

Julie Honekamp
SNAP

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Breathe, Focus, Smile

Good afternoon Chairman Danner and Commissioner Rendahl and Commissioner Balasbas.

My name is Julie Honekamp and I serve as the CEO at Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners ~~better known as SNAP~~. For 52 years SNAP has served as the Spokane area community action agency and the primary energy assistance and weatherization provider in Spokane County. Additionally, SNAP's subsidiary SNAP Financial Access is a chartered as at Department of Treasury Community Development Financial Institution focused on small business lending and economic development efforts.

In **2017** SNAP served just shy of 49,000 unduplicated low income individuals through nearly 30 programs aimed at either stabilizing low income individuals OR equipping them to exit poverty.

In a subset of our work, in **2017** SNAP provided energy assistance to **16,296 unduplicated** low income households through a mix of public, private and rate payer dollars.

Additionally SNAP **weatherized 216 homes**, and helped create **108 jobs by starting or expanding 48 small businesses** through our economic development efforts.

My intention today is to share our hopes and thoughts about the proposed Avista Hydro One merger and the settlement proposal

After taking time to review the highlights of the proposed settlement as summarized by several parties, I believe that from a macro level and with regard to low income consumers the net benefit test appears to be met. While individual consumers may feel otherwise, I believe that in total low income consumers will benefit as a result of this merger.

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negotiated
by several
parties

43 Strategic choice

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I believe

- The consumer rate credits
- Increased community Contributions
- Low Income Weatherization,
- Security Deposit elimination
- Continue LIRAP funding including the pilot programs

Are all strong signals of a commitment to low income households in Washington.

I am particularly pleased to see acknowledgments around

- The need for AMI consumer protections particularly with regard to remote disconnect and prepayment.
- Funding for low income participation in renewables. For many years renewable energy and equipment have been out of the reach of low income households and organizations.
- As Spokane's lead weatherization provider we well know the energy efficiency challenges involved with older manufactured housing. We were pleased to learn of Avista/Hydro Ones openness to a manufactured home replacement project.
- Like renewables, electric vehicles and equipment have largely remained out of the realm of both low income residential customers and organizations that serve low income. We are pleased to see this included in the proposed settlement.

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- We appreciate Avista maintaining their level of commitment to economic development efforts. As we grow the business infrastructure of our community we all thrive. SNAP Financial Access works with Avista loan funds to help small entrepreneurs get on their feet and grow.

I believe Avista plays a critical role in Spokane's and the Inland Northwest's greater economic vitality. They are key leaders and corporate citizens and maintaining their headquarters, staff and leaders in Spokane is critical to our community. Avista's roots are old and deep in this community.

If I have any concerns about this proposed merger it is not for the next 5 – 10 years, but for a longer term horizon. The 20-50 year timeframe.

Will the low income rate payers I bring voice to today still be as considered in 50 years as they are today? Will hydro one consider the needs of low income customers as much as industrial users? *of environmental concerns*

To this end, I encourage Avista to seat and maintain a Board Member who brings a strong, regional knowledge of low income, weatherization, energy assistance and economic development issues. This governance level perspective will help to ensure that low income voices are considered.

In closing I want to express my gratitude to

- Avista staff. While Avista and SNAP's missions maybe different they are certainly complimentary and both share a desire for a robust and healthy and strong community.
- I am grateful for our strong partnership and innovative and collaborative working style. I hope we can form an equally strong partnership with Hydro One.
- THANK YOU FOR Commission *ers* for holding a hearing in SPOKANE FOR striving to be fair and just on behalf of all ratepayers.