

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

ALEXANDER AND ELENA ARGUNOV,  
THOMAS AND HEIDI JOHNSON, CHAD  
AND VICTORIA GROESBECK,

Complainants,

v.

PUGET SOUND ENERGY,

Respondent.

DOCKET UE-220701

MOTION TO WITHDRAW WITH  
CONDITIONS ON BEHALF OF  
COMMISSION STAFF

1           By and through the Prehearing Conference Order issued by the Washington Utilities  
and Transportation Commission (Commission) on November 1, 2022, Commission staff  
(Staff) was identified as a participant in this proceeding. Pursuant to Washington  
Administrative Code (WAC) section 480-07-380(3), Staff respectfully requests that it be  
granted leave to withdraw as a party, subject to the condition that Staff appear as a witness  
to the evidentiary hearing and reviews the record prior to the hearing.

2           WAC 480-07-380(3)(a) states:

Once the commission has issued a hearing notice or otherwise commenced  
an adjudicative proceeding pursuant to chapter 34.05 RCW, a party may  
withdraw from that proceeding . . . only upon permission granted by the  
commission in response to a written motion.

3           Further, WAC 480-07-380(3)(b) states that the Commission will “grant such a  
motion when the requested withdrawal is in the public interest.”

4           The Complainants allege in the formal complaint that the Company has violated  
WAC 480-100-001, -013, -103, -108, -148, -173, and -338. The overarching claim in the  
complaint is that PSE is overcharging the Complainants based on either a miscalculation or  
a malfunctioning of the Complainants’ meters. The Complainants allege that PSE is  
incorrectly charging 15-minute intervals of usage as if it were one hour of usage.

5           Staff conducted investigations of the Complainant’s allegations prior to the filing of the formal complaint. Commission Staff Consumer Protection Manager Sheri Hoyt has reviewed the documentation of those investigations and discussed those investigations with the various Staff members that were involved in the individual investigations. She will be available as a witness should this matter proceed to an evidentiary hearing.

6           Based on the allegations made in the formal complaint and the conclusions of the investigations conducted by Staff, Staff does not believe that continuing as a party in this docket will serve the public interest. The primary purpose of Commission Staff’s involvement in formal complaints brought by individual ratepayers is to act as an impartial investigator and provide the Commission with objective analysis regarding the allegations and to make recommendations in the public interest. In this particular case, those goals can be achieved more efficiently if Staff makes itself available as a witness at the evidentiary hearing rather than as a party to the case.

7           The results of the Staff investigations into the Complainants’ claims are included as an attachment to this motion. Staff believes that the investigations and analysis already provided would not change in any meaningful way if Staff remained a party in this docket. Therefore, continuing as a party in this proceeding would only result in inefficient use of Commission resources. Should the Commission grant the motion to withdraw, Staff would continue monitoring the developments in this case and would be prepared to address at the evidentiary hearing whether any new information discovered during the proceeding changes the conclusions Staff reached in the informal investigations.

8           The circumstances outlined above support granting Staff’s motion to withdraw as it is in the public interest.

DATED December 6, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT W. FERGUSON  
Attorney General

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