



WEAF ADVISORY GROUP MEETING AGENDA
November 16, 2022: 3:00 – 4:00pm

1. Welcome and roll call – *Shannon Steed*

Community Action Agencies	Contact
Blue Mountain Action Council	Sylvia Schaefer
Community Action Connections	Dalia Ochoa
Community Action of Lewis, Mason, & Thurston Counties	Dale Lewis, Sandra Koch
Coastal Community Action Program	Debbie Gregg
Chelan-Douglas Community Action Council	Vern Gurnard, Kristi Hills, Alan Walker
Kitsap Community Resources	Kandi Balandran, Julie Barleta
Lower Columbia Community Action Center	Deanna Dahlberg, Kathy Bates
NW Community Action Center	Jose Alvarez
OIC of Washington	Heidi Silva, Isidra Sanchez, Casandra Ochoa
Opportunity Council	Marie Stangeland, Lorena Shah
Community Action of Skagit County	Misty Velasquez
Snohomish County Human Services Dept	Constance Hockett, Manu Morgan
WUTC Staff	
Hanna Navarro, Andrew Roberts, Andy Sellards	
The Energy Project	
Ross Quigley, Yochi Zakai	
Public Counsel	
Corey Dahl	
NW Energy Coalition	
Charlee Thompson	
Department of Commerce	
Michelle DeBell	
Cascade Natural Gas	
Pam Archer, Regulatory Analyst	
Chris Mickelson, Mgr Regulatory Affairs	
Byron Pfordte, Mgr Customer Experience	
Shannon Steed, Consumer Specialist	
Dan Tillis, Dir Customer Service	
Mark Chiles, VP of Regulatory Affairs & Customer Service	

2. Presentation of *Fall 2022 Energy Assistance Term Sheet*, attached, by The Energy Project, Public Counsel, NW Energy Coalition, 40 mins

Yochi – Reviewed Cascade Fall 2022 Energy Assistance Term Sheet

Corey – Concerned no clear explanation of how the outreach would happen for new customers. Would only reach existing customers. Collaborative agreement on inclusive outreach to all customers.

Charlee – Involved in Avista’s low-income advisory committee specific to build discount programs. Process that works well, each meeting has a specific discussion based on topic. Having that planning process works well. Suggest for these meetings.

Dan – 1E – Just want to clarify this is not just for customers who have participated in past – it is for all who needs assistance. Opt in any customer who has had assistance in the past. They can seek approval through company for discount program. As in OR, we would have a comprehensive outreach program. We do not exclude any customers.

Corey – That was my understanding. Just concern that motivation for the Commissioners request was that bills would increase significantly due to no steps for mitigation. Inclusive outreach for all/as many customers is brought forward.

3. Bill discount rate issue identification, by Advisory Group, 10 mins

Yochi – Reviewed TEP Feedback on Cascade Bill Disconnect Rate Proposal

Corey – Reiterate public counsel’s commitment to make sure we meet and have a shared goal of getting assistance to our customers – take time necessary to work out the build discount program.

Yochi - Not opposing interim program – just want to talk about everything first.

Dan- Mentioned in past, we’re open to some sort of arrearage forgiveness targeting to customers verified as need in past or now. Regarding 2A – not precise enough to help customers who would likely be in need or have exhibited need in past. Open to discussion options, no leftover funds. Is now the time or wait until higher rates go in affect? On number 3, - good ideas – we need to talk internally and get a consensus.

Hanna – 2 options for interim assistance are both good ideas we should explore.

Yochi– Reviewed TEP Feedback document

Provisions made to leverage funds. Some may be eligible for LIHEAP providing doc – number of customers may exempt due to immigration status.

Dan – Heightened threshold – Cascade moved to 200% FPL 2019. We don’t have 80% AMI integrated yet, due to complexity of calculator and timing.

Corey – Continued with document.

Hannah – Not enough time in process to determine details. A lot of questions.

Dan – Haven’t gotten into the details, no agreement on temporary program. Have temporary energy discount program in place in OR now (been in place since Oct 1). Some things brought forward, we’re still working to address and will work through next couple of months. Appreciate your feedback on the energy discount program. We are committed to have a program in place, and the goal is to get as much help to all customers. We will review the documents and discuss in the next upcoming meetings.

4. Clarification on intent to file a bill discount rate this week or not, by Cascade, 5-10 mins

Dan – With disappointment, Cascade will not move forward filing temporary energy disc program. Disappointment is that we firmly believe it’s the best way for mitigation during the winter season with the new rates through the PGA. Gives customer monthly recurring discounts that help with bill rates every month instead of increasing rates in spring. Ready to move forward with working with advisory group to address concerns and we know the Oct 1, 2023, is still a good goal. Will take time to address issues. Hold off on filing. Next steps, meet internally to talk and digest, then have a follow up meeting.

Yochi – Understandable you have not been able to digest everything. Thank you for listening and agreeing not to file. Willing to put in time to get it done.

Corey – Appreciate you receiving feedback. Confident can get forms of immediate relief to customers and in a way, it can be administered. Work through discount program that we feel good about and will be successful. All players prepared to implement.

Dan – Options for arrearage forgiveness grant – working to better understand NWN, Puget and other utilities. In contact with Forefront economics. See if their approach might help higher level of accuracy to determine the customers. #3 – Shannon will start looking at what those changes would look like. Add 25% to past usage, not bill amount, current calculator works on energy usage. Typically, don't get near CAP so room to work, ask for more if needed. Could have 16 AMI calculators, 1 for each county. 1 for FPL and 1 for AMI. Would choose best assistance for customer. Open to feedback, other options.

Michelle – Advise not to use 2 calculators. Complicate things.

Dan – Yochi – maybe you can look to see if there are other options, or if agencies would be ok with utilizing 2 calculators.

Michelle – Calculation is what it is – income vary county/county

Chris – Our benefit curve is built on the FPL and having it provide AMI for 16 counties would take some time to incorporate, unless the CAAs would like to have 17 different calculators, 16 AMI for each county and 1 for FPL. Cascade will need to investigate the AMI chart for PSE that Yochi provided and how its incorporated into their usage benefit curve calculator, if at all.

Dan – We will work to get it done as soon as we can.

Sylvia – Calculators not affecting agencies – tabs at bottom now. Information received is a lot – they will adjust to changes – they will do what is best for customers. Appreciate CNG working so closely with us.

Dan – Appreciate feedback. Chris – look at 2 calculator model for Sylvia's agency, see how it works, then expand.

5. Next steps, by all, 5 mins

Dan - Small group meeting next week. Committed to meet more often.

Yochi – We've been vague to "small group", there are multiple agencies, if any others interested, reach out to get added.

Meeting Adjourned