

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

ALEXANDER AND ELENA
ARGUNOV, THOMAS AND HEIDI
JOHNSON, CHAD AND VICTORIA
GROESBECK,

Complainants,

v.

PUGET SOUND ENERGY,

Respondent.

DOCKET UE-220701

ORDER 03

GRANTING COMMISSION STAFF’S
MOTION TO WITHDRAW WITH
CONDITIONS

- 1 On September 15, 2022, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) served on Puget Sound Energy (PSE or Company) the formal complaint (Complaint) of Alexander and Elena Argunov, Thomas and Heidi Johnson, and Chad and Victoria Groesbeck (Complainants). The Complaint alleges that PSE violated several Commission rules contained in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100.
- 2 On November 1, 2022, the Commission entered Order 01, Prehearing Conference Order and Notice of Hearing, noticing an evidentiary hearing on Tuesday, March 14, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. The Commission took appearances from PSE, Complainants, Commission staff (Staff), and the Public Counsel Unit of the Attorney General’s Office.
- 3 On December 6, 2022, Staff filed a Confidential Motion to Withdraw as a Party Subject to Conditions (Motion to Withdraw With Conditions). Staff averred that its primary role in this proceeding is to act as an impartial investigator and that it would be an inefficient use of Commission resources to require Staff to continue as a formal party. Staff notes that it would make Staff witness Consumer Protection Manager Sheri Hoyt available as a witness should this matter proceed to an evidentiary hearing.

DISCUSSION

- 4 After the Commission initiates an adjudication, a party may withdraw from that proceeding only upon permission granted by the Commission.¹ The Commission shall grant such a motion to withdraw when it is in the public interest.²
- 5 In this case, the Commission agrees that it would represent an inefficient use of Commission resources to require Staff to continue as a party to the proceeding. Staff may reasonably continue to serve in its role as an impartial investigator by providing its designated witness if this matter proceeds to an evidentiary hearing. The Commission finds Staff's proposed conditions sufficient and finds it appropriate to decide this issue without further briefing or responses from other parties.

ORDER

- 6 THE COMMISSION ORDERS That Commission staff's Motion to Withdraw with Conditions is GRANTED.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective February 6, 2023.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

/s/ Michael S. Howard

Michael S. Howard

Administrative Law Judge

NOTICE TO PARTIES: This is an Interlocutory Order of the Commission. Administrative review may be available through a petition for review, filed within 10 days of the service of this Order pursuant to WAC 480-07-810.

¹ WAC 480-07-380(3)(a).

² WAC 480-07-380(3)(b).