



Puget Sound Energy
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February 26, 2021

Filed Via Web Portal

Mr. Mark L. Johnson, Executive Director and Secretary
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
621 Woodland Square Loop SE
Lacey, WA 98503

**Re: Advice No. 2021-04
PSE Natural Gas Tariff Revision - Filed Electronically**

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Puget Sound Energy (“PSE”) hereby submits proposed revisions to its natural gas Schedule 129, Low Income Program. This filing, pursuant to RCW 80.28.060 and Chapter 480-80 WAC, proposes revisions to the following natural gas tariff sheets.

WN U-2, Tariff G - (Natural Gas Tariff):

2nd Revision of Sheet No. 1129-A.2 Schedule 129 Low Income Program (Continued)

1st Revision of Sheet No. 1129-A.3 Schedule 129 Low Income Program (Continued)

1st Revision of Sheet No. 1129-A.4 Schedule 129 Low Income Program (Continued)

The purpose of this filing is to revise PSE’s Schedule 129 Crisis Affected Customer Assistance Program (“CACAP”) as required by Order 01 in Docket U-200281 to provide additional bill payment assistance to customers who are impacted by the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. This proposal does not change the current Schedule 129 monthly rates.

In 2020, PSE established the CACAP to provide assistance to customers who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program successfully distributed over \$8.9 million in bill assistance funds to over 15,000 households from its inception in April 2020 through the program end date on September 30, 2020. PSE subsequently collaborated with its Low Income Advisory Group on October 13, 2020, November 16, 2020, November 30, 2020, December 15, 2020, January 12, 2021, February 2, 2021, and February 25, 2021, regarding the implementation of this revised CACAP, which has also been referred to as “CACAP-2” during those discussions.

PSE’s revised CACAP will be available to the PSE residential customers who meet both the criteria below:

1. Residential customers who have a past due balance on their PSE residential Gas Service

account; and

2. Residential customers whose total household income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level guidelines, based on their household income prior to the month of application.

Consistent with the Additional Funding for Customer Programs established in Paragraph 18 of Order 01 of Docket U-200281, the CACAP benefits available exclusively to PSE electric customers are capped at \$20 million and the CACAP benefits available exclusively to PSE natural gas customers are capped at \$7.7 million. The benefits will begin to be available on April 12, 2021.

PSE will determine the CACAP benefit amount for each customer based upon the total past due amount on their individual residential Gas Service account at the time of approval of their application. The maximum benefit per customer will be capped at \$2,500. Customers may apply for CACAP more than once during a 12-month period of October-September (“Program Year”).

Customers identified by PSE as income eligible due to receiving bill assistance via PSE’s Low Income Program (as approved in Docket Nos. UE-011570 and UG-011571, aka “HELP”), the federal government’s Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (“LIHEAP”), or PSE’s Warm Home Fund since October 1, 2019, and who have an amount due which is greater than sixty days past the due date as of the effective date of this tariff section of Schedule 129, will begin receiving their qualifying CACAP benefits automatically. PSE will check for customers meeting these criteria at the beginning of each new Program Year and right after the initial effective date of this tariff section.

PSE will determine customers’ eligibility to receive benefits under the revised CACAP:

1. No Customer Application Required: For customers who have a balance greater than 60 days past due and are identified as income eligible because they received bill assistance in the prior Program Year plus the current Program Year. (Bill assistance includes: the HELP, the LIHEAP, and PSE’s Warm Home Fund). Customers do not need to apply to receive CACAP bill assistance. PSE identifies eligible customers based on the applicable bill assistance plan participation and past due balance and notifies those customers of their eligibility. PSE automatically applies a credit on the identified customer’s current account balance up to \$2,500. Customers can re-apply later if they accumulate a past-due balance, have already met the income eligibility requirements for that program year, have not reached the \$2,500 maximum, and the CACAP funds are available.
2. Application, but no documentation: For customers who have a balance one day or more past due and are identified as income eligible because they received bill assistance in current Program Year. (Bill assistance includes: the HELP, the LIHEAP, and PSE’s Warm Home Fund). Customer applies but does not need to provide any documentation

(their application is auto-approved). PSE applies credit on the identified customer's current account balance up to \$2,500.

3. Application, but requires documentation: For customers who have a balance one day or more past due that have NOT received bill assistance in the current Program Year but may be income qualified. (Bill assistance includes: the HELP, the LIHEAP, and PSE's Warm Home Fund). Customer applies through the PSE Energy Portal or by manual application and provides income documentation. This application initiates a 14-day dunning lock, which prevents the customer from being disconnected for nonpayment during the 14-day period. PSE reviews income eligibility and, if approved, (1) applies a credit on the total account balance due (only) up to \$2,500, and (2) removes any account hold.

Cost recovery of the deferral of costs to fund this revised CACAP program, including grant distributions and education costs, will be addressed in either the next Schedule 129 filing or in the next general rate case.

The tariff sheets described herein reflect an issue date of February 26, 2021, and an effective date of March 28, 2021. Posting of the proposed tariff change for public inspection and review, as required by law and the Commission's rules and regulations, is being completed in accordance with WAC 480-90-193(1).

Please contact Veronica Martin at (425) 457-5624 for additional information about this filing. If you have any other questions, please contact me at (425) 456-2142.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jon A. Piliaris

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cc: Lisa Gafken, Public Counsel
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Attachments:
Gas Tariff Sheets (listed above)