

**Docket No. UE-200980 - Vol. II**

**WUTC v. Puget Sound Energy**

**April 20, 2021**



**206.287.9066 | 800.846.6989**

1325 Fourth Avenue, Suite 1840, Seattle, Washington 98101

[www.buellrealtime.com](http://www.buellrealtime.com)

email: [info@buellrealtime.com](mailto:info@buellrealtime.com)



WASHINGTON UTILITIES and TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

v.

PUGET SOUND ENERGY

Docket UE-200980

---

PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING

VOLUME II

APRIL 20, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Pages 16-50

---

TAKEN BEFORE: JAMIE BOOKER, RPR, CCR NO. 3681

1 APPEARANCES:

2 UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION:

3 COMMISSIONER DAVID DANNER

4 COMMISSIONER ANN RENDAHL

5 COMMISSIONER JAY BALASBAS

6

7 COMMISSION STAFF:

8 ANDREW ROBERTS

9

10 PUBLIC COMMENTS BY:

11 CINDY KISSKA

12 KEN JOHNSON

13 RACHEL BROMBAUGH

14 ANDY ADO

15 ADAM TORRES

16 CAMI KEYES

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 2021; REMOTE, WASHINGTON

2 --oo0oo--

3 DAVID DANNER: Good evening, everyone. And  
4 thank you for participating in our hearing tonight. We  
5 are here in -- for the meeting of the Utilities and  
6 Transportation Commission. Today is Tuesday, April 20,  
7 2021.

8 We are here today to hear public testimony on a  
9 settlement stipulation and agreement filed by parties  
10 in Docket UE-200980, which is a power-cost-only rate  
11 case filed by Puget Sound Energy to update its power  
12 costs.

13 And I am joined today -- I'm Dave Danner. I'm  
14 Chair of the Commission. I'm joined this evening by my  
15 colleagues Commissioner Ann Rendahl and Commissioner  
16 Jay Balasbas.

17 What I would like to do before we begin taking  
18 public comment, I would like to turn it over to Andrew  
19 Roberts of Commission staff who will give us an  
20 overview of the case that is before us tonight. And  
21 then we will need to swear you all in and then take --  
22 take your comments.

23 We have several people who signed in, in advance  
24 of the hearing. We will take their testimony first,  
25 and then we will find out who else has signed in

1 wishing to comment. And we will make sure that, before  
2 we close tonight, that everybody who wishes to comment  
3 will have an opportunity to do so.

4 So with that, Andrew, I'm going to turn it over to  
5 you right now, if you would take it from here for an  
6 overview.

7 ANDREW ROBERTS: Okay. Thank you, Chair  
8 Danner.

9 My name is Andrew Roberts. I'm a Public  
10 Involvement Representative with the Utilities and  
11 Transportation Commission, and I'll be moderating the  
12 comment hearing tonight.

13 I'd first like to provide a little background on  
14 the case. Puget Sound Energy filed last December a  
15 request to increase its overall revenue by \$88 million  
16 or 4.13 percent.

17 Earlier this month, PSE, UTC staff -- that's  
18 Utilities and Transportation Commission staff -- the  
19 Alliance of Western Energy Consumers, the Energy  
20 Project reached a settlement agreement in the case.

21 The Public Counsel Unit of the Washington Office  
22 of the Attorney General did not join the settlement but  
23 does not oppose the settlement.

24 The settlement is not binding on the three-member  
25 Commission. The multiparty settlement calls for a

1 general revenue increase of \$65.3 million. And, if the  
2 settlement is allowed to go into effect, an average  
3 residential electric customer's bill will increase by  
4 about 2.9 percent. A residential customer using 900  
5 kilowatt hours could see an increase of about \$2.73 for  
6 a monthly bill total of \$98.30.

7 The UTC will hold an evidentiary hearing on  
8 April 22nd.

9 This evening you'll have the opportunity to  
10 provide comment to the Commissioners pertaining to this  
11 rate case.

12 The Commissioners act as judges in formal  
13 proceedings like this and cannot answer questions. If  
14 you have questions, please email [comments@UTC.wa.gov](mailto:comments@UTC.wa.gov) or  
15 call (888)333-9882 and ask to speak with me, Andrew  
16 Roberts.

17 Now for some meeting logistics:

18 We ask that everyone please mute your computer  
19 microphone or telephone unless you're called upon to  
20 speak.

21 If you called in through Teams, mute your  
22 connection by clicking the microphone at the top right  
23 of the Teams screen. A slash will appear across the  
24 microphone. This indicates that you have successfully  
25 muted your connection. To unmute, simply click the

1 microphone. The slash will disappear. Please remember  
2 to mute your connection after you are done speaking.

3 If you called in on the phone, press star 6 on  
4 your phone to mute yourself. When you are called on to  
5 speak, press star 6 to unmute yourself and, after  
6 you're done speaking, please press star 6 again to  
7 remute.

8 Please wait to be called on for comment, and do  
9 not interrupt other speakers.

10 The use of video isn't required. If you do wish  
11 to use video, please help us save some bandwidth and  
12 only use video while you are speaking.

13 There are two options to report technical  
14 difficulties, if you encounter them. The first is to  
15 use the chat feature in Microsoft Teams. The second is  
16 you can call Ryan Smith at (360)664-1165. The chat  
17 feature in Teams should only be used to report  
18 technical difficulties.

19 Next, I'd like to get the names of those who wish  
20 to speak and have not yet signed up. We have four  
21 customers who already contacted us to sign in. You do  
22 not need to provide us your names. You're already on  
23 the list. That is James Parham, Cindy Kisska, Walt  
24 Jorgenson, and Ken Johnson.

25 So, to begin, I would like to start with the

1 alphabet for last names beginning A through F.

2 Anyone with the last name A through F, if you'd  
3 like to speak, please unmute and provide us your name.

4 RACHEL BROMBAUGH: Hi, this is Rachel  
5 Brombaugh from King County. I would like to provide  
6 comment.

7 ANDREW ROBERTS: Okay. Could you spell your  
8 last name for me?

9 THE WITNESS: B -- as in boy --  
10 r-o-m-b-a-u-g-h. It's also in the chat.

11 ANDREW ROBERTS: Great. Thank you.

12 Anyone else with the last name A through F?

13 ANDY ADO: Yes. This is Ado. Spelling of  
14 alpha-d-o. I'm getting ready to say Ado. D-o.

15 ANDREW ROBERTS: Great. Thank you.

16 ANDY ADO: And I do -- I do have a question  
17 or comment.

18 ANDREW ROBERTS: Okay. So we can't answer  
19 questions this evening, but you can email  
20 comments@UTC.wa.gov, and I'd be happy to answer any  
21 questions you might have.

22 Anyone else with a last name A through F? Okay.

23 Last names G through J? Anyone with the last name  
24 G through J who wishes to comment tonight? Okay.

25 How about K through O? K through O?

1           Anyone with the last name beginning P through T  
2           who would like to comment tonight?

3           ADAM TORRES: Yes.

4           ANDREW ROBERTS: Okay. Can I get your name,  
5           please.

6           ADAM TORRES: Adam Torres.

7           ANDREW ROBERTS: Can you spell your last name  
8           for me.

9           ADAM TORRES: T-o-r-r-e-s.

10          CAMI KEYES: And after Adam, I'm a K. I just  
11          couldn't get unmuted quick enough.

12          ANDREW ROBERTS: Oh, okay. Could I get your  
13          name, please.

14          CAMI KEYES: Cami, C-a-m-i, Keyes, K-e-y-e-s.

15          ANDREW ROBERTS: Thank you.

16          Anyone else with the last name P through T who  
17          would like to comment tonight?

18          Okay. How about U through Z? Anyone with the  
19          last name U through Z who would like to comment  
20          tonight?

21          Okay. Is there anyone else at all who would like  
22          to provide comment tonight and would like to provide  
23          your name now?

24          Okay. With that, I will now turn the time over to  
25          Chair Danner, Commissioner Rendahl, and Commissioner

1 Balasbas.

2 DAVID DANNER: All right. Thank you, Andrew.

3 All right. So we have several people signed up to  
4 speak tonight. Let's -- in the interest of time, for  
5 those who do wish to speak tonight, I need to swear you  
6 in.

7 So I see Ms. Keyes has walked away from her desk.  
8 But for the rest of us -- oh, there she is -- we need  
9 to swear you in. So if everybody would please raise  
10 your right hand.

11 Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth,  
12 and nothing but the truth?

13 Say "I do"? All right. Thank you very much.

14 All right. So we'll -- we are ready then to start  
15 taking public comments.

16 James Parham, are you on the line? James Parham?

17 All right. We will come back to you.

18 Cindy Kisska, are you on the line?

19 CINDY KISSKA: Hello?

20 DAVID DANNER: Cindy Kisska?

21 CINDY KISSKA: Yes.

22 DAVID DANNER: Yes. Please, if you have  
23 comments, we're ready to receive them.

24 CINDY KISSKA: Okay. Very good.

25 My name is Cindy Kisska. I live in Birch Bay,

1 Washington. I've been a Puget Sound Energy electric  
2 customer for more than 16 years.

3 Puget Sound Energy raises its rates every year.  
4 With so many people falling through the cracks  
5 financially, I am hard-pressed to see why Puget Sound  
6 Energy wants to raise its rates again, especially when  
7 Puget Sound Energy paid out over a three-year period  
8 from 2016 to 2018 almost \$40 million to its top five  
9 employees in salaries, incentives, compensations, and  
10 bonuses.

11 PSE is a utility company, not a Fortune 500  
12 Company. PSE belongs to a group called investor-owned  
13 utilities, called IOUs for short, that service electric  
14 and natural gas customers across the state of  
15 Washington. And I quote: They are all monopoly --  
16 monopoly franchises, end quote. They exist to make a  
17 profit for their shareholders.

18 These top five -- including PSE -- investor-owned  
19 utilities paid out a total of almost \$400 million in  
20 dividends in 2019. That's how wealthy they are.

21 The Utility Commission says it's their  
22 responsibility to ensure service to customers at  
23 reasonable rates while allowing PSE an opportunity to  
24 earn a fair return.

25 What is a fair return? When Puget Sound Energy is

1           paying its CEOs millions of dollars every year, takes  
2           in over \$100 million every month just from the  
3           residential electric customers alone, and took in  
4           almost 3-and-a-half billion dollars in energy revenue  
5           two years ago, and paid out over \$64 million in  
6           dividends to five foreign countries. I would call this  
7           more than a fair return.

8           In contrast, most people I know have to wear their  
9           winter coats in their houses during the winter to stay  
10          warm because they can't afford to pay higher electric  
11          bills. Tell that to the CEOs who get paid millions of  
12          dollars every year in bonuses, et cetera. What sense  
13          does it make? None.

14          Puget Sound Energy has turned into a  
15          profit-churning machine. It has joined the ranks of  
16          what I call Corporate America: Profits at all cost.

17          The UTC treats Puget Sound Energy like it's two  
18          separate companies -- the one that services its  
19          customers and the one that services its shareholders.  
20          The latter are very wealthy, while the incomes of the  
21          major majority of Puget Sound Energy customers are most  
22          likely lower middle class and poverty level.

23          We shouldn't have to pay for an overly top-heavy  
24          utility company with way too much money floating around  
25          at the top.

1           It becomes very clear there is a conflict of  
2 interest here. So when you talk about balancing the  
3 needs of both the customers and the company, who do you  
4 think has the greatest need? The already wealthy  
5 becoming wealthier? Or the little person at the bottom  
6 just trying to stay warm in the winter and struggling  
7 to feed their families.

8           Hold on. How is it that Puget Sound Energy's  
9 millions and billions of wealth at the top has never  
10 trickled down to the bottom to translate into savings  
11 for customer rates?

12           Yet the Utilities Commission allows Puget Sound  
13 Energy to generate billions of dollars in profits and  
14 give away millions in dividends. And now Puget Sound  
15 Energy's asking Utility Commission to okay Puget Sound  
16 raising their rates again?

17           On what grounds? PSE doesn't need more money from  
18 us to cover their operating costs. And on what grounds  
19 will you, the Utilities Commission, yet again let PSE  
20 raise our rates as you have done every single year  
21 knowing full well the extent of PSE's wealth?

22           Puget Sound Energy has more than enough money  
23 right now, not only to not raise our rates but to  
24 decide to reduce them instead and still be able to pay  
25 for the help program which I believe should be on a

1 separate docket altogether.

2 In conclusion, I'd like to share with you a  
3 meaningful quote: Money is not honesty. Money is not  
4 integrity. Money is not truth. If you base all your  
5 values on money, you've lost your values.

6 The original purpose of the Utilities Commission  
7 being established in the first place was to protect the  
8 rights of the people that the utility companies  
9 service. Whose rights are you protecting now, the  
10 wealthy utility companies or the people they service?

11 Please do the right thing and stand up for the  
12 customer. We are the ones trying to stay warm in the  
13 winter and struggling to just put food on our tables.  
14 We -- I feel like crying. We are the ones who need  
15 your protection.

16 Thank you. I finished, dear.

17 Hello? Hello?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Chair Danner, you're  
19 on mute?

20 CINDY KISSKA: I'm sorry?

21 DAVID DANNER: I'm sorry. I was on mute. I  
22 just wanted to thank you, Ms. Kisska, for your  
23 comments. I appreciate them.

24 CINDY KISSKA: Okay. You heard everything,  
25 dear? Did you -- did you -- was I -- did everybody

1 hear what I had to say?

2 DAVID DANNER: Got it all. Thank you very  
3 much.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

5 CINDY KISSKA: Okay. Okay. Thank you so  
6 much. Thank you.

7 DAVID DANNER: All right.

8 CINDY KISSKA: Uh-huh. Okay. I'll mute  
9 myself.

10 DAVID DANNER: Thank you.

11 Let me go back to James Parham. Are you on the  
12 line?

13 All right. Walt Jorgensen, are you on the line?  
14 Walt Jorgensen?

15 All right. Ken Johnson, are you on the line?

16 KEN JOHNSON: I am here.

17 DAVID DANNER: Go ahead, sir.

18 KEN JOHNSON: My name is Ken Johnson, live in  
19 Bellingham, Washington. I am a PSE customer. And I  
20 got notification of the request to -- for the rate  
21 increase.

22 I've never spoken publicly at one of these before  
23 so please bear with me. I'm a little nervous.

24 I'd also like to congratulate -- is it Ms. Kisska  
25 who spoke earlier? I completely appreciate her -- her

1 research and homework that she did for us, the  
2 customers.

3 The one thing that got me to sign up for this  
4 meeting -- I looked at -- at the reasons for the  
5 requested rate increase: Higher natural gas costs, new  
6 power purchase agreements, new and renewed transmission  
7 contracts -- and the fourth one really got me --  
8 decreasing customer electricity usage.

9 I'm in my 60s. I've seen many, many public  
10 service announcements saying we need to conserve our  
11 energy, reduce electricity usage year after year after  
12 year after year. And now they're using that as an  
13 excuse to raise our rates? Because we aren't using  
14 enough electricity?

15 That's just an insult and a slap in the face to  
16 customers who can't afford the current rates let alone  
17 an increase in rate, especially upon the last year  
18 during the pandemic that people lost their jobs and  
19 people, like me -- I was lucky enough to keep my job,  
20 but I didn't get a raise last year. I'm not getting  
21 one this year. And I'm -- I'm part of a private  
22 company that has to live within its means, and I think  
23 PSE should do the same.

24 This rate increase should not be allowed. We have  
25 to undergo several LEAN initiatives in order to reduce

1 our internal costs in order to make a buck. Just think  
2 if we told our customers, "Well, we got to raise your  
3 rates now because you aren't buying enough product from  
4 us." How -- how absurd does that sound? And so I  
5 was -- I was quite angry when I saw that.

6 And the other excuses, they have negotiators, they  
7 pay them a good wage, and they should negotiate better  
8 contracts for lower costs.

9 And, also, if you wanted natural gas cost, why  
10 don't you also push for allowing some pipelines to go  
11 through instead of stonewalling the pipelines that  
12 would reduce costs in natural gas.

13 So, in summary, I am against this rate increase.  
14 I -- I think, as the previous speaker said, they do not  
15 need to raise rates. They can live within their means  
16 like the rest of us have to so we can stay in our homes  
17 and heat our homes during the winter and not have to  
18 wear extra clothing.

19 Thank you very much for letting me speak.

20 DAVID DANNER: Thank you very much for your  
21 comments tonight.

22 Rachel Brombaugh, are you on the line?

23 RACHEL BROMBAUGH: Yes, sir. I'm here.

24 DAVID DANNER: Good evening. Go ahead.

25 RACHEL BROMBAUGH: Thank you, Chair Danner

1 and Commissioners Rendahl and Balasbas for the  
2 opportunity to come -- comment this evening.

3 My name is Rachel Brombaugh, and I am the Director  
4 of Climate and Energy Initiatives at King County. I am  
5 speaking to oppose the portion of the joint settlement  
6 for Docket 200980 that is relevant to Green Direct.

7 The change in the calculation methodology for the  
8 energy-charge credit in the Green Direct program will  
9 have a significant deleterious effect to the financial  
10 performance of Green Direct for King County.

11 We have projected very modest financial benefits  
12 from Green Direct but now anticipate significant  
13 additional costs for electric that we had not budgeted  
14 for. This will take funding away from other County  
15 services which are in strong demand as we continue to  
16 address COVID and concomitant economic impacts.

17 We anticipated some level of rate adjustment from  
18 the fluctuation in power prices and were comfortable  
19 with that risk but did not anticipate that the  
20 calculation methodology itself would be changed.

21 We understand from John Piliarus' testimony in  
22 support of the multiparty settlement that parties  
23 reserved the right to reevaluate the rate methodology  
24 in future proceedings.

25 PSE staff tell me that they are interesting in

1 convening a stakeholder meeting in the summer to  
2 discuss Green Direct. But should this settlement be  
3 approved, the change in calculation methodology and  
4 precedent for change without customer input will have  
5 already been made.

6 I have deep respect for the staff of the UTC with  
7 whom I have worked with on many complicated and highly  
8 technical issues over the past couple years.

9 I am frankly astonished that staff could have made  
10 such an error five years ago when the program was first  
11 developed that now -- only six months into operation --  
12 has been discovered. This erodes the credibility of  
13 the UTC.

14 We, King County and other subscribers, would like  
15 a clear explanation of the charges, the rationale  
16 behind it, and how the parties agreed it to.

17 While we are happy to pay for the cost of green  
18 energy, we do -- we want to ensure that we are not  
19 disproportionately bearing the costs of the transition  
20 to clean energy.

21 I'll talk a little bit about process. While I  
22 understand that proceedings and intervenors must  
23 proceed with confidentiality, King County, who is the  
24 largest subscriber to Green Direct is very frustrated  
25 that the settlement was made without the participation

1 of any Green Direct customers.

2 At King County, we do not have staff capacity to  
3 follow every rate proceeding much less intervene;  
4 although, we may want to reconsider that.

5 As the largest customer, timely notice from either  
6 the UTC or PSE would have been appreciated. We were  
7 first made aware of these negotiations on March 22,  
8 only eleven days prior to the settlement date when PSE  
9 staff reached out. Many other subscribers that I've  
10 talked to were not aware of the changes until we  
11 informed them this past week.

12 So I encourage the Commissioners to reject the  
13 settlement and give Green Direct customers and their  
14 technical staff or consultants an opportunity to better  
15 understand the changes and to provide input.

16 Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

17 DAVID DANNER: Thank you very much for your  
18 comments. I appreciate it.

19 All right. Andy Ado, are you on the line, sir?

20 ANDY ADO: Yes. I think I don't have comment  
21 at this time, but thank you for the -- for calling my  
22 name. I'd like to withdraw my comments.

23 DAVID DANNER: I'm sorry. I -- I'm having  
24 trouble hearing you.

25 ANDY ADO: I said I don't have any comment at

1 this time, and I'd like --

2 DAVID DANNER: Okay.

3 ANDY ADO: -- to withdraw my comment. Thank  
4 you.

5 DAVID DANNER: Thank you very much.

6 Adam Torres.

7 ADAM TORRES: Yes, Chair.

8 DAVID DANNER: Go ahead.

9 ADAM TORRES: You know, come from the veteran  
10 side of the family of -- of Washington state. I've  
11 been here for 20 years, moved multiple times, and seen  
12 influx and increase in the rates that we consume.

13 My -- my biggest question is why did this outline  
14 of charitable profits that are being requested by the  
15 clients of PSE, why hasn't that been fronted earlier  
16 and provided for us, the customer?

17 This seems very, very captivating that this has  
18 come through so fast as far as being notified of this  
19 meeting. I believe it was March, as well, that I had  
20 got an email about this. So I'm just here to speak for  
21 the portion that I -- I can speak for.

22 Where's this money going? Why is it a  
23 three-percent increase? And who's compensating or  
24 receiving the -- what was it -- 78 million in revenue  
25 that would be increased or raised or accumulated from

1 this -- this project that's supposed to be going on?

2 I'm just curious myself as to -- as to why the  
3 planning of this has been so secretive.

4 DAVID DANNER: All right. Thank you.

5 So the questions you're asking -- generally, a  
6 public comment hearing, the Commission doesn't engage  
7 in discussion or take the comments.

8 However, I want to make -- I want to introduce  
9 Public Counsel. The Public Counsel's Office in the  
10 Attorney General's Office represents the interests of  
11 rate payers in our proceedings.

12 I'd like to ask if Public Counsel is on the call  
13 and if they would put themselves on video to introduce  
14 themselves.

15 LISA GAFKEN: Good evening, Chair Danner.  
16 This is Lisa Gafken, the Public Counsel Unit Chief.  
17 And Public Counsel does operate as a statutory  
18 representative of residential and small business  
19 customers.

20 I'll also offer should -- you know, usually when  
21 we're in person, we're able to chat after the hearing.  
22 I want to provide an email address if any of the  
23 commenters tonight wish to follow up after the meeting.  
24 And that email address is utilities@atg.wa.gov. So  
25 utilities@atg.wa.gov.

1           They can email questions to that email address,  
2           and we'll respond.

3           DAVID DANNER: All right. Thank you for  
4           that.

5           So I apologize, Mr. Torres, that I can't engage  
6           your questions, but I want to make clear that  
7           Ms. Gafken at the Public Counsel's Office is a resource  
8           for those questions and for all commenters tonight.

9           Thank you, Mr. Torres, for your comments tonight.

10          And thank you, Ms. Gafken, for being on the line.

11          ADAM TORRES: I appreciate it.

12          DAVID DANNER: Thank you.

13          All right. Cami Keyes, I know you're on the line.  
14          I can see you. Go ahead.

15          You're on mute.

16          CAMI KEYES: Lagging a bit. Unmute. There  
17          we go. Okay, can you hear me now?

18          DAVID DANNER: Yes. Speak up a little bit.  
19          You're a little faint.

20          CAMI KEYES: Famous words from the Zoom days  
21          and Teams days.

22          So my name is Cami Keyes. I'm a Redmond resident.  
23          I've been a PSE customer since 1997, and I have  
24          consistently seen the rates go up over and over again.

25          I actually wrote in early about this rate increase

1 because I saw a small advertisement in the Seattle  
2 Times. And I thought that this was absolutely not an  
3 appropriate way to notify the community, first off, in  
4 today's day and age where fewer take the paper. And,  
5 second, we should all have an opportunity to be able to  
6 speak out against this or speak for it, if that is the  
7 case. And I didn't feel that the notification was  
8 appropriate to the public to be able to have an  
9 opportunity to speak or to write in or to whatever.

10 And I believe that my comments were read to the  
11 board at that time. I'm glad that we have this second  
12 opportunity as I wasn't able to attend that first  
13 meeting.

14 And I did a lot to help promote this in my own  
15 area and hope that some of the people here tonight are  
16 as a result of that.

17 I can tell you on Next Door, there wasn't a single  
18 person who had something positive to say about the rate  
19 increase because this is all a very difficult time.

20 I am a disabled single woman, disabled from  
21 cancer, who literally sold her home because she could  
22 no longer afford to heat it by herself.

23 I moved into a condominium which is more  
24 reasonable to heat, but my expenses have gone up  
25 considerably due to COVID, as I think we can say our

1 communities at large have -- city governments, County  
2 governments, State governments, individual households,  
3 and companies. And I have no doubt that PSE has had  
4 some increases in expenses as well.

5 However, as a public, we seem to be -- and pardon  
6 my language -- screwed either way if we conserve, as  
7 we're advised to, or go green, as we're advised to,  
8 because, when we stop using electricity, they get to  
9 increase their rates.

10 Why don't they get to cut back if they're not  
11 needing as much electricity? Why aren't they cutting  
12 back on management? Why aren't they cutting back on  
13 management bonuses? Why aren't they cutting back on  
14 dividends to their investors? Why does it always have  
15 to fall on the back of the consumer to support a public  
16 utility that is a publicly traded company?

17 I have worked for nonprofit organizations that --  
18 well, I'm going to back up here a little bit.

19 You are basing the utility's need to increase  
20 rates based on the information that they provide you on  
21 their expenses and costs. Some of them no doubt have  
22 gone up -- new agreements that they're having with the  
23 regional electrical supplies. But, for the consumer,  
24 it feels like the company needs to take a little bit of  
25 the hit, this time especially.

1           It is a time that is unprecedented in our country,  
2           and people are stuck at home either because they're  
3           having to work from home or because they don't have  
4           work.

5           We don't have the opportunity to sit in a freezing  
6           cold home. I keep my home very cold because that's  
7           what's inexpensive. I have the option of being  
8           somewhat insulated, but other people don't. And this  
9           is a really difficult time and an inappropriate time,  
10          in my opinion, for a utility to come forward and ask  
11          for a rate increase.

12          I'm sorry. Companies across the board have had  
13          increased expenses. Management have taken cuts.  
14          Employees have had to take cuts. Where is PSE in this?  
15          Why aren't they also contributing to the cost, the  
16          increased cost that they are experiencing?

17          I have worked for nonprofit organizations that, in  
18          general, most of them are very good. But some of them  
19          at the end of year will raise bonuses or raise salaries  
20          because they have too much money left over. And how do  
21          we know that PSE is not doing this? Who's looking  
22          after their reporting to make sure that it's accurate?  
23          Who's looking after these increases in contracts to  
24          make sure that it actually reflects the increase that  
25          they're asking for?

1 I really believe that this is an inappropriate  
2 time. The utility is a public utility operated at the  
3 benefit of the public, and they should have some  
4 accountability to the public as to how and why they  
5 need these rate increases.

6 And, right now, I urge the Commission -- and I  
7 thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. But I  
8 urge you to look at the law and make sure that this is  
9 really what we have to do.

10 At this time, can we not push this back? Can we  
11 not say no? You cannot recapture your losses this  
12 year. You'll need to find out other ways to pay for  
13 them, just like the rest of the world is having to do  
14 right now.

15 In closing, I'm just going to say this is a bad  
16 time, this is a very profitable company, and they can  
17 certainly take a small hit for the better of our  
18 communities.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

20 DAVID DANNER: Thank you, Ms. Keyes. I  
21 appreciate your comments tonight.

22 So that's -- let me go back to the beginning here.

23 James Parham, are you on the line?

24 All right. Walt Jorgensen, are you on the line?

25 Okay. That brings us to the end of the folks who

1 have signed in. I see there are a lot of people who  
2 have joined us more recently so let me ask -- is there  
3 anybody on the line who wishes to speak who hasn't  
4 spoken yet? And I'm going to go through the alphabet  
5 so that we can do this in an orderly fashion.

6 Is there anyone whose last name begins A through E  
7 who has not spoken yet and wishes to speak tonight?

8 All right. Is there anyone with the last name  
9 that begins F through H who wishes to speak tonight?

10 Okay. Anyone whose last name begins I through L?

11 CINDY KISSKA: Hello.

12 DAVID DANNER: Hello.

13 CINDY KISSKA: Yes. This is Cindy Kisska.  
14 And I did speak, but there was one thing I left out  
15 because I didn't think I had time. So I'm wondering  
16 if -- it's just one short paragraph.

17 DAVID DANNER: Well, Ms. Kisska, let's --  
18 let's hold that. I'll come back to you. But I want to  
19 give other people a chance to speak too.

20 CINDY KISSKA: Okay. No problem.

21 DAVID DANNER: If that's all right.

22 CINDY KISSKA: Thank you very much. Okay.

23 Thank you very --

24 DAVID DANNER: Yeah. People want to speak.

25 CINDY KISSKA: Okay. Very good. Thank you.

1 DAVID DANNER: Yeah.

2 CINDY KISSKA: Okay.

3 DAVID DANNER: So, again, anyone whose last  
4 name begins I through L?

5 All right. Anyone whose last name is -- ends with  
6 M through P who wishes to speak tonight who hasn't  
7 spoken?

8 All right. Anyone whose last name begins Q  
9 through T?

10 All right. Is there anyone who wishes to speak  
11 tonight who hasn't spoken? Please speak up right now.

12 All right. It appears that everyone who has  
13 spoken -- everyone who wishes to speak has spoken  
14 tonight. Is that correct?

15 CINDY KISSKA: Sir?

16 DAVID DANNER: Ms. Kisska, we'll get to you  
17 in a second.

18 CINDY KISSKA: Hello? Hello?

19 DAVID DANNER: Yes. Ms. Kisska --

20 CINDY KISSKA: I -- yeah. Can I just quickly  
21 say one more thing?

22 DAVID DANNER: I -- yeah. Just -- I was  
23 going to get to you. So just --

24 CINDY KISSKA: Oh, okay.

25 DAVID DANNER: -- just hang on just a second.

1 CINDY KISSKA: Okay. I'm sorry.

2 DAVID DANNER: That's all right.

3 All right. So I just want to be clear that there  
4 is no one else on the line -- on the phone tonight who  
5 wishes to speak.

6 All right. Apparently so.

7 Ms. Kisska, please go ahead.

8 CINDY KISSKA: Okay. So somewhere I read  
9 online, and I quote, Puget Sound Energy is currently  
10 subject to the Washington Commission order that  
11 requires Puget Sound Energy to share its excess  
12 earnings above the authorized rate of return of  
13 7.39 percent with its customers.

14 In other words, the Washington Commission ordered  
15 Puget Sound Energy to share its excess earnings with  
16 its customers. As far as I know, this never took  
17 place. Here's an order to Puget Sound Energy from the  
18 UT itself, but UT itself, I think, never enforced it.

19 Has -- and then I say, has Puget Sound Energy  
20 become such a powerful company that everyone, including  
21 the UTC, is afraid to stand up to them?

22 DAVID DANNER: All right. Thank you. Is  
23 that all?

24 CINDY KISSKA: Yes. That was it, sir.

25 DAVID DANNER: So because we don't basically

1 get into conversations like that at the public-comment  
2 hearing, I would ask you to refer -- I would ask you to  
3 refer that to the Office of Public Counsel.

4 CINDY KISSKA: Okay.

5 DAVID DANNER: And did you get her email  
6 address earlier?

7 CINDY KISSKA: I think I did, dear.

8 DAVID DANNER: Okay. Ms. Gafken, do you want  
9 to repeat it then for people?

10 CINDY KISSKA: I -- yeah. I've got it, dear,  
11 but go ahead.

12 DAVID DANNER: You do have it. Okay.  
13 Ms. Gafken, why don't you repeat it anyway?

14 LISA GAFKEN: Sure. I also have a barking  
15 dog in the background so I apologize for the noise.

16 But it is utilities -- so utility-plural --  
17 @atg.wa.gov. And I did also place that address into  
18 the chat. Someone else kindly put it in the chat as  
19 singular. It's actually utilities plural.

20 I'm sorry about the barking.

21 DAVID DANNER: So your dog hasn't been sworn  
22 in so we can't take any comment from her.

23 But, Andrew, did you get that -- the email that  
24 Ms. Gafken provided us?

25 ANDREW ROBERTS: Yeah. The -- the email for

1 the Public Counsel Unit is utilities@atg.wa.gov.

2 DAVID DANNER: All right. Thank you.

3 And so, Ms. Kisska, Ms. Gafken and/or Public  
4 Counsel Office can -- can answer the question that you  
5 have. And I --

6 CINDY KISSKA: It was more of a statement --  
7 sir, it was also a statement that, you know, was an  
8 order of -- that Puget Sound Energy supposed to share  
9 its excess earnings with its customers. That was  
10 really the point I was trying to make out -- say to  
11 everybody.

12 DAVID DANNER: Yes. And that --

13 CINDY KISSKA: That was an order. Right? It  
14 was ordered by the UTC.

15 DAVID DANNER: So --

16 CINDY KISSKA: You know, it is -- I'm  
17 wondering why it never happened, but I'm also making  
18 that statement, that that was, you know, I believe a  
19 fact.

20 DAVID DANNER: Well, I --

21 CINDY KISSKA: Yeah.

22 DAVID DANNER: -- will say that there is --  
23 yes. We did issue an order that said that.

24 CINDY KISSKA: Uh-huh.

25 DAVID DANNER: Ms. Gafken can provide you

1 with the facts around that so --

2 CINDY KISSKA: Okay.

3 DAVID DANNER: I --

4 CINDY KISSKA: Okay.

5 DAVID DANNER: Your question --

6 CINDY KISSKA: Yeah.

7 DAVID DANNER: -- as far as we take it as a  
8 rhetorical one, and we'll just --

9 CINDY KISSKA: Yes.

10 DAVID DANNER: -- leave that for this  
11 evening.

12 CINDY KISSKA: Okay. Thank you -- thank you.  
13 I understand. Yeah.

14 DAVID DANNER: I thank you very much.

15 So if there is no one else on the line who wishes  
16 to speak tonight, that brings us to the end of our  
17 public-comment hearing tonight.

18 We will be having an evidentiary hearing that will  
19 be coming up in the near future. I believe that is  
20 this Thursday. And so we -- we do take into  
21 consideration all the public comments, and the public  
22 comments are made part of the record in this  
23 proceeding.

24 So let me turn to my colleagues. Are there any  
25 comments that you wish to make before we adjourn

1           tonight?

2                   COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: This is Commissioner  
3 Rendahl, and I want just want to thank those who called  
4 in or appeared tonight and gave us your comments. We  
5 very much appreciate it.

6           CINDY KISSKA: Hello?

7           DAVID DANNER: All right. And --

8           CINDY KISSKA: Sir, excuse me. I missed --  
9 because I was -- there was a muting and unmuting and so  
10 I missed what you said about the evidentiary hearing on  
11 Thursday. What did you say just after you said  
12 Thursday?

13           DAVID DANNER: So this -- I'm saying we -- so  
14 the settlement comes before the UTC for a hearing.

15           CINDY KISSKA: Uh-huh.

16           DAVID DANNER: And these are the party -- the  
17 formal parties to the case will present the settlement  
18 to us, and then we will take it under advisement.

19           But I wanted to say that that's not an opportunity  
20 for us to receive further public comment. But I wanted  
21 to make clear that the public comments that we receive  
22 tonight and the written comments that we have received  
23 will all be made part of the record and are part of our  
24 determination going forward.

25           CINDY KISSKA: Okay. Very good.



1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, JAMIE BOOKER, A CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER IN AND FOR THE STATE OF WASHINGTON, RESIDING AT TACOMA, DO HEREBY CERTIFY;

THAT THE FOREGOING PROCEEDINGS WERE TAKEN BEFORE ME AND THEREAFTER REDUCED TO A TYPED FORMAT UNDER MY DIRECTION; THAT THE TRANSCRIPT IS A FULL, TRUE AND COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT OF SAID PROCEEDINGS CONSISTING OF PAGES 1 THROUGH 32;

THAT, AS A CCR IN THIS STATE, I AM BOUND BY THE RULES OF CONDUCT AS CODIFIED IN WAC 308-14-130; THAT COURT REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS AND FEES IN THIS CASE ARE OFFERED TO ALL PARTIES ON EQUAL TERMS.

THAT I AM NOT A RELATIVE, EMPLOYEE, ATTORNEY OR COUNSEL OF ANY PARTY TO THIS ACTION, OR RELATIVE OR EMPLOYEE OF ANY SUCH ATTORNEY OR COUNSEL, AND I AM NOT FINANCIALLY INTERESTED IN THE SAID ACTION OR THE OUTCOME THEREOF;

THAT UPON COMPLETION OF SIGNATURE, IF REQUIRED, THE ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT WILL BE SECURELY SEALED AND THE SAME SERVED UPON THE APPROPRIATE PARTY.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY HAND  
THIS 27TH DAY OF APRIL 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_  
JAMIE BOOKER, RPR, CCR NO. 3681