

Agenda Date: August 29, 2019  
Item Number: B1

**Docket:** TG-190508  
Company Name: Rubatino Refuse Removal, Inc.

Staff: Ann LaRue, Regulatory Analyst  
John Cupp, Consumer Protection Staff

**Recommendation:**

Take no action, thereby allowing tariff 8 filed on June 14, 2019, by Rubatino Refuse Removal, Inc. as revised on August 23, 2019, to take effect September 1, 2019 by operation of law.

**Discussion**

On June 14, 2019, Rubatino Refuse Removal, Inc. (Rubatino or company) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (commission) a proposal for a general rate increase generating approximately \$794,000 (4.6 percent) in additional annual revenue, to become effective September 1, 2019. The proposed increases are prompted by increased labor, pension, fuel and maintenance costs. The company provides service to approximately 20,000 residential, commercial, and drop box customers in Snohomish County. The company's last general rate filing was for \$169,000 (1.1 percent) additional annual revenue and became effective September 1, 2014.

Commission staff (staff) has completed its review of the filing and found that the proposed rates were somewhat excessive. Staff made several adjustments which resulted in approximately \$606,000 (3.5 percent) additional annual revenue. The company agreed with staff's adjustments and filed revised tariff pages on August 23, 2019, at the staff revised rates.

**Residential Rate Comparison**

Monthly Rate	Current Rate	Proposed Rate	Staff Revised Rate	Increase
64 Gallon Toter Weekly Garbage	\$20.52	\$21.70	\$21.80	6.25%
Recycling	\$6.75	\$7.14	\$6.75	0%
Yard waste	\$9.52	\$9.50	\$10.02	5.2%

**Commercial Rate Comparison**

<b>Per Pickup Rate</b>	<b>Current Rate</b>	<b>Proposed Rate</b>	<b>Staff Revised Rate</b>	<b>Increase</b>
<b>1-Yard per Pick-up</b>	\$32.56	\$34.43	\$34.60	6.25%
<b>3-Yard per Pick-up</b>	\$59.46	\$62.88	\$63.18	6.25%

Staff has completed its review of the company's financial books and records and finds the revised rates to be fair, just, reasonable, and sufficient.

**Customer Comments**

On July 01, 2019, the company notified its customers by mail of the proposed rate increase. Customers were notified that they may access relevant documents about this rate increase on the commission's website, and that they may contact John Cupp at 1-888-333-9882 or john.cupp@utc.wa.gov with questions or concerns. Staff received two comments opposed to the rate increase and one in favor.

**General Comments**

Two customers stated their opposition to the proposed increase because of its impact on senior citizens on fixed incomes. The customer in favor of the increase believes the company deserves an increase because the service is "reliable and efficient."

Two customers said they don't care about the increase, but have other concerns. One customer expressed concern about the timing of the increase because it is hard for her non-profit organization to adjust its budget in the middle of the year. The other feels the company does not provide good customer service and does not operate efficiently.

**Staff Response**

Staff informed customers that state law requires rates to be fair, just, reasonable, and sufficient to allow the company to recover reasonable operating expenses and the opportunity to earn a reasonable return on its investment. Customers were also told that commission staff performs a thorough review of rate filings to ensure all rates and fees are appropriate.

**Recommendations:**

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