

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION, Complainant, v. NORTHWEST NATURAL GAS COMPANY, Respondent.	DOCKET UG-200994 ORDER 04
In the Matter of the Petition of NORTHWEST NATURAL GAS COMPANY For an Accounting Order Authorizing Deferred Accounting Treatment of Certain Start-up Costs Associated with a Major Information Technology and Services Project	DOCKET UG-200996 ORDER 01
In the Matter of the Petition of NORTHWEST NATURAL GAS COMPANY For an Accounting Order Authorizing Deferred Accounting Treatment of Conservation Potential Assessment Costs	DOCKET UG-210085 ORDER 01 GRANTING JOINT MOTION TO CONSOLIDATE PROCEEDINGS AND AMENDING PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE

BACKGROUND

- 1 On December 18, 2020, Northwest Natural Gas Company, d/b/a NW Natural, (NW Natural or Company) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) revisions to its currently effective Tariff WN U-6, Natural Gas Service.

The Commission suspended operation of the tariffs on January 7, 2021, by Order 01 in Docket UG-200994.

- 2 Also on December 18, 2020, NW Natural filed with the Commission a Petition for an Accounting Order Authorizing Deferred Accounting for Certain Start-up Costs Associated with a Major Information Technology and Services Project (IT Petition) in Docket UG-200996.
- 3 On January 19, 2021, the Commission convened a virtual prehearing conference in Docket UG-200994 and on January 26, 2021, the Commission issued a Prehearing Conference Order that, among other things, set various deadlines for filing testimony and established a date for an evidentiary hearing.
- 4 On February 8, 2021, NW Natural filed a Petition for an Accounting Order Authorizing Deferred Accounting Treatment of Conservation Potential Assessment Costs (Conservation Petition) in Docket UG-210085.
- 5 On May 5, 2021, Commission staff (Staff) filed a Joint Motion to Consolidate Proceedings and the Amend Procedural Schedule (Joint Motion), on behalf of the Company, the Public Counsel Unit of the Attorney General's Office (Public Counsel), the Alliance of Western Energy Consumers (AWEC), and The Energy Project. (collectively, the Parties).
- 6 In the Joint Motion, the Parties state that progress has been made towards a settlement in principle, and that consolidating the matters in Dockets UG-200996, UG-200994, and UG-210085 will assist the Parties with negotiating a potential settlement that resolves all three dockets. In light of this progress, the Parties request agreed changes to the procedural schedule relating to deadlines for filing testimony and exhibits.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION

- 7 The Commission grants the Joint Motion and adopts the proposed amendments to the procedural schedule as reflected in Appendix A to this Order. Pursuant to Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-07-375, parties may request modifications to the procedural schedule. WAC 480-07-320 allows the Commission to consolidate proceedings in which the facts or principles of law are related.
- 8 The Parties have demonstrated that NW Natural's proposed tariff revisions in Docket UG-200994 and the accounting petitions in Dockets UG-200996 and UG-210085 involve common issues of fact and law, *i.e.*, recovery of costs relating to specific projects.

- 9 The Parties have also demonstrated that the proposed modifications to the procedural schedule may facilitate the resolution of all three dockets by settlement. Accordingly, we conclude that granting the Joint Motion is consistent with the public interest.

ORDER

- 10 THE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT the Joint Motion to Consolidate Proceedings and Amend the Procedural Schedule is GRANTED. The revised procedural schedule is reflected in Appendix A, attached to, and incorporated into this Order by reference.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective May 10, 2021.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

/s/ Samantha Doyle
SAMANTHA DOYLE
Administrative Law Judge

**APPENDIX A
PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE
DOCKET UG-200994, UG-200996, UG-210085**

EVENT	DATE
Initial Filing	Friday, December 18, 2020
Prehearing Conference	Tuesday, January 19, 2021
Initial Settlement Conference	Tuesday, April 13, 2021
Staff, Public Counsel and Intervenor Response Testimony and Exhibits ¹	Tuesday, June 15, 2021²
NW Natural Circulates Joint Issues Matrix	Wednesday, June 23, 2021
Settlement Conference	Wednesday, June 23, 2021
Company Rebuttal Testimony and Exhibits; Staff, Public Counsel and Intervenor Cross-Answering Testimony and Exhibits ³	Friday, July 27, 2021
Notice Issued for Public Comment Hearing	30 days prior to Public Comment Hearing
Public Comment Hearing	TBD (Exact date and location to be determined)
Discovery Deadline – Last Day to Issue Data Requests ⁴	Thursday, August 5, 2021
NW Natural Files Joint Issues Matrix	Friday, August 13, 2021
Exhibit List, Cross-Examination Exhibits, Witness Lists, Time Estimates, and Exhibit Errata	Monday, August 16, 2021
Evidentiary Hearing	Monday and Tuesday, August 23 and 24, 2021
Initial Post-Hearing Briefs and Updated Joint Issues Matrix	Friday, September 24, 2021
Simultaneous Reply Briefs	Friday, October 8, 2021
Statutory Suspension Date	November 18, 2021

¹ Response time to data requests relating to this testimony will be 7 business days.

² Highlighted dates reflect modifications to the original schedule.

³ Response time to data requests relating to this testimony will be 5 business days.

⁴ Response time to data requests will be 5 business days.

