

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,

Complainant,

v.

PUGET SOUND ENERGY,

Respondent.

DOCKET UE-200980

ORDER 04

GRANTING MOTION TO AMEND
PREHEARING CONFERENCE
ORDER

BACKGROUND

- 1 On December 9, 2020, Puget Sound Energy (PSE or Company) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) revisions to its currently effective electric tariff, WN U-60, Tariff G. PSE characterizes its filing as a Power Cost Only Rate Case (PCORC), as authorized by the Settlement Stipulation approved by the Commission in Dockets UE-011570 and UG-011571.
- 2 On January 14, 2021, the Commission entered Order 03, Prehearing Conference Order; Notice of Hearing. Paragraph 17 of Order 03 required that PSE customers receive notice of the date, time, and the methods for participating in the public comment hearing, as well as other information required under WAC 480-100-197, at least 30 days prior to the date of the public comment hearing.
- 3 On March 11, 2021, PSE filed its Petition for Puget Sound Energy for Exemption from WAC 480-100-197 and Order 03 (Petition). In its Petition, PSE requests that the Commission allow PSE to provide individual customer notice within 20 calendar days of the scheduled April 20, 2021, virtual public comment hearing, rather than 30 days as required by Order 03. PSE submits that its vendor for mailing customer bills and notices, KUBRA, is located in Texas. Due to the recent extreme weather in Texas, KUBRA was not able to begin mailing notices until February 24, 2021. PSE estimates that approximately 312,000 customers will receive delayed notice of the public comment hearing.
- 4 On March 16, 2020, the Public Counsel Unit of the Attorney General's Office (Public Counsel) filed its Response to the Petition. Public Counsel does not oppose the Petition

but requests that the Commission order PSE to include clearer language on its website regarding the public comment hearing scheduled for April 20, 2021. Addressing PSE's "Rates news and filings" webpage, Public Counsel recommends that the pertinent description should read, "Learn more about the public hearing for the proposed electric rate increase resulting from increased power costs."

DISCUSSION

- 5 We grant PSE's Petition to amend Order 03, subject to the condition recommended by Public Counsel. The majority of customers will receive 30-days' notice of the public comment hearing. PSE is taking steps to notify customers by email and will post the information on its website. Under the circumstances, it is sufficient that PSE customers receive notice of the date, time, and the methods for participating in the public comment hearing, as well as other information required under WAC 480-100-197, at least 20 days prior to the date of the public comment hearing.
- 6 We agree with Public Counsel that PSE's website could provide clearer notice of the April 20, 2021, public comment hearing. As Public Counsel observes, the relevant webpage provides a link for customers to "Learn more about potential changes to your service, click here (2/25/2021)." We agree that customers will be more clearly apprised of the upcoming public comment hearing in this docket by instead using the following language: "Learn more about the public hearing for the proposed electric rate increase resulting from increased power costs."
- 7 We find it unnecessary, however, to grant PSE an exemption from WAC 480-100-197. WAC 480-100-197 states that "the timing, location, and amount of notice to the public or to customers will be addressed in the prehearing conference order." Because the regulation itself does not require 30-days notice of a public comment hearing, it is sufficient to grant PSE's request to amend Order 03.

ORDER

- 6 (1) Puget Sound Energy's Petition to amend Order 03, Prehearing Conference Order and Notice of Hearing in Docket UE-200980 is GRANTED, as described in paragraphs 5 and 6 of this order.
- 7 (2) Paragraph 17 of Order 03, Prehearing Conference Order and Notice of Hearing is amended as described in paragraph 4 of this order.

Dated at Lacey, Washington, and effective March 18, 2021.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

/s/ Michael Howard
MICHAEL HOWARD
Administrative Law Judge