela Etchart  
06/24/99  
Thursday's meeting

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Chuck\_Eberdt@mail.oppco.org on 06/22/99 02:46:19 PM

To: Graciela Etchart/WUTC@WUTC, anmkarp@pacificrim.net (Michael Karp)  
cc:  
Subject: Thursday's meeting

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Graciela,

I believe Michael will be attending the meeting on Thursday as I am unable to. I do have a number of thoughts on the issue and can forward some work done by Roger Colton, but I believe Liz Klumpp will be summarizing much of that.

Basically, it comes down to this. Unless the utility has a program that targets all their low-income customers to keep them connected to the system, any increase in any fees, deposits, etc. will end up unduly punishing many families who can least afford it. Since the utilities to date have claimed they can not clearly or accurately identify their low-income customers, I have grave doubts of their ability to do so in the future, absent some mammoth sort of effort to reach out to them. Even if they are willing to exert such an effort, however, those same increases will unduly punish thousands who are just above the eligibility level, often making them worse off than some households who do qualify. That means the threshold has to be set much higher - higher than the eligibility levels we use for our low-income programs (because these are really intended to help the worst off), and probably much higher than the utilities would find palatable.

Having said that, we would like very much to work with utilities to design a program that will provide such benefits to eligible low-income households, while at the swame time have no or extremely low initial, rate impact.

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