

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of	)	DOCKET NO. PG-031828
	)	
PUGET SOUND ENERGY,	)	ORDER NO. 01
	)	
Petitioner,	)	
	)	
Seeking Temporary Authorization to	)	
Operate a Facility with a Maximum	)	
Allowable Operating Pressure	)	
Greater Than Two Hundred Fifty	)	
pounds per square inch gauge	)	
Pursuant to WAC 480-93-030.	)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION
.....	)	

**BACKGROUND**

- 1 On October 23, 2003, Puget Sound Energy (PSE), filed with the Commission a petition requesting Commission approval to temporarily operate above 250 pounds per square inch gauge (psig) for a period not exceed 24 hours within thirty days from the effective date of this order.
  
- 2 WAC 480-93-183 (2) requires gas companies to petition the Commission for a waiver of WAC 480-93-030 if applicable, before operating a pipeline above two hundred fifty psig. Consistent with WAC 480-93-230 the Commission considered the petition at its regular open meeting on December 10, 2003.

**DISCUSSION**

- 3 PSE proposes to uprate the Maximum Allowable Operating Pressure (MAOP) of the 3.9 mile, 6 inch diameter North Chehalis Limited Supply (NCLS) system from the current 100 psig to a new MAOP of 280 psig. The pressure increase is necessary to provide needed capacity to serve the cities of Centralia and Chehalis, and eliminate cold weather station by-passing.

- 4 PSE intends to petition the Commission for a permanent waiver of WAC 480-93-030 within 30 days of the effective date of this order. A notification letter has been prepared and will be sent to property owners detailing PSE's proposal, and where and when comments can be made. The request for temporary approval allows PSE to establish a new MAOP, by verifying through testing that operations at that level would be safe. PSE would then proceed with the uprate process after public comment. Testing to establish a new MAOP normally takes no more than 1 day.
- 5 PSE has provided a copy of its uprate procedure to the Commission's Pipeline Safety Division Staff (Staff) for review. Staff reports that the proposed uprate procedure meets all applicable state and federal pipeline safety codes and requirements.
- 6 PSE proposes to increase the MAOP of the NCLS system from 100 psig to 280 psig. Currently, the downstream load on the intermediate pressure (IP) distribution system fed by the NCLS reduces the high pressure system such that manual by-pass of the NCLS and curtailment of large customers has been required during cold weather. Completion of this uprate will increase system supply pressure, increase capacity of the district regulators feeding downstream IP distribution systems, eliminate the need for manual by-passes, and avoid further customer interruptions.
- 7 PSE is conducting preliminary field work to ensure that system regulators, overpressure protection and other components are compatible with the proposed system uprate.
- 8 Pipelines are designed to withstand higher pressure than the MAOP, which limits the operating pressure. Natural gas pipeline safety rules specify that pipelines in a highly populated area be operated at pressures producing a hoop stress of no greater than 40% of specified minimum yield strength of the pipe.

The proposed MAOP will create a hoop stress of approximately 14.1% of the pipe's specified minimum yield strength, providing a higher margin of safety.

- 9 Once the new MAOP has been successfully established, the operating pressure will be reduced to less than 250 psig until PSE gets approval to operate permanently at the new MAOP.

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 10 1) The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission is an agency of the State of Washington vested by statute with the authority to regulate public service companies, including every person or corporation transporting natural gas by pipeline, or having for one or more of its principal purposes the construction, maintenance or operation of pipelines for transporting natural gas. *RCW 80.28.210.*
- 11 2) PSE is a public service company subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission under the provisions of RCW 80.28.210 and Chapter 480-93 WAC.
- 12 3) This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on December 10, 2003.
- 13 4) After examination of the petition and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission finds it consistent with the public interest to grant PSE's request to operate above 250 psig, subject to conditions.
- 14 5) This approval is conditioned on:

- (a) The operating pressure of the pipeline not exceeding 280 psig without Commission approval;
  - (b) PSE completing all preliminary field work prior to beginning the uprate procedure;
  - (c) PSE classifying and repairing all identified leaks before proceeding with the next pressure increase;
  - (d) PSE reducing and maintaining an operating pressure not to exceed 250 psig upon completion of the uprate process; and
  - (e) PSE exceeding 250 psig for only one period not to exceed 24 hours, to be completed no later than thirty days from the effective date of this order.
- 15    6)    The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission has jurisdiction over the subject matter of, and all parties to, these proceedings.
- 16    7)    Puget Sound Energy is a public service company as defined in RCW 80.04.010.
- 17    8)    Puget Sound Energy should be granted a waiver of WAC 480-93-030 to temporarily operate above 250 pounds per square inch gauge (psig) for one period not to exceed 24 hours within thirty days from the effective date of this Order.

**ORDER**

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 18     1)     The request by Puget Sound Energy for a waiver of WAC 480-93-030, to temporarily operate above 250 pounds per square inch gauge (psig) for one period not to exceed 24 hours within thirty days from the effective date of this Order.
- 19     2)     As a condition of the grant of the waiver, Puget Sound Energy must implement the additional safety measures listed in Paragraph 14.

The Commissioners, having determined this Order to be consistent with the public interest, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective this 10<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2003.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary