

[Service Date March 8, 2012]

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND)	DOCKETS UE-110876 and
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,)	UG-110877 (<i>Consolidated</i>)
)	
Complainant,)	ORDER 07
)	
v.)	ORDER GRANTING REQUEST TO
)	MODIFY PROCEDURAL
AVISTA CORPORATION d/b/a)	SCHEDULE AND RESCHEDULING
AVISTA UTILITIES,)	HEARING
)	(Evidentiary Hearing rescheduled for
Respondent.)	June 4 and 14, 2012)
.....)	

MEMORANDUM

- 1 **NATURE OF PROCEEDING.** On May 16, 2011, Avista Corporation d/b/a Avista Utilities (Avista) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) revisions to its currently effective Tariff WN U-28, Electric Service in Docket UE-110876 and revisions to its currently effective Tariff WN U-29, Gas Service in Docket UG-110877 for a general rate increase for electric and gas service. Avista’s initial filing requested an electric rate increase of \$38.3 million, or 9.1 percent, and a gas rate increase of \$6.2 million or 4.0 percent. The Commission, by Order 01, suspended the operation of the general tariff revisions and shortly thereafter consolidated the dockets for hearing.

- 2 On December 16, 2011, the Commission entered Order 06 addressing various issues within the proceeding, with the exception of decoupling. The Commission issued a Notice of Decoupling Phase Procedural Schedule which designated April 24 and 25, 2012, as the dates set for hearing.

- 3 **MOTION.** Avista, the Commission’s regulatory staff (Staff), the Public Counsel Section of the Washington Office of Attorney General (Public Counsel), Industrial Customers of Northwest Utilities (ICNU), and The Energy Project (collectively, Joint

Parties) filed a Joint Motion for an Order Revising Procedural Schedule for Decoupling Phase (Motion).¹

4 The Joint Parties state that the Commission currently has before them a general rate request filed by Puget Sound Energy, Inc. (PSE).² That matter, the Joint Parties explain, also addresses electric decoupling and is presently in the briefing phase. As a result, the Joint Parties contend that the Commission is likely to enter a decision in the PSE general rate case addressing electric decoupling around the time parties in this matter are filing post-hearing briefs. The proposed revised schedule, set forth in Appendix A to this Order, would delay the filing of rebuttal and cross-answering testimony, as well as the evidentiary hearing. The Joint Parties argue that this will allow them to respond to any decoupling issues the Commission may raise in its order on PSE's request. They assert that the Commission will also benefit from the creation of a more developed record.

5 ***Discussion/Decision.*** Pursuant to WAC 480-07-385(2), the Commission will grant a timely request for a continuance if the requesting party demonstrates good cause for the continuance and the delay will not prejudice any party or the Commission. In furtherance of a fully developed record in this proceeding, the Commission finds that the Joint Parties have demonstrated good cause for the requested continuance. For that matter, none of the parties object to the request, much less allege any prejudice arising from it, and the Commission is also not prejudiced by the continuance.

6 WAC 480-07-385(4) requires that a continuance request contain a specific date to which the deadline is being extended. The Joint Parties have met this requirement by including a proposed procedural schedule with their request. Thus, the Joint Parties' Motion should be granted.

¹ The Northwest Energy Coalition (NWECC) and the Northwest Industrial Gas Users (NWIUGU) did not join in the Motion. The Joint Parties explain that NWECC does not oppose the request. NWIUGU does not intend to participate in this phase of the case and does not object to the proposed schedule revision.

² See Dockets UE-111048 and UG-111049.

- 7 **NOTICE OF HEARING.** The evidentiary hearing, previously set for April 24-25, 2012, is rescheduled for **June 4, 2012, at 10:00 a.m., in the Commission's Hearing Room, Second Floor, Richard Hemstad Building, 1300 S. Evergreen Park Dr. SW, Olympia, Washington, continuing, as necessary, on June 14, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.**

ORDER

- 8 THE COMMISSION ORDERS that the Joint Motion for an Order Revising Procedural Schedule for Decoupling Phase, filed by Avista, Staff, Public Counsel, ICNU, and The Energy Project, is granted.

Dated at Olympia, Washington, and effective March 8, 2012.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MARGUERITE E. FRIEDLANDER
Administrative Law Judge

APPENDIX A
REVISED PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE
DOCKETS UE-111048 and UG-111049

EVENT	PRIOR DEADLINE	REVISED DEADLINE
NWEC Rebuttal Testimony and Exhibits; Avista, Staff, Public Counsel, ICNU, and The Energy Project Cross-Answering Testimony and Exhibits	March 28, 2012	May 21, 2012 ³
Evidentiary Hearing	April 24-25, 2012	June 4 and afternoon of June 14, 2012 (if necessary)
Post-Hearing Briefs	May 15, 2012	July 9, 2012

³ After this deadline, responses to data requests are due in five days.