

APPENDIX A

Diana Otto

From: Pat Dutton
To: Diana Jones; Diana Otto; Eugene Blake, Jr.; Ken Chapman; Lori Kanz; Mary Taylor; Michael Meeks; Pam Smith; Pat Dutton; Roger Kouchi; Suzanne Stillwell; Vicki Rasmussen
Subject: FW: Prior Obligation
Date: Tuesday, May 30, 1995 8:13AM

FYI - Let me know if you have questions. Pat

From: Pat Dutton
To: LOGEN
Cc: Pat Dutton
Subject: RE: Prior Obligation
Date: Tuesday, May 30, 1995 8:10AM

Lynn - First let me say I regret the delay in responding. It has been very "hectic" down here.

While I can't agree to not look at complaints prior to May 1 in a certain light (not that it matters much now), I can agree that if there is a problem encountered on a specific complaint you and I can review it to determine whether the action was appropriate and what the resolution ought to be. I hope that works for you.

If I am reading your e-mail correctly, it looks like we have agreement on how priors will be treated by Puget and Consumer Affairs staff. ~~The prior will be the amount that has already been billed at disconnect rather than the amount that has gone thru the meter and Puget agrees to make sure its customers understand the options available.~~

For customers who choose to not use the prior obligation rule there shouldn't be an issue - the amounts owed will not be treated as a prior obligation because the customer has agreed to a special arrangement between company and customer. Should Puget and my staff have a disagreement on handling these, you and I can look into them to determine appropriate handling (I don't think this will happen but it may be confusing to our staffs and if so hopefully we can provide more clarity through example.) If Puget really wants to close this loop, however, I suggest it send confirming letters to these customers stating the terms they agreed to (this is something U S WEST and other utilities currently do and it seems to work for them) - that should minimize misunderstandings between the company and its customers. I don't think you need to necessarily explain the terms of the prior obligation rule but you need to make it clear what arrangements have been chosen by the customer and the consequences if the arrangements aren't kept.

Let me know if you have questions, or we have a problem. Thanks and again I am sorry it took me so long to respond. Pat Dutton

APPENDIX B

This letter is sent as a reminder regarding the application of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission's prior obligation rules.

WAC 480-90-123(2) applies to gas companies, and WAC 480-100-123(3) applies to electric companies. The rules state "...A prior obligation is the dollar amount, excluding deposit amounts owed, the utility has billed to the customer and for which the utility has not received payment at the time the service has been disconnected for nonpayment....".

At the time of disconnection, the customer has two options for restoring service:

- 1) The customer must either pay the full amount owing shown on the disconnection notice, plus any reconnection fee, if the company is unwilling to bill that fee; or,
- 2) If the customer is unable to pay the full amount for which he or she was disconnected, the company must advise the customer of his or her right to instead pay a new deposit, plus reconnection fee, if the company is unwilling to bill that fee. If the customer is unable to pay the full deposit amount, the company must offer deposit arrangements in accordance with WAC 480-90-113(4) for gas companies and WAC 480-100-113(4) for electric companies of no more than half to be paid at the time of restoral, and the other half spread equally over the next two months. The company may spread the arrangements over more months, but not less.

If the customer is unable to pay the full amount owing, then past due amount shown on the disconnection notice, plus any other amount that has already been billed to the customer, immediately becomes prior obligation.

The company may, in addition to collecting a deposit under option 2, accept arrangements on the prior obligation amount to keep it from going to outside collections. However, the pending dollar amount not paid must still be considered prior obligation. The company must never again threaten a customer's service over the prior obligation amount if the customer fails to make or keep the arrangement on that amount.

The only time, after a disconnection of service that the past due amount does not become prior obligation, is:

- 1) When the customer pays the total amount shown past due on the effecting disconnection notice; or,
- 2) When the disconnection of service happened because the customer did not keep the payment arrangement made under the winter low-income payment program in WAC 480-90-143 for gas customers, and WAC 480-100-143 for electric customers.

If you have questions about these rules, please contact Diana Otto at (360) 664-1104.

APPENDIX C

Otto, Diana (UTC)

From: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC)
Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2009 1:48 PM
To: 'Walker, Dee -Kirby'
Cc: Otto, Diana (UTC)
Subject: RE:

If only the gas was disconnected, the prior obligation amount is anything billed at the time of disconnected; in this case \$2000. If the customer pays the noticed amount of \$500; it is considered a current active account.

From: Walker, Dee -Kirby [mailto:Dee.Walker@pse.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2009 11:40 AM
To: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC)
Cc: Walker, Dee -Kirby
Subject: RE:

I missed another part of our question. See my additional comment in blue below

dw

From: Walker, Dee -Kirby
Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2009 11:24 AM
To: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC)
Cc: Walker, Dee -Kirby
Subject:

Hello Suzanne.

We have additional questions regarding prior obligation. The Tara Connelly complaint and the questions surrounding it have resulted in our belief that we need further clarification. We are going to flow chart our process to show the decision points and criteria that we use in working with our customers. I believe your input and then sitting in on the training class helped, and now we are getting into some of the real life detail that we need to be able to address consistently.

Clarification you and staff can provide will assist us in the flow charting process - we will then ask to share our definitions and results with you to be sure we are in sync.

Here is an example that I was shown yesterday - and it results in several questions.

A customer uses PSE gas and electric energy
Their total past due bill is \$5000
this breaks down to gas \$2000
electric \$3000

Customer is disconnected for gas.
Amount they are disconnected for is \$500
All that shows on the disconnect notice put on their door is \$500

So, the question is: What amount is "prior"

the total amount on the combined account that is past due? ie \$5000
the total amount on the gas account (the shut off) that is past due? ie \$2000

or, the total amount they were disconnected for (and all that shows on the disconnect notice on the door) - \$500

We are confused about parts of Sharon's letter (copied below), particularly as related to what is meant by "the full amount owing" (see the paragraph immediately following the first two bullet points). I believe this is the key phrase we need to understand. It goes back to the questions I asked above: What is the "full amount owing"? the \$5000, \$2000, or \$500? Please note that the "disconnection notice" in PSE terminology only shows \$500 - see bullet 1 below - that tells me that using PSE terminology, then the full amount owing is \$500.....

If you then look at bullet 1 in the second group where Sharon says "The only time, after a disconnection of service that the past due amount does not become prior obligation is: 1) when the customer pays the total amount shown past due on the effecting disconnection notice or" - if you look at the comment above, when the disconnection notice only shows \$500, does that become the "total amount owing on the disconnection notice"? If so, if the customer pays this amount, then the past due amount does not become prior.

Thanks! With your input and once we have flow charted the process, I will let you know and I believe it would be a good idea to have a couple of our key people meet with you and some of the others from the commission to walk through some real examples to be certain we are clear and consistent

Dee

APPENDIX D

Washington UTC Complaint

106758

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 880-170-503-2

Elisabeth Brown

Contact:

131st ave ne

bellevue, wa 98005

Primary Phone: (425) 636-8281

Secondary: (206) 218-6299

E-mail addr: lbenestad@gmail.com

Complaint: 106758

Serviced by: Gail Griffin-Wallace

Opened on: 06/15/2009

Grouped by: Disputed Bill

Closed on: 09/22/2009

Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Customer believes she has been disconnected for an amount that is prior obligation. In addition, she believes she has been overcharged for her deposits.

Please provide a 12 month account history.

Please provide calculations for any deposit request in 2009

passed to pse via email 6/15 @ 2:40pm - your initial response to this complaint is due by close of business 6/17/09

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 06/14/2009 02:37 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace << customer



Please explain your complaint in detail.

This started in Jan with my first bill for \$2300. for 1 month, this was current charges and an \$1126. deposit plus \$276. from June at a previous residence I vacated in APRIL, so I never saw or recieved that bill. I did not have enough to cover this bill. I could only cover the current .or deposit not both. I started calling pse in beginning of Feb. to try and work this out. Took till the end of March to get an answer. Which of course was no. No one ever offered to let me pay the month ahead. So I spoke with Rachael and did exactly what she told me to do. They shut us off Mar 30th. I paid 1/2 the deposit and reconnect. Only they had added another \$200 plus to the deposit. Anyway I paid the ballance of the deposit as agreed.I've also paid the current charges on time since Mar 30th. I also specifically stated the bill before Mar 30 is prior obligation, said that 3 times also emailed so I cannot be shut off twice for that amount and I have till Oct 15th to pay it off. Since Mar 30th I have paid PSE \$2744. I finished paying the dep in May today payed the current bill of \$522. Due 6/10/09. So all kosher? Hell no Mr greedy PSE They sent me a bill for May demanding now a \$2300. deposit and \$1100. past due plus my \$500 current for a total of \$4070. They have done the most screwed up bookeeping and I will send you copies. It's incredible the blatant disregard for my rights as a consumer the deposit is 5 times my monthly bill, and they credited the deposit I just paid and all my current charge payments to the back

so they can threaten me with another shut off and this totally out of control deposit. As current charges. My next stop is an attorneys office. I don't expect a free ride nor am I asking for hand outs, what is supposed to be a public utilities, but private company. So no other choice for us the public, does not have the right to blatantly charge, credit and recharge and credit and recharge the one time late fee for the charge than credit than one more one time late fee for the same charge they just credited than credit the deposit they change 3times in 4 months than credit. Are you confused yet. Good than read my bills. It's so unbelievable. By the way I also saw the paper today about the woman w/stage 4 cancer, who PSE is going to shut off for under \$400. Which would cost her her life. They don't give a rats ass. It's all about \$\$\$\$\$

The working poor don't count right???? Please give me some faith in our government, and set this right so I can keep my house. the 7 people that live here deserve to get public utilities for the public not the rich. PSE needs to be dropped kicked and shook up. They are not god nor should they be allowed to act like it. Times are real tough for all of us, so a fair shake should not be too much to ask.

Did you speak to a supervisor from your utility or transportation company?
No

If 'Yes', what was the result?

What do you think the company should do to resolve your complaint?

This has been harrassment for me since Jan I go to bed stressed about it and wake up stressed about it. None of us make much money, we are constantly searching for work, the increase of prices for everything is not reflected in our pay. I think PSE should skip the deposit as long as I stay current on current charges and let me pay the back by Oct 15th. If I fail than kick in the deposit. They are not depending on my \$\$ to keep their doors open, they wan't this huge deposit for their slussh fund. This will put not only me but 6 other people out of our home. I owe them \$1100. to the back and could clear that by Aug/Sept. My life has been living hell since Dec/Jan over this staggering \$4000 bill which is 3 times what we actually owe them. Our average is \$5 to \$700 a month. I think \$2700 in 2 months is a hell of an effort to resolve this and that it is time for them to step up and act reasonable.

*** 06/15/2009 02:42 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Dear Ms. Brown:

Thank you for contacting the Utilities and Transportation Commission regarding your complaint against Puget Sound Energy. I have opened an informal complaint investigation on your behalf, and will work with the company to resolve your complaint. Complaints usually take between two and four weeks to complete, depending on the complexity. If you have questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 1-800-562-6150.

Sincerely,
gpg-w

*** 06/17/2009 06:49 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << lis brown



Thank you very much for looking in to this. Any help will be great, this has been an ongoing frustration all spring and is a serious threat to the stability of my household. It is a struggle to make the rent and utilities every month as is. That deposit is out of my reach. Enjoy your reading, I just hope you make sense out of it. Please note I paid the \$1344. deposit amount, I don't know where the \$2000. they credited in May came from. Call me if you have questions, and I will wait to hear from you. Thank you again for your time on this.
Lis Brown

*****SEE ATTACHMENTS*****

***** 06/17/2009 02:10 PM Attachment: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << molly brown pse**



Gail:

Please refer to Complaint #105881 for background up through March. I will provide account information from March forward. This complaint also has the deposit calculations.

Remarks dated 5/5/09: "On March 27th Elisabeth was disconnected for both her gas and electric deposits. She was reconnected and the acct was processed as prior obligation. Per WAC rules #480-100-123 for electric and #480-90-123 for gas, since it was a deposit she was disc for she would not qualify for prior. If she is disconnected for usage down the road, then of course she could go prior ob".

You will see a number of entries on 3/27/09 which was the agent processing the account as prior obligation. However, in May, the account was reviewed and reprocessed since a customer can not go prior obligation on the deposits. Also appears new deposit amounts have been charged.

My calculations:

Gas Deposit = $3526/12 \times 2 \times 1.132$ charge factor = \$665, CLX asked for \$647.

Electric Deposit = $\$4432 / 12 \times 2 = \738 , CLX asked for \$697.

Both Deposits have been paid in full.

Electric Collectibles owing = \$1758.99

Gas Collectibles owing = \$1951.86

Before PSE would make any arrangements, both gas and electric past due charges over 90 days old needs to be paid in full.

Electric needing to be paid before arrangements made = \$487.29.

Gas charges needing to be paid before arrangements made = \$772.19.

***** 06/22/2009 03:47 PM Action: Gail Griffin-Wallace**




Requested DO review to determine if statements by PSE are correct.


***** 06/24/2009 09:16 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown**


Molly, can you point me to where it states a customer can not go prior on deposits. Do you have an opinion from previous meeting with staff?
Thanks - Gail

*** 06/24/2009 09:49 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly

WAC 480-90/100-123(3).

*** 06/30/2009 10:42 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown

Molly,
Was the customer disconnected? When?

*** 07/01/2009 03:43 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly

Gail:
Please see my email dated 6/17/09 which stated "On March 27th , Elisabeth was disconnected for both gas and electric deposits." Even though she was disconnected for the deposits, PSE processed the full account as prior. She has not been disconnected again but is up for disconnection for both gas and electric usage (\$487.29 Electric and \$722.19 Gas).

*** 07/10/2009 03:21 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> pse

Molly,
I am having a great deal of difficulty trying to figure out the activity. What was the amount billed at time of disconnect? How much went to prior obligation. If deposit amount were billed, they still go into prior and PSE can request a new deposit. I need an activity accounting with the prior removed.
Thanks - Gail

*** 07/13/2009 05:00 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly

Gail:

Elisabeth was disconnected for the deposits, NOT usage.

As you are aware, WAC 480-100-123 (2) states:
An electric utility may not refuse to provide new or additional service to a residential applicant or residential customer who has a prior obligation. A prior obligation is the dollar amount, excluding deposit amounts owed, the utility has billed to the customer and for which the utility has not received payment at the time the service has been disconnected for nonpayment. The utility must provide service once the customer or applicant has paid all appropriate deposit and reconnection fees. This subsection does not apply to customers that have been disconnected for failure to honor the terms of a winter low-income payment program.

PSE does not feel that this customer meets the prior obligation criteria since she was disconnected for the deposits.

Perhaps we need further clarification. Please provide PSE with an interpretation of this WAC rule that states the deposit would be considered a prior obligation.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 07/17/2009 03:34 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << lis brown



Gail,

I am getting the shut off notices again from PSE. The bill is still sitting at \$4000. with current charges for June of \$379. They are still asking for the 2400 deposit which is an unbelievable amount to expect from a resident. That is 6 months worth of useage. I struggled very hard to get them the original 1300. deposit. Since they did there creative bookeeping and ignored the prior obligation before March 30th. I know keeping the current charges paid makes no difference to them. They just want that deposit again. I am very worried they will shut us off, and I will not be able to raise the money to turn it back on. I know they don't really care, for us it's home or street. The economy has yet to rebound enough for rent increases or jobs. I also have a guy who was hurt last week and faces surgery next week so now his rent is on hold. No insurance either. I do not go for public welfare I choose to earn my own way, it's not an easy one but it's mine and I'm ok with that. We are the working poor, but we still do work. Having this black clouds hanging over me for the last 6 months is wearing me out the stress is hell. We are all constantly searching for any work we can find to keep our house going. I have one person with a honest legitimate 9 to 5 job. One on unemployment, 3 of us do peice work. We've made it this far but that not so jolly fatassed giant PSE can step on us anytime we will be done. This situation could very easily throw me and those with me in the street literally. Any help you can get us would be so wonderful or at least some sort of reasonable arrangement that we can live with. Oh and did you make sense of my bills I sent you? Thank you so much for your time and efforts,
Lis Brown

206-218-6299 or 425-636-8281

*** 07/21/2009 11:57 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> molly brown



Had conversation with PSE after discussing another complaint by phone. PSE explained that the customer was never disconnected for usage that the disconnect was for deposit amounts only. As a result, customer payments were applied to the deposit and not the balance owed.

*** 07/21/2009 12:21 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> pse



Molly,

Is there a balance on the deposit at this time? Please provide an update on the account history as of May 31, 2009.

Thanks- Gail

*** 07/21/2009 12:26 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> cust



called customer - lmtc

*** 07/21/2009 12:46 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Both gas and electric deposits have been satisfied.
Attached is statement activity from 5/31/09 to current.

I would recommend she get disconnected and go prior.

*** 07/30/2009 03:27 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace << customer



Customer returned call - advised customer that due to the complexity of the complaint I would need to re-familiarize myself with it before talking to her. Customer agreed to call tomorrow morning for update.

*** 07/31/2009 11:06 AM Attachment: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Sorry.

see attachments

*** 07/31/2009 12:04 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



customer called and advised gas was disconnected yesterday evening.

*** 07/31/2009 12:56 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << lis brown



Gail,
You mentioned adding up the gas and electric usage. Well I added them up
Gas for 7 months \$1857.66 ave \$265.38x2= \$530.76

PSE \$1329.19 ?

That's only \$798.46 overcharge for just the gas deposit.

Electric for 7 mo.\$2030.25 ave \$290.05x2=\$580.10

PSE \$1035.42

That's only \$455.32 overcharge for electric.

So they would have tied up an extra \$1253.78 of my hard earned desperately needed money. For more than a year. In case they haven't figured it out the overcharge comes from the creative tap dancing in Mays bill. Causing them to add each month twice ie once on the monthly and duplicated on Mays bill. I can find some time to help them w math. Hopefully this is not a common occurrence.. Not to mention the orig \$1100 was in line the \$1344. I paid a stretch, and the \$2300. they want now , 3 fries short of a happy meal.

*** 07/31/2009 01:04 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) >> 'lis brown'



I need to talk to you as soon as possible - please call

*** 07/31/2009 01:55 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



I feel bad about the disconnect but as I said credit was held until July 21st with the expectation that a disconnect complaint would be reviewed and closed before 30 days. Unfortunately, I did not baby-sit the credit suspension.

Gas Deposit is calculated at roughly \$577 so 1/2 would be \$288.50. PSE will waive the reconnect charges.

If she chooses not to go prior, the PSE will ask for 50% of the past due collectibles owing immediately before PSE would offer new arrangements. The amount Elisabeth would need to pay would be \$745. So it would appear the prior obligation is the way to proceed with this customer.

The electric is also subject to disconnect for \$450.25 however, I canceled the disconnect order but that won't stop the credit action (delinquent notices).

Please advise me what you would like me to do. We need to get a reconnect order in for gas before 3:00 PM.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 07/31/2009 03:13 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



called customer - provided PSE options. Customer still believes that the amount owed is incorrect and will send copies of bill statements and notices from 1/2009. Customer however agreed to pay the \$288 half deposit for reconnection of gas. I told customer I will review her bill statements when they arrive.

*** 07/31/2009 03:47 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Once she calls in her payment and gives PSE a confirmation # PSE will order the reconnect. If she calls in before I leave, I then can assist in the ordering of the reconnect. I will remark the account to process prior, to order reconnect and to try and get it done tonight.

*** 08/03/2009 10:07 AM Action: Gail Griffin-Wallace



Referred complaint to DO to review.

1. are there amounts that should have been prior obligation?
2. What would be the best approach to explain this to the consumer?

*** 08/05/2009 11:30 AM Email: Diana Otto >> Dee Walker, cc: Stillwell, Wallace, Barard, bc: Gail



Dee, Gail Griffin Wallace requested that I review one of her complaints. It is a billing dispute, and the customer does not believe the deposit amounts were warranted, or that she owes the amounts being requested on the disconnect notices. As I reviewed the complaint, I noticed several issues that we have had previous discussions about, however, it appears as if the company continues to not understand the application of several rules.

1. Refer to the activity on 6/17/09 2:10 p.m. PSE states that the account could not go prior because the customer was disconnected for deposit amounts, rather than usage amounts. PSE quotes WAC 480-90/100-123 as the basis for this decision. PSE's interpretation of the rule is incorrect. The rule states that any deposit amount owing does not become part of the prior obligation. Example: Customer has been billed a combined amount of \$400.00 for gas and electric service. The customer also was billed \$200 for a deposit, which has not yet been paid. The customer is disconnected for not paying the

New arrangements on what? I thought it was perfectly clear during previous meetings between PSE and our staff that the customer must pay all amounts owing on the disconnect notice to be restored, or, all amounts billed at the time of disconnect are prior obligation. If the full amount of the disconnect notice is not paid, the account goes prior, and the customer must be allowed to pay no more than one-half of a new deposit, plus, a reconnect fee to restore service. It appears PSE still does not understand prior obligation.

Dee, please have Molly finish the complaint with Gail. However, if you have any questions about the above information, please contact me.

Thank you.
Diana
1-360-664-1104

*** 08/05/2009 11:47 AM Email: Otto, Diana (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Thank you for the synopsis of this complaint.

I will follow up with Molly to be sure that the details are sorted out properly and that she and Gail are in complete agreement on getting this addressed promptly.

I will also give you my feedback once I have had a chance to review the details.

Dee Walker

*** 08/05/2009 01:11 PM Violation: 480-90-123(2) -



Violation: WAC 480-90-123(2) for not moving the billed amounts to prior obligation. The customer was disconnected for nonpayment of deposit amounts after the gas and electric was 3/24/09. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/05/2009 01:36 PM Violation: 480-100-128(2) -



Violation: WAC 480-100-128(2) for failure to move the amounts billed to prior obligation. The customer was disconnected on 3/27/09 for nonpayment of deposit amounts. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/05/2009 01:39 PM Violation: 480-90-128(9) -



Violation: WAC 480-90-128(9) for disconnecting the customer's service while she was seeking resolution through this complaint. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/05/2009 01:40 PM Violation: WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) -



Violation: WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) for an incomplete response to the complaint. The company was notified of the violation. The company bill due date with its account history.

*** 08/11/2009 09:13 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



called customer - lmtc

*** 08/20/2009 01:42 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << lis brown

New arrangements on what? I thought it was perfectly clear during previous meetings between PSE and our staff that the customer must pay all amounts owing on the disconnect notice to be restored, or, all amounts billed at the time of disconnect are prior obligation. If the full amount of the disconnect notice is not paid, the account goes prior, and the customer must be allowed to pay no more than one-half of a new deposit, plus, a reconnect fee to restore service. It appears PSE still does not understand prior obligation.

Dee, please have Molly finish the complaint with Gail. However, if you have any questions about the above information, please contact me.

Thank you.
Diana
1-360-664-1104

*** 08/05/2009 11:47 AM Email: Otto, Diana (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Thank you for the synopsis of this complaint.

I will follow up with Molly to be sure that the details are sorted out properly and that she and Gail are in complete agreement on getting this addressed promptly.

I will also give you my feedback once I have had a chance to review the details.

Dee Walker

*** 08/05/2009 01:11 PM Violation: 480-90-123(2) -



Violation: WAC 480-90-123(2) for not moving the billed amounts to prior obligation when the customer was disconnected for nonpayment of deposit amounts after the gas and electric was disconnected on 3/24/09. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/05/2009 01:36 PM Violation: 480-100-128(2) -



Violation: WAC 480-100-128(2) for failure to move the amounts billed to prior obligation after the disconnection on 3/27/09 for nonpayment of deposit amounts. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/05/2009 01:39 PM Violation: 480-90-128(9) -



WAC 480-90-128(9) for disconnecting the customer's service while she was seeking remedy and appeals through this complaint. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/05/2009 01:40 PM Violation: WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) -



WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) for an incomplete response to the complaint. The company neglected to provide bill due date with its account history. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/11/2009 09:13 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



called customer - lmtc

*** 08/20/2009 01:42 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << lis brown



Hi Gail,
I cannot find your phone number, I didn't get your message from last week till
Mon
(no excuse for my delay) so I'm trying to call you and can't find the number.
Would \
please e-mail it to me or give me a call. Thanks
Lis 425=636-8281

*** 08/20/2009 03:04 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) >> 'lis brown'



Hi Lis,

You can reach me at either 1-888-333-WUTC(9882) or 1-800-562-6150. I have asked
to have my supervisor review your complaint and have asked for some Attorney
General opinions on some of the issues. What this means is that there may be
some monies that should have gone to prior obligation. I am still reviewing and
coordination with all the parties that have become involved. If you have any
questions or new information, feel free to call or email.

Gail

*** 08/27/2009 01:25 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Gail:

PSE has corrected this account according to Diana's attached email.

Both gas and electric product assignments have been processed prior obligation
back to the March 2009 disconnect date. Payments have been re-directed to pay
the deposits and applicable charges since March 27th
billing. The customer's current charges owing include:

Gas = \$0.00 (nothing)

Electric:

\$86.74 balance owing from charges for usage from 5/20/09 - 6/18/09.
\$197.71 charges for usage from 6/19/09 - 7/20/09.
\$222.54 charges for usage from 7/21/09 - 8/18/09.
= \$506.99.

A six-month install was set up on the prior obligation collectibles of
\$3,414.82.

*** 09/17/2009 08:29 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Called customer - lmtc

*** 09/17/2009 10:34 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> PSE



I have a call into the customer for confirmation. There are a couple of thing
I need to request. You said a 6 month installment plan was set up on the prior

of \$3414.82, when does that begin and what is the amount? Also, could I have a corrected account history from Jan, 09.

Thanks - Gail

*** 09/17/2009 11:03 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Gail:

6-month installment on \$3414.82 @ \$569.14 starts with her 9/21/09 statement. Attached is statement activity from January.

As I indicated in my 8/27/09 email, nothing is owing on gas and \$506.99 owing on electric (not prior obligation).

Molly

SEE ATTACHMENTS

*corrected activity statement

*** 09/18/2009 10:12 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Called customer - lmtc

*** 09/21/2009 09:10 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



called customer - Im stating complaint will close 9/22 if no response.

*** 09/21/2009 04:43 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace << customer



Customer returned call. I advised the customer of corrections made to the account regarding what is prior and what arrangement the company made. Because today is 9/21/09, customer asked if the 1st payment could be extended to October 1.

*** 09/21/2009 04:52 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Vera/Dee

I have been unable to contact the customer until today regarding the 6 month installment arrangement on the prior obligation. Customer wants to keep this arrangement and asks if the 1st installment of \$569.14 could be postponed until 10/1/09 and thereafter on the due date beginning 10/21/09.

Thanks - Gail

*** 09/22/2009 07:43 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Hi Gail,

I have altered the installment for the first payment to be due after the 20th of the month. The update will appear on the next statement October 20, 2009.

Thanks Vera

*** 09/22/2009 04:38 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace << customer



Customer returned call and was advised that the company will accept and October start date for the first installment payment to the prior obligation. I explained to the customer that because this is prior obligation that should she not be able to keep the installment arrangements, the amount will be sent to collections, and she cannot be disconnected for this amount again. Complaint closed with customer.

*** 09/22/2009 04:49 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Molly,

I have closed this complaint.
Thanks - Gail

Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account#

Cristina Faulkins

Contact:

9611 Kodiak Place SW
Port Orchard, WA 98367

Secondary: 360-990-5516 cell

Complaint: ~~106941~~

Serviced by: **Pam Smith**

Opened on: 07/09/2009

Grouped by: Disconnect

Closed on: 07/23/2009

Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Customer was disconnected in February 09. on two accounts. Addresses were 1219 Colchester DR. SW Port Orchard and at 9611 Kodiak Place SW. She was on both accounts because she was living at one address and her husband and kids were at the other. She reconnected the same day with 1/2 of a deposit. She expected both of these accts. to go prior obligation. Now PSE is telling her she needs to pay over \$2000.00 or they will disconnect at any time. Customer has told PSE these are prior obligation. Customer is not disputing the charges, just would like to make arrangements.
Please stop pending disconnect.

7/9 1:14 sent to PSE via e-mail: Please stop disconnect. This response is due 7/13. I will need the disconnect information and the amount billed at the time of disconnect. Why hasn't this gone prior obligation?

Results:

Company removed the 1547.11 from the balance owing to prior obligation. One violation of 480-100-123(3) . Company will make arrangements on the prior obligation.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 07/10/2009 01:49 PM -Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Pam:

This is not the name of the record holder for this account and address. The name on the account is CHRISTINA D FALCONS. Please confirm they are the same person before I release any information. Also if they are the same person, we will need to change the name on the account. Thank you.
Molly

*** 07/13/2009 08:56 AM Phone: Pam Smith >> customer



left message to call re: name

*** 07/13/2009 03:29 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Pam:

The response is due today. I have account information for this address but I need verification that Cristina Saulking and Christina Falcone are the same person, otherwise I will be unable to release any account information. Thank you, Molly

*** 07/14/2009 07:23 AM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



I am trying to find out.

*** 07/14/2009 10:07 AM Phone: Pam Smith >> customer



called 1st number provided wrong number
called cell number, not able to receive calls.

*** 07/14/2009 10:30 AM Letter: Pam Smith >> customer



July 14, 2009

Cristina Saulking
9611 Kodiak Place SW
Port Orchard, Washington 98367

Dear Ms. Saulking:

I have been unable to reach you to discuss your informal complaint regarding Puget Sound Energy. If you would like me to continue my investigation, please contact me.

I can be reached toll-free at 1-888-333-9882. If I do not hear from you by July 20, 2009, I will close your complaint.

Sincerely,

Pam Smith
Consumer Program Specialist 3
Utilities and Transportation Commission
psmith@utc.wa.gov
1-888-333-9882

*** 07/14/2009 12:50 PM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



Ok, I have it figured out. Her last name is Faulkins, I spelled it wrong, She said every time she calls PSE it is an issue. Now I can get the acct. info.

Pam Smith

*** 07/14/2009 03:11 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



OPEN ACTIVITY TO VIEW PRODUCT ACTIVITY AND STATEMENT HISTORY

Pam:

We can transfer the balance from 1219 COLCHESTER DR E # A PORT ORCHARD, WA 98366 back to Collections if she would prefer to make arrangements at her old location. We are unable to include this as part of her prior obligation

because it does not meet the criteria.

Background:

* 2/7/2009, Christina was disconnected for non-payment at 1219 COLCHESTER DR E # A PORT ORCHARD, WA 98366. Client comments indicate this was a home where she lived while separated from her husband and children. She never requested a reconnection of service at this property. We do not know the date she abandoned the premises, only that the owner of the property called for reconnection of service on 3/5/2009.

* Christina simultaneously had service in her name at 9611 KODIAK PL SW PORT ORCHARD, WA 98367. Client comments indicate this is where her husband and children resided while they were estranged.

* Both products were on the same statement account.

* 2/11/2009, Christina was disconnected for non-payment at 9611 KODIAK PL SW PORT ORCHARD, WA 98367.

* 2/12/2009, Christina requested to go Prior Obligation at 9611 KODIAK PL SW PORT ORCHARD, WA 98367. She was quoted the deposit amount is \$440.00 plus the reconnect charge of \$37.00, with a minimum amount of \$257.00 to complete the reconnection.

* 5/11/2009, Unpaid charges from 1219 COLCHESTER DR E # A PORT ORCHARD, WA 98366 were attached to 9611 KODIAK PL SW PORT ORCHARD, WA 98367 for the purpose of collection.

* As you are aware, WAC 480-100-123 (3) states:

An electric utility may not refuse to provide new or additional service to a residential applicant or residential customer who has a prior obligation. A prior obligation is the dollar amount, excluding deposit amounts owed, the utility has billed to the customer and for which the utility has not received payment at the time the service has been disconnected for nonpayment. The utility must provide service once the customer or applicant has paid all appropriate deposit and reconnection fees. This subsection does not apply to customers that have been disconnected for failure to honor the terms of a winter low-income payment program.

* Since Christina had not requested a reconnection at 1219 COLCHESTER DR E # A PORT ORCHARD, WA 98366 location, prior obligation was not processed.

*** 07/15/2009 11:05 AM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



Molly, according to the rule this is prior obligation. The rule does not state that a reconnect has to be ordered. Prior obligation is the amount billed at time of disconnect that has not been paid excluding the deposit.

Pam Smith

*** 07/16/2009 12:00 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



After further review, we agree that it is prior obligation. The unpaid collectibles for 1219 Colchester Dr. #E, Port Orchard at the time of the balance transfer were \$1547.11. Does Cristina want PSE to send this to Collections as bad debt or does she want to agree to a 6-month installment which is the maximum length of time we are allowing for prior obligation balances.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 07/16/2009 12:36 PM Phone: Pam Smith >> customer



called asked for update, I am clarifying with company what prior obligation should be. I should have more informaton Monday, she will call.

*** 07/16/2009 01:11 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Hi Pam:

In order for PSE to change the customer's name on the account we will need one of the following pieces of ID:

1. Valid Drivers License Number
2. Valid Washington state ID number
3. Other Valid State ID number
4. Gov't issued Military ID (Branch of service and unit or command)
5. Valid Passport number

Thank you,
Molly

*** 07/21/2009 11:01 AM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly



Molly, what do you have on file now?

*** 07/21/2009 11:35 AM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Apparently the name was changed to CHRISTINA D FAULKINS on 7/20/09. I guess we don't need any further ID. - Molly

*** 07/21/2009 11:37 AM Phone: Pam Smith >> customer



called cell - recording - not able to receive calls

*** 07/22/2009 12:19 PM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



I am writing a closing letter to this customer, just a couple of questions. The prior for Kodiak is 1780.71 and COLCHESTER is 1547.11. Is that correct? The total prior obligation is: 3327.81. Is that correct? I also see some late pay fees on the acct. Shouldn't those get removed?

Pam Smith

*** 07/22/2009 12:48 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Prior obligation amount is correct.
The late fees are from past due charges that are not prior obligation and will remain on the account.

Past due charges 60 days or older = \$439.50 need to be paid before PSE will make arrangements on remaining balance.

Also does she want arrangements on the prior obligation amount or does she want it sent to Collections?

Thank you,
Molly

*** 07/22/2009 01:10 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



1-888-225-5773. I will remark the account that should she call for arrangements on the prior obligation amount, ok to make.

Molly

*** 07/23/2009 10:57 AM Letter: Pam Smith >> customer



July 22, 2009

Christina Faulkins
9611 Kodiak Place SW
Port Orchard, Washington 98367

Dear Ms. Faulkins:

I have been unable to reach you to discuss your informal complaint regarding Puget Sound Energy (PSE). I contacted PSE on your behalf and questioned the balance of \$1547.11 that had been transferred to your current account that you believe should be considered prior obligation. PSE has agreed that this balance is prior obligation. This amount has been transferred off your current account and added to your \$1780.71 previous prior obligation. Your total prior obligation amount for the two addresses is \$3327.81. Please contact PSE at 1-888-225-5773 to make arrangements on this balance.

I can be reached toll-free at 1-888-333-9882. I am closing your informal complaint.

Sincerely,

Pam Smith
Consumer Program Specialist 3
Utilities and Transportation Commission
psmith@utc.wa.gov
1-888-333-9882

*** 07/23/2009 11:00 AM Violation: 480-100-123 (3) -



Company billed for an amount from a different address and it should have been a prior obligation. The address was 1219 Colchester Dr. #E, Port Orchard the amount was \$1547.11. The disconnect was 2/7/09. Company has agreed to remove the charges and place it as prior obligation.

*** 07/23/2009 11:06 AM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



I am noting one violation of 480-100-123(3)
Company threatened disconnect for an amount from a different address and it should have been a prior obligation.
The address was 1219 Colchester Dr. #E, Port Orchard the amount was \$1547.11.
Company has agreed to remove the charges and place it as prior obligation.

I sent a letter to the customer instructing her to call PSE for arrangements on the prior. I don't know if she will make them or not.

This complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 08/06/2009 01:08 PM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly



Molly -

Just to clarify, PSE did not threaten disconnect of this service for the prior obligation amount that was incorrect. The violation was because PSE placed the disconnected amount into prior obligation from the 2/7/09 disconnect.
Pam Smith

*** 08/06/2009 01:20 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



PSE did send an Urgent Notice on 6/16/09 for the amount of \$2294.69. This amount did include the transferred balance.

*** 09/08/2009 02:25 PM Email: Lynda Johnson >> Customer



Called and said the Co. is threatening to disconnect her service again. Told her Pam is not in the office this afternoon, but will be back in the morning. Told her I would let Pam know she called and will contact PSE and ask them to hold off disconnection until such time that Pam is able to review the complaint and get back to her.

*** 09/08/2009 02:30 PM Email: Lynda Johnson >> Molly Brown



This is Pam Smith's closed complaint, however, the customer said she is being threatened with disconnection. Since Pam is out of the office this afternoon, could you please hold off disconnection until Pam is able to call the customer in the morning?

*** 09/08/2009 03:30 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Pam:

Christina has not made a payment on this account since FEBRUARY 12, 2009.

The account at 9611 Kodiak Place SW was processed prior obligation effective 1/23/09. She has not made any payments towards charges or balance of the deposit since then. PSE is not willing to offer arrangements until those collectibles 60-days past due are paid.

Past due balances owing:
\$96.00 due 3/18/09

\$439.50 due 4/14/09
\$502.08 due 6/15/09
\$287.48 due 8/13/09
\$14.75 in late fees not stated

Final Notice mailed due 9/9/09 is for the balance of the deposit owing from the prior obligation (\$194.00).

Deposit calculation = $\$2134 / 12 \times 3 = \533 . Minimum to be reconnected is 1/2 deposit of $\$266.50 + \$37 = \$303.50$.

Attached is statement activities from last Commission Complaint to present.

*** 09/09/2009 08:29 AM Phone: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



If she is disconnected today, it would be everything minus 14.75 in late fees (they have not been billed). If she goes prior new deposit is 553.00 (total)+ reconnect 37.00 PSE will take 1/2 deposit.
bottom line if she goes prior - 1/2 deposit is 277.00 + 37.00 reconnect = 314.00

*** 09/09/2009 09:56 AM Phone: Pam Smith >> customer



returned call - message says phone is not able to receive calls.

*** 09/09/2009 10:45 AM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



OPEN ACTIVITY TO VIEW MARCH, APRIL, MAY, AUG. STATEMENTS
Statements Attached.

Please note the \$96 is all that is left owing from the statement due 3/18/09.

Washington UTC Complaint

107162

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account#

Valerie Cruz
Contact:
15607 Kelly Road NE
Duvall, WA 98019

Primary Phone: (425) 208-5121

Complaint: ~~107162~~ Serviced by: Roger Kouchi
Opened on: 08/05/2009 Grouped by: Refusal Of Service
Closed on: 08/13/2009 Disposition: Company upheld

Description:



Consumer stated that she had her electricity disconnected since December 2008. Out of desperation, she self connected. PSE disconnected her again. She has been working with Kathy (Supv; 888-225-5773). PSE stated that she would need to pay \$5,247.90 to have her service restored.

- She has \$5,000 in prior obligation
- Her account number is 3802300073.

Passed complaint to PSE via e-mail on 8/5/09 (12:47)
Initial response due 8/7/09

Results:

PSE stated that the consumer self connected (fraud). For service to be restored, the customer will need to pay the entire "TOTAL \$1,247.98 in cash, cashiers check or money order. See-complaint text for calculation of the amount owing. NOTE: Savings to consumer is approx \$3,999.92 because PSE backed out the prior obligation from the amount needed to restore service.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 08/05/2009 12:49 PM Action: Roger Kouchi



Washington UTC Request

107063

Valerie Cruz
15607 Kelly Road NE
Duvall, WA 98019
Phone: (425) 208-5121

Request: 107063 Serviced by: Roger Kouchi
Opened on: 07/24/2009

Description:

Consumer stated that she had her electricity disconnected since December 2008. Out of desperation, she self connected. PSE disconnected her again. She has been working with Kathy (Supv; 888-225-5773). PSE stated that she would need to pay \$400 to have her service restored.

- She has \$5,000 in prior obligation

- Her account number is 3802300073.

Passed inquiry to PSE via e-mail on 7/24/09 (12:53)

Activity:

*** 07/24/2009 12:54 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown
Molly - Please respond to this inquiry. Thank you.

*** 07/28/2009 12:56 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly
I'm not sure what I'm supposed to be responding to.
Valerie self-reconnected and tampered with our meter. Prior obligation
does not apply when the customer has self-reconnected.
PSE has quoted her \$5247.90 cash or money order to get reconnected.
Supervisor did not tell Valerie PSE would accept \$400 to have her service
restored.
This is meter tampering.

*** 07/28/2009 03:10 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> 107063
Molly - I still need to see billing/payment history and date that consumer self
connected. Thanks.

*** 07/28/2009 03:12 PM Email: Roger Kouchi << molly brown
Your message

To: molly.brown@pse.com
Subject:

was read on 7/28/2009 3:11 PM.

*** 07/29/2009 10:15 AM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly
Valerie was disconnected for non-pay in the amount of \$4861.54 on 12/10/08.
The meter was removed due to missing glass.
No PSE reconnect Order.
1/23/09 usage began on STOLEN meter.
Had she not self-reconnected, she could have gone prior.
Prior Obligation is not an option with meter tampering.
\$406.51 Charges for Time and Material for meter tampering.
PSE is requesting payment of \$5247.90 for reconnect.

Attached is product history, statement activity and notice showing disconnect
amount.

((SEE ATTACHMENT FIELD OF THIS ACTIVITY)))

*** 07/31/2009 12:09 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown
Molly - From the statement and credit activity it appears that the self
reconnect was on 1/23/09. The previous bill (1/13/09) had a balance owing of
\$5,694.52. I don't see any notes that show any disconnects were made. What
were the disconnect dates on the account? Thank you.

*** 08/03/2009 10:46 AM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly
Please see statement activity. Service was disconnected on 12/10/08.
No disconnects in 2008 prior to that date.

*** 08/05/2009 01:03 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown



Molly - I've change inquiry 107063 into complaint 107162. I've discussed this with staff. The rules do not allow PSE to refuse service because of fraud for the prior obligation that occurred prior to the fraud. You stated that the consumer was disconnected on 12/10/08 for nonpayment which put all the billed amount prior to 12/10/08 into prior obligation status.

- Please confirm the amount billed prior to 12/10/08.
- Please confirm the amount billed after 12/10/08.
- WAC 480-100-128(2)(a) are the rules about fraud. First offense: The utility may disconnect service without notice when it discovers theft, tampering, or fraud, unless the customer immediately pays all of the following:

- A. The tariffed rate for service that the utility estimates was used as a result of the theft, tampering, or fraud;
- B. All utility costs resulting from such theft, tampering, or fraud; and
- C. Any required deposit.

*** 08/05/2009 02:08 PM Email: Diana Otto >> Dee Walker, PSE



Dee, I have another prior obligation complaint issue I received just now from Roger concerning the above-named complaint. The customer had self-connected after a disconnection of service. The customer had stolen \$400 of service. This same customer already had prior obligation of about \$5,000. PSE advised Roger that the prior obligation could no longer be prior obligation because the customer had created fraud. Roger did not agree that the prior obligation status could change. I agree with him. There is nothing in our rules that state prior obligation ever goes away and comes back to a live status, unless the company made it prior outside of the rules.

The fraud rules, WAC 480-90/100-128(2) clarify that the customer's service will not be disconnected when fraud is found if the customer immediately pays the tariffed rate for service that the utility estimates was used as a result of the theft, tampering, or fraud; and all costs resulting from such theft, tampering, or fraud; and any required deposit. I don't see where it says previous prior obligations go back on the account as active status!

In this complaint, the company knew the customer had used \$400 worth of service. Therefore, the customer had to only pay that amount, plus any costs related to the fraud (meter repair, perhaps), plus deposit, if required. Certainly, the customer must not be made to pay any previous prior obligation.

Where is PSE coming up with these interpretations? I'm frankly concerned.

Diana

*** 08/06/2009 09:43 AM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly



PSE will process the account prior obligation effective the date of the disconnect. Any monies owed after that date including the meter tampering charges, usage charges and deposit will be required before PSE will reconnect this service. I will provide those charges once we have calculated what they are.

Thank you,

*** 08/06/2009 02:07 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Thank you Diana

I have reviewed the history of this account. I agree with your and Roger's definition of the appropriate application of Prior Obligation and the Fraud rules. The actual amount that will be required to restore service due to the fraud will be greater than the \$400 and we are calculating that now. The \$400 includes only the "Utility costs resulting from such theft, tampering, or fraud" and we still need to determine the amount of service to bill and also the deposit.

Molly will work with our internal folks and Roger to get this particular complaint sorted out.

As far as the overall issue, I believe I have figured out what has happened here and it is a misinterpretation of the direction I gave our staff as a result of the conversations we all had at our May meeting. We have gotten Prior Obligation mixed up with the statement in WAC480-100-128(2)(a)(i) that says"immediately pays all..." This is not the correct interpretation and I will work with our training folks and other management team members to get proper application more clear.

I do believe that this particular situation (prior obligation from a prior disconnect getting mixed into a disconnect for fraud) is a very rare situation and is not indicative of any sort of a trend. Nonetheless, I will still do as noted above and be sure we reinforce application of Prior Obligation. There are other issues related to this that I will also address internally.

*** 08/10/2009 03:43 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Hello Roger. I believe you have our initial response to this inquiry / complaint.

Here are the answers to your follow-up questions:

Please confirm the amount billed prior to 12/10/08: \$5123.39
Please confirm the amount billed after 12/10/08:

Usage:	\$173.34
Late Fees:	\$329.10
Deposit:	(\$120.15)
Meter Tampering charge:	\$406.51

We have calculated the amount required for reconnect using WAC480-100-128 (2)(a)(i)(A),(B),(C)

"Tariff rate for service that PSE estimates was used as a result of the theft, tampering, or fraud" (A): \$503.47

"All costs resulting from such theft, tampering, or fraud"

(B): \$406.51

"Any required deposit"

(C): \$338.00

*** 08/10/2009 04:06 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Here is the attachment referenced in earlier email
(((SEE ATTACHMENT FIELD OF THIS ACTIVITY)))

*** 08/13/2009 10:52 AM Letter: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



(((SEE ATTACHMENT FIELD OF THIS ACTIVITY)))
- copy of letter

August 13, 2009

Valerie Cruz
15607 Kelly Road NE
Duvall, WA 98019

Dear Ms. Cruz:

I have completed my investigation into your complaint with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) about the disconnection of your electric service and the conditions for reconnection. You initially told me that you self connected. Unfortunately, self connection is considered fraud and the company is allowed to request for the cost to reconnect (i.e., any damages and disconnection/reconnection costs) plus a deposit prior to reconnection of your service.

My investigation revealed that for service to be restored, you will need to pay \$1,247.98 in cash, cashiers check or money order. See complaint text for calculation of the amount owing.

I am enclosing a copy of the complaint record for your files. I will consider my investigation closed at this time. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions. I can be reached toll-free at 1-800-562-6150 or via e-mail at rkouchi@utc.wa.gov. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Roger Kouchi
UTC Regulatory Analyst

*** 08/13/2009 10:56 AM Violation: 480-100-123(3) -



PSE stated that she would need to pay \$5,247.90 to have her service restored. This included prior obligation amounts.

Violation: 480-100-123(3) - (1 count) - for initially refusing service for an amount that was prior obligation. Company later corrected this and took out the prior obligation amount after UTC staff interceded.

*** 08/13/2009 11:00 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown



Molly - PSE stated that she would need to pay \$5,247.90 to have her service restored. This included prior obligation amounts. I have recorded a violation

of WAC 480-100-123(3).

Violation: 480-100-123(3) - (1 count) - for initially refusing service for an amount that was prior obligation. Company later corrected this and took out the prior obligation amount after UTC staff interceded.

Thank you. This complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 08/20/2009 11:43 AM Phone: Roger Kouchi << consumer



Consumer wanted PSE to consider taking \$350 per month starting September 1, 2009.

- She stated that she would never have self connected if she would have known about prior obligation and the help provided by the UTC.

*** 08/20/2009 11:46 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown



Molly - Consumer would like PSE to consider taking \$350 per month starting September 1, 2009.

- She stated that she would never have self connected if she would have known about prior obligation and the help provided by the UTC.

What do you say? Is PSE willing to give this a go and see how it works out? Since I will be out next week, if you are unable to respond to me by tomorrow, please respond to Mike Meeks. Thank you.

*** 08/20/2009 04:02 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly



PSE can not accept the customer's offer.

Customer owes \$5912 in bad debt.

There has been no payment on this account since 9/18/07 so I really don't think she will be able to make the \$350 a month payments as she claims.

She had an opportunity to claim prior obligation before she self-reconnected. We only heard from her when we disconnected the power at the source so it was no longer possible to divert energy.

PSE has provided the charges owed which is not considered prior obligation of \$1,247.98 in cash, cashiers check or money order.

*** 08/20/2009 04:06 PM Phone: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



Provided PSE's response to consumer. Consumer thank me for trying.

*** 08/20/2009 04:07 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> Molly Brown



Molly - Ok. Complaint remains closed.

*** 10/01/2009 01:47 PM Phone: Roger Kouchi << consumer



PSE is saying that she now owes over \$3,000 to get service. I agreed to go back to PSE to confirm the amount she needs to pay to get service restored (i.e., \$1,247.98).

*** 10/01/2009 01:51 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera - Consumer informed me that PSE is saying that she now owes over \$3,000 to get service. I agreed to go back to PSE to confirm the amount she needs to pay to get service restored (i.e., \$1,247.98).

Here is a copy of my closing letter to the consumer. Please confirm that the information is still correct. Consumer believes she might be able to come up with the \$1,247.98 in the next 2-4 weeks. Thank you.

August 13, 2009

Valerie Cruz
15607 Kelly Road NE
Duvall, WA 98019

Dear Ms. Cruz:

I have completed my investigation into your complaint with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) about the disconnection of your electric service and the conditions for reconnection. You initially told me that you self connected. Unfortunately, self connection is considered fraud and the company is allowed to request for the cost to reconnect (i.e., any damages and disconnection/reconnection costs) plus a deposit prior to reconnection of your service.

My investigation revealed that for service to be restored, you will need to pay \$1,247.98 in cash, cashiers check or money order. See complaint text for calculation of the amount owing.

I am enclosing a copy of the complaint record for your files. I will consider my investigation closed at this time. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions. I can be reached toll-free at 1-800-562-6150 or via e-mail at rkouchi@utc.wa.gov. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Roger Kouchi
UTC Regulatory Analyst

*** 10/01/2009 01:59 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



The amount required today is \$1,247.98 if paid after October 15, Valerie has been notified in writing that these will be trebled to the amount of \$2729.94, as well as a L & I inspection of electric meter base.

Thank you, Vera

*** 10/01/2009 02:14 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera - Thank you. Please tell me the provisions (i.e., rule, tariff, statute) that allows PSE to charge treble charges. Thank you.

*** 10/01/2009 02:14 PM Email: Roger Kouchi << vera fuchs



Your message

To: vera.fuchs@pse.com

Subject:

was read on 10/1/2009 2:14 PM.

*** 10/02/2009 07:04 AM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



From: Wagner, Kelli

Sent: Thursday, October 01, 2009 3:05 PM

The information you are looking for is in RCW 80.28.240. Specifically item number 2.

Here is the link for the exact verbage:

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=80.28.240>

The letter states:

RCW 80.28.240(1) specifically authorizes PSE to initiate a civil action against all individuals involved in diversion of its electric services. RCW 80.28.240(2) specifically authorizes recovery of triple the amount of PSE's actual damages, reimbursement of all reasonable attorneys' fees, and reimbursement of all costs. In enacting this statute, the legislature of this state has given utilities (such as PSE) a powerful civil weapon against persons who divert electric services.

Thank you, Vera

*** 10/05/2009 08:33 AM Voice Mail: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



LWTC on VM. Informed the consumer that PSE will be seeking triple damages for the diversion of electric services. Left my name and toll-free number. Complaint remains closed.

*** 10/05/2009 08:36 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera - Thanks. The complaint remains closed.

*** 01/26/2010 11:55 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown



Molly - Staff has reviewed this complaint and has requested an account summary to include a billing/payment history with notices and disconnects. Thank you.

*** 01/27/2010 02:23 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly

Washington UTC Complaint

107183

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 1049024613

Dorcia Duenas

Contact:

21639 29th Ave S #105

Des Moines, WA 98198

Primary Phone: (206) 422-6296

Complaint: 107183

Serviced by: Gail Griffin-Wallace

Opened on: 08/07/2009

Grouped by: Disconnect

Closed on: 08/13/2009

Disposition: Company upheld with arrangements

Description:



Customer was disconnected for \$235. I instructed customer to call PSE and inquire what half of the deposit would be for reconnections. Customer was told she had to pay the \$235.

Please provide account history for past 12 months.

Has billed amounts gone prior?

Please provide amount and calculations for deposit request.

Why wasn't customer given the deposit amount when she called?

passed to pse via email 8/7 @ 3:10p - your initial response to this complaint is due by close of business 8/11/09, however, please provide deposit request amount as soon as possible.

Results:

Customer service was restored 6/7/09. Customer must pay 1/2 the deposit (\$70) + reconnect fee to retain service. Past due monies processed as prior obligation.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 08/07/2009 04:44 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Attached is statement activity and product history.

A payment to stop a disconnect for \$235.60 came back NSF which is most likely the reason they were told to pay that amount.

A pledge for \$169 posted to the account today leaving a balance of \$384.12.

I've asked to have the account processed prior.

I'm out of the office until Wednesday, August 12th.

Thank you,

Molly

SEE ATTACHMENTS

*product history

*** 08/10/2009 10:35 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Gail.

Molly is out of office today and tomorrow. I will provide rest of response to this complaint by tomorrow.

Here is the information regarding deposit and reconnect.

The prior obligation amount has been processed as well.

Dee Walker

-----Original Message-----

From: Merrell, Renee

Sent: Monday, August 10, 2009 9:06 AM

To: Brown, Molly

Cc: Walker, Dee -Kirby

Subject: RE: WA - UTC complaint 107183 for Dorcia duenas

I've processed prior obligation on this account and now require payment for reconnect; deposit \$140 with minimum payment of \$70.00 + 37.00 reconnect = \$107.00.

Thanks

*** 08/10/2009 10:56 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



called customer - advised she will need \$70 + \$37 reconnect fee to restore service not. Advised customer that I did not have all the information I need from the company but wanted her to have this information so her service can be restored.

*** 08/11/2009 04:16 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Hello Gail

Here is the rest of the response on this complaint.

I checked the notes on this account at 3:45pm today and see no indication the customer has called or paid to have service restored per the email I sent yesterday.

*** 08/12/2009 08:53 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Hello Gail.

In my response summary I neglected to indicate account start date. It is 6/2/2008

Dee Walker

*** 08/13/2009 12:47 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer Molly Brown



Called customer - Asked customer if she had service and she does as of 6/7/09. Advised customer that company has not received 1/2 the deposit. Customer said she would make the payment tomorrow. I advised the customer that I will be closing the complaint and if she does not make the payment immediately, service will be disconnected. I also told the customer to call PSE as soon as they

payment is made with the receipt #.
Advised customer complaint will close.

*** 08/13/2009 12:54 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Dee Walker



Good Afternoon Dee,

I just spoke with the customer and told her the payment must be made. Customer advised she will make payment of \$107.00 tomorrow (1/2 deposit + reconnect fee). Customer was advised to call PSE as soon as the payment was made with the receipt number.

I have closed this complaint.
Thanks - Gail

Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 11/03/2009 02:39 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Dee Walker



Molly,

I have been reviewing some of my closed complaints and noticed that I did not record the appropriate violations for failure to process amounts billed to prior obligation at the time of disconnect.

*** 01/22/2010 11:21 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> PSE



Molly, I am revisiting this complaint. It appears I started to in 11/09 however, was distracted. I have a few additional questions & requests. What amount was processed to prior obligation?

Please verify this is electric customer only.

Please provide a new statement of activity that reflects date and amount of disconnect.

Thanks - Gail

*** 01/22/2010 11:46 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly



Molly,

I continue to review my complaints.

What amount went to prior obligation when customer was disconnected 8/13/09?

Is this a gas only customer?

Did customer pay 1/2 the deposit plus reconnect fee for restoral? When?

Thanks - Gail

*** 01/22/2010 03:55 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Gail:

Attached is statement activity showing disconnected date of 8/6/09 for \$235.60.

Prior obligation is \$202.99. Prior obligation calculation =
\$384.12 amount billed up through the time of disconnect.
- \$180.00 deposit application
- 1.13 deposit interest
= \$202.99

Washington UTC Complaint

107293

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 270-348-100-8

Gabriel Olivo

Contact:

1942 Prigee Road #47A

Ferndale, WA 98248

Primary Phone: (360) 734-6760

Complaint: ~~107293~~

Serviced by: **Lynda Johnson**

Opened on: 08/24/2009

Grouped by: Disconnect

Closed on: 08/26/2009

Disposition: Company upheld

Description:



The customer was disconnected yesterday for a balance of \$265.00. The customer will get paid on 8/25/09. Customer needs service restored and wants to know his options for restoral with prior obligation.

8/24/09 12:20 PM -- Passed to Molly Brown, PSE, via e-mail -- URGENT (response due 8/26/09).

Results:

Customer can restore service for \$181, which is \$144 for half of the deposit, plus \$37 reconnect fee.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 08/24/2009 01:41 PM Email: Johnson, Lynda (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Deposit calculation is $\$1726 / 12 \times 2 = \288 .

Minimum amount due is 1/2 deposit = \$144 plus \$37 reconnect fee for total = \$181.00.

I'll provide account information by 8/26/09.

*** 08/25/2009 11:13 AM Email: Johnson, Lynda (UTC) << Brown, Molly



SEE ATTACHED

Attached is payment and credit activity along with product history.

Customer's service is still disconnected.

Received PSE HELP assistance paid in June pledge \$392.

*** 08/26/2009 09:45 AM Phone: Lynda Johnson >> Mr.



Went over the Co. response with the customer. Told him to restore the service he would need to Pay \$181.00, which is half of the deposit (\$144, plus \$37 reconnect fee). Mr. said he was looking to borrow the money to make the payment and may call the Co. to see if they would take payment arrangements. Told him I would be closing the complaint.

*** 09/15/2009 01:47 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly



This is another disconnect opened by Lynda on 8/24/09. PSE provided all account information and provided minimum amount owing for reconnect. Service is still disconnected - no payment.

Deposit calculation is $\$1726 / 12 \times 2 = \288 .

Minimum amount due is 1/2 deposit = \$144 plus \$37 reconnect fee for total = \$181.00.

Can we close?

((SEE ATTACHMENT FIELD OF THIS ACTIVITY))

- Statement activity
- Product history

*** 09/15/2009 02:29 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown



Molly - Lynda closed this one. Here is a copy of the complaint record for your files. Thank you. This complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 01/21/2010 11:40 AM Email: Lynda Holloway >> Molly Brown



Could you please let me know if this customer's account was actually processed as prior obligation when he was disconnected in August 2009. If yes, was the amount of prior obligation \$175.39? If not, please explain.

*** 01/21/2010 04:01 PM Email: Holloway, Lynda (UTC) << Brown, Molly



The disconnect date was 8/21/2009 (not 2008).
Correct address is 1942 Trigg Road #47A, Ferndale, WA

Gabriel was disconnected on 8/21/09 for \$175.39.
PSE advised Gabriel that the minimum to be reconnected would be \$181 which was 1/2 the deposit plus reconnect fee.
9/25/09 Gabriel made a payment for \$40.00
11/10/09 Gabriel made a payment for \$50.00
11/13/09 Gabriel made a payment for \$140.00 (reconnect ordered).
Total payments = \$230 which was more than the disconnected amount so account was not processed prior obligation.

Are you requesting PSE to process this account prior?

*** 01/21/2010 04:22 PM Email: Holloway, Lynda (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Is the customer still carrying a balance or is the account up-to-date?

*** 01/21/2010 04:26 PM Email: Holloway, Lynda (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Account balance of \$449.29 of which \$117.83 of the Deposit is past due.

*** 01/22/2010 08:06 AM Email: Holloway, Lynda (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Is this what the customer wants? Does he understand the payment arrangements on the prior obligation amount? Does he understand that if its not paid, it will be sent to collections? Just want to make sure the customer is aware of what we're doing.

*** 01/22/2010 08:39 AM Email: Holloway, Lynda (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



It should have been processed as prior obligation, as that was what he was asking for in the initial complaint.

*** 01/22/2010 09:07 AM Email: Holloway, Lynda (UTC) << Brown, Molly



I've been asked for you to tell me how much is prior and why since the disconnected amount has been paid, so how much do you feel is prior?

*** 01/22/2010 10:12 AM Email: Holloway, Lynda (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



\$175.39 - the amount he was disconnected for in August. Then he should have been set-up to pay the remaining deposit over the next two months. How much does he owe now on the current account if you process as prior?

*** 01/22/2010 01:47 PM Email: Holloway, Lynda (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Revised email regarding the prior obligation. Due to processing prior now instead of August, we had to redirect payments. So the current prior obligation amount is \$288.32.

Current product assignment:

The deposit is paid in full.

The reconnect fee is paid in full.

December charges are paid in full.

\$120.53 is the balance owing from the Jan. Charges of \$214.11.

Please note PSE started the new product assignment effective 11/13/09.

PSE ended the customer's previous product assignment 8/6/09.

So the period between 8/7/09 - 11/12/09 is in PSE's name.

*** 01/22/2010 01:47 PM Email: Holloway, Lynda (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Revised email regarding the prior obligation. Due to processing prior now instead of August, we had to redirect payments. So the current prior obligation amount is \$288.32.

Current product assignment:

The deposit is paid in full.

The reconnect fee is paid in full.

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\$120.53 is the balance owing from the Jan. Charges of \$214.11.

Please note PSE started the new product assignment effective 11/13/09.

PSE ended the customer's previous product assignment 8/6/09.

So the period between 8/7/09 - 11/12/09 is in PSE's name.

*** 01/22/2010 01:52 PM Email: Holloway, Lynda (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



What are the Charge of \$214.11 for?

*** 01/22/2010 02:01 PM Email: Holloway, Lynda (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Usage from 12/6/09 - 1/6/2010.

*** 01/27/2010 01:50 PM Violation: 480-100-123(3) -



I have cited one violation of WAC 480-100-123(3) - The company should have processed this customer's electric account using the prior obligation rule when service wa disconnected on August 21, 2009.

*** 01/27/2010 01:53 PM Email: Lynda Holloway >> Molly Brown



I have cited one violation of WAC 480-100-123(3) - The company should have processed this customer's electric account using the prior obligation rule when service wa disconnected on August 21, 2009.

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 512-114-100-5

Hoda Seikh

Contact: Samuel Wossene (husband)
28226 State Hwy 3 NE
Poulsbo, WA 98370

Primary Phone: (206) 403-0851

Complaint: ~~107433~~

Serviced by: **Rachel Stark**

Opened on: 09/15/2009

Grouped by: Disconnect

Closed on: 11/18/2009

Disposition: Company upheld with arrangements

Description:



Mr. says their service has been disconnected since July 13, 2009. He was told he had to pay about \$1,132.25 to be reconnected. Mr. would like to know why he continues to receive disconnect notices if he has no service. Mr. would like to know what he needs to do to have his service restored.

He also states he believes there may be two lines to his home and meter. The electrical person told him there is two lines to his home and one is a mystery line. He believes he is charged too much for electricity. Mr. says he asked the company to test his meter every year, however, he was not told if this happened or what the results of the meter test. Mr. would like someone to explain to him why his bill is so high because he does not use a furnace, he uses wood to heat his home.

9/15/09 11:20 URGENT complaint passed to Molly Brown via email.
Response due September 17, 2009, by 5:00pm PST

Results:

The company disconnected service in compliance with all rules. The company does not have a record of a meter test request and is unable to determine how the customer used service, but the meter tested accurate.

These customers attempted to change account name to avoid payment and service was restored. The company confirmed tenants and re-disconnected service. The account is not considered prior obligation due to fraud. The company is willing to only require the customer to pay \$520.78 to have service restored. The customer must make payment arrangements on the remaining balance.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 09/15/2009 01:12 PM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Rachel:

1. There are no remarks on the account regarding customer requesting a meter test. There are no notes on the account that the customer has asked about his high bills in the past. Perhaps the reason the customer's bills are high is that there has been no payment on the account since last November, 2008. I have ordered a meter test per the customer's request.
2. The Disconnect.

7/13/09 Hoda was disconnected for non-payment.
On 7/14/09 Samuel Wossene called to put service into his name claiming he was the owner of the property.
7/14/09 PSE reconnected service for "new owner." System Reconnect for Starting Product Assignment.
7/15/09, PSE confirmed with Hoda and Samuel this was a name game to put the account into Samuel's name to get away from the debt.
7/23/09 PSE disconnected service due to name games.

According to WAC 480-100-123(2)(e) and/or (4) PSE may refuse service.

\$1113.18 in Bad Debt.

Collectibles Owing:
\$869.81 over 60 days old would be due now before disconnection of service.
\$168.92 due 6/3/09
\$93.52 due 7/2/09
\$10.41 due 8/3
\$117.38 due 9/2/09
\$18.32 not stated yet.
Total amount = \$1278.36
Total Account Balance = \$2391.54

Deposit calculation = $\$1437 / 12 \times 2 = \239 . CLX asked for \$236.

ATTACHED IS STATEMENT AND CREDIT ACTIVITY AND PRODUCT HISTORY.

- Molly

*** 09/18/2009 09:22 AM Phone: Rachel Stark << Consumer



I let the customer know his new deposit is \$236.00. I let him know I will contact the company and confirm what his old balance is and payment arrangements. Mr. kept saying Sean Hoffman or Hofner from Puget Sound Energy would always take payments from them. I let him know the company states he has not made payments since November 2008. Mr.'s wife got on the phone and stated in January she was told they owed \$2.36 to bring account to \$0. She states she paid that and the bills have gone up ever since. Their goal is to reduce their bills; they do not use their heat in winter, no computer, no t.v. They had an electrician come out to look; she has shut her power off at the fuse box. The neighbor has built a new garage and they think there are 3 lines from her box to somewhere and they may be paying for the neighbor's usage. They are still receiving a bill even now and they are disconnected.

She said she requested the meter be checked about 2 or 3 years ago and the company told them the meter was brand new because they just changed out all the meters in their area. She said Sean had given her instruction to shut her things off and then she would see where the energy was used. She thinks that the pump house has its own meter? She does not know for sure. She said Sean is the one that told them to put the name in the others name and start a new account. I explained to her about prior obligation and that Sean may not have said the words "prior obligation" however, he was telling her the correct things when, the old balance the could make payments and have a new account. She said that is all they would like to do and they do not want a \$1,000 bill per month again. I explained to her the bill is not \$1,000 per month, her monthly usage is between \$75 and \$243 per month, however, her balance is over

\$1,000. I confirmed with her that I will find out from the company how much they need to pay to have their service restored and how much their prior obligation amount is and how much their past due amount is. I also told her to go back to her records and confirm and get the proof of payments and she can provide that information to me and I will ensure the company has the information.

She was told the company could come out and check the electrical in their home? Is that something the company is willing to do?

*** 09/18/2009 10:58 AM Email: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown



Good morning Molly,

These customers states they only speak with a supervisor named Sean Hoffman or Hofner. He takes their payments and works with them on their bill. These consumers are not attempting to play the name game with the company. They are husband and wife and live in the same home. They misunderstood Sean when he told them the best thing for them to do is be disconnected and put the account in the other's name and start a new account. I believe Sean was speaking to them about prior obligation without say the words "prior obligation".

Can you please tell me how much this consumer has in prior obligation? How much is past due? How much would be their new deposit, \$236? Reconnect fee? They would like to have service reconnected as soon as possible.

They would also like to set up payment arrangements for the prior obligation and past due amounts.

They also state their neighbor has built a new garage and they think there are 3 lines from her box to somewhere and they may be paying for the neighbor's usage. They are still receiving a bill even now and they are disconnected. She read the bill to me and it sounds like a disconnect notice. Why is the company send the consumer a disconnect notice when they are already disconnected?

She said she requested the meter be checked about 2 or 3 years ago and the company told them the meter was brand new because they just changed out all the meters in their area. She thinks that the pump house has its own meter? She does not know for sure.

She was told the company could come out and check the electrical in their home? Is that something the company is willing to do?

Response due September 23, 2009, by 5:00pm PST

Thank you.

Rachel

*** 09/18/2009 02:22 PM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Hi Rachel,

\$1113.18 previous prior obligation

\$1260.04 past due

\$18.32 current charges due October 2, 2009

\$236 new deposit, \$37 reconnect - amount for prior obligation is \$273
Deposit calculation = $\$1437 / 12 \times 2 = \239 . CLX asked for \$236

We can offer a 9 month installment on prior obligation balance if they choose this option

There are no free programs available for in home electric energy audits, we can provide some contractor referrals but the contractors do charge.

"Why is the company send the consumer a disconnect notice when they are already disconnected?" The notices received are for charges owed prior to the disconnect that have now reached a urgent or final notice stage.

We have a service order in place to test the meter, I'm unable to locate a separate meter or billing for the pump house. The only meter I can find assigned to Hoda is the one attached to her home. B035895653

thanks Vera

*** 09/18/2009 04:10 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Vera Fuchs



Thanks Vera,

Can you tell me why they have so much past due and not prior? Weren't they disconnected for nonpayment?

*** 09/21/2009 11:46 AM Phone: Rachel Stark << Vera Fuchs



Spoke with Vera.

She said the customers are playing a name game and that is why their account is not processed prior obligation. I told her I would have to look at the information again and get back to her.

*** 10/01/2009 10:51 AM Phone: Rachel Stark >> Consumer



Called consumer - left voicemail that I am working on their complaint information and still waiting for payment information.

*** 10/09/2009 09:53 AM Voice Mail: Rachel Stark << Consumer



Consumer left voicemail stating they will get payment stuff to me because they had to look through their checkbook.

*** 10/19/2009 01:56 PM Action: Rachel Stark



Reviewed account information:

Puget Sound Energy mails their bills and notices from Texas

WAC 480-100-178(2) Bill due date requirement is 18 days.

WAC 480-100-128(6)(i) 1st notice due date requirement is 11 business days.

WAC 480-100-128(6)(ii) 2nd notice due date requirement is 6 business days.

Why is account not prior obligation? Customer's are husband and wife.

Deposit calculation: $\$1,543.23 / 12 = \$128.60 \times 2 = \$257.20$ - the company asked for \$236

The company is in compliance with deposit amount request.

Still do not have payment information from customer.

Has the meter been tested?

*** 10/27/2009 09:22 AM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Meter tested 9-17-09 and tested accurate.

99.8% on FL

99.5% on LL

*** 11/02/2009 02:17 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown



Good afternoon Molly,

Besides the meter test, are there any other new information for this consumer's account for September and October? I am working on this one to close hopefully today with a letter.

Account number: 512-114-100-5

Address: 28226 State Hwy 3 NE; Poulsbo, WA 98370

Thank you and let me know if you have questions.

Rachel

*** 11/03/2009 01:10 PM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Still disconnected. No payment.

*** 11/05/2009 09:43 AM Email: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown



Thank you Molly,

I will look at this complaint right now and get back to you.

Rachel

*** 11/13/2009 01:55 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown



Molly,

Thank you for the information regarding this filing, I will work on this and get back to you as soon as I can. Thank you for your patience, I appreciate it.

Rachel

*** 11/17/2009 02:33 PM Action: Rachel Stark



Reviewed account history:

Created account history spreadsheet.

Puget Sound Energy mails their bills and notices from Texas

WAC 480-100-178(2) Bill due date requirement is 18 days.
The company is in compliance with bill due date requirements.

WAC 480-100-128(6)(i) 1st notice due date requirement is 11 business days.
Check with company: Account shows urgent notice mailed June 15, 2009, with a due date of June 19, 2009, for \$1,040.78. Not enough notice - confirm with company this notice is correct. If not correct, June 16, 2009, final notice is not good and disconnect not good.

WAC 480-100-128(6)(ii) 2nd notice due date requirement is 6 business days.
Final notice mailed April 15, 2009, for \$693.12, due April 22, 2009. Due date should be April 23, 2009. - violation.

Confirm with company why account if not prior obligation. Customer's are husband and wife.

Deposit calculation: $\$1,543.23 / 12 = \$128.60 \times 2 = \$257.20$ - the company asked for \$236
The company is in compliance with deposit amount request.

SEE ATTACHED ACCOUNT HISTORY SPREADSHEET

*** 11/17/2009 03:47 PM Phone: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown



Called and spoke with Molly.

We went over account information and attempted to figure out what was prior obligation. Molly is going to check with an account history expert to look over this account information and let me know how much is prior obligation and how much is past due. She will send me the information.

*** 11/18/2009 10:39 AM Phone: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown



Spoke with Molly.

June 15, 2009, urgent notice for \$1,040.78 due June 19, 2009, is a typo. The notice was mailed June 4, 2009. - The company is in compliance with notice requirement for this notice. The final notice is good, and the disconnection on July 13, 2009, is good.

The company also is unwilling to restore service unless the customer pays the bill. The account is not considered prior obligation because these customer's have attempted to put service in the other's name to avoid payment. The company is stating they had service restored frauduantly. The customer was disconnected July 13, 2009, Sam called on July 14, stating he was a new tenant and property owner - the company restored service. July 15, 2009, a lead PSE person spoke with Hoda and Samuel - they said they were roommates. The company disconnected service July 23, 2009, due to fraud of name game.

I asked Molly about Sean Hoffman or Hofner. She said he spoke with the consumer on August 3, 2009, and told them they did not have prior obligation. He is in Bothell access center.

SEE UPDATED SPREADSHEET

*** 11/18/2009 12:10 PM Voice Mail: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown



Left voicemail for Molly to return call.

*** 11/18/2009 12:16 PM Phone: Rachel Stark << Molly Brown



Spoke with Molly.

The company is sending someone out to the property to verify the meter is still off. If the meter is not tampered with, the company will process the account as prior obligation. She is putting a rush on this meter investigation and will get back to me today or tomorrow.

*** 11/18/2009 12:48 PM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Rachel:

We've compromised (Access Center and myself). We are not going to process prior however we will reconnect for \$520.78 which is half of the disconnect amount.

Can we close?

Thank you,
Molly

From: Merrell, Renee
Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2009 12:45 PM
To: Brown, Molly
Cc: O'Brien, Donna J
Subject: RE: HODA SHEIKH

\$520.78 and I am having one of my point people call and expedite the service order for the meter check. Hopefully, we will know by Friday. I'm not in on Friday, so you can e-mail Donna O'Brien to inquire.

Donna, this is account 512114100. I will fill you in.

From: Brown, Molly
Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2009 12:41 PM
To: Merrell, Renee
Subject: RE: HODA SHEIKH

can you get me a figure so I can advise utc?

thanks,
Molly

From: Merrell, Renee
Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2009 12:36 PM
To: Brown, Molly
Subject: RE: HODA SHEIKH

great!

From: Brown, Molly
Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2009 12:36 PM
To: Merrell, Renee
Subject: RE: HODA SHEIKH

Works for me.

From: Merrell, Renee
Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2009 12:36 PM
To: Brown, Molly
Subject: RE: HODA SHEIKH

I will compromise with you? How about if we don't process prior for the obvious reason and agree to reconnect their service for 1/2 of the disconnect amount?

From: Brown, Molly
Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2009 12:21 PM
To: Merrell, Renee
Subject: HODA SHEIKH

Commission is not going to make us process prior if we don't want to. I told them that we have a service order out to verify meter. I indicated that since they are husband and wife, we could process prior if everything is ok with meter however, if meter tampering or something fishy, then PSE won't be as generous.

Does this work for you?

Molly

*** 11/18/2009 01:30 PM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Brown, Molly



FYI...

From: Merrell, Renee
Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2009 1:29 PM
To: Brown, Molly
Subject: RE: HODA SHEIKH

Molly, I just got a call from the field tech. The meter is good to go. Will the UTC call the customer?

*** 11/18/2009 01:40 PM Voice Mail: Rachel Stark >> Consumer



Left voicemail for consumer.

Let them know the company was not processing their account as prior obligation because the company believed they were playing a name game with them to avoid paying the bill. I let them know the company is being generous by only

requiring them to pay \$520.78 to have service restored. They still have to pay the remaining balance of their account and set up payment arrangements. I told them I do not have any other payments on the account other than the \$300 payment on November 13, 2008. I told them if they have proof of any other payments to please provide that information and I will be glad to update the company. I told them the company now knows they are husband and wife and not roommates. The company's record also shows they spoke with Sean in Bothell at the access center and he told them their account was not considered prior obligation. I told them the company tested their meter and it is accurate. I let them know I am closing their complaint and to contact me if they have questions.

*** 11/18/2009 02:05 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown



Good afternoon Molly,

Thank you for the information.

I have left a voicemail for this consumer and let them know the company was not processing their account as prior obligation because the company believed they were playing a name game with them to avoid paying the bill. I let them know the company is being generous by only requiring them to pay \$520.78 to have service restored. They still have to pay the remaining balance of their account and set up payment arrangements. I told them I do not have any other payments on the account other than the \$300 payment on November 13, 2008. I told them if they have proof of any other payments to please provide that information and I will be glad to update the company. I told them the company now knows they are husband and wife and not roommates. I told them the company tested their meter and it is accurate.

I do need to let you know about one violation:

PSE mails their bills and notices from Texas.

I am recording one (1) violation of WAC 480-100-128(6)(ii) because a final notice was mailed to this consumer April 15, 2009, for \$693.12, due April 22, 2009. The due date is one day short; the due date should be April 23, 2009.

I have completed my investigation and this complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection Section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Thank you.

Rachel

*** 11/18/2009 02:15 PM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Rachel:

It was a typo. Attached is the final notice with the correct due date of 4/23/09.

Thank you,
Molly

SEE ATTACHED FINAL NOTICE

*** 11/18/2009 02:19 PM Action: Rachel Stark



Reviewed attachment. Final notice is in compliance with rules. Remove violation.

*** 11/18/2009 02:20 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown



Thank you Molly for the update. I have confirmed the notice is in compliance with rules. I will remove the violation.

Complaint remains closed.

Have a good day.
Rachel

*** 11/18/2009 02:21 PM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Thanks Rachel.

*** 02/08/2010 11:55 AM Email: Rachel Stark >> Vera Fuchs and Molly Brown



Good morning Vera and Molly,

The account number is 512-114-100-5

This account should have been processed prior obligation once this consumer became disconnected July 13, 2009. At the time of disconnect, the billed out amount to the customer was \$2,355.48.

Please go back and fix this customers account and process it prior obligation.

I am recording the following violations:

One violation of WAC 480-100-123(3) because in July 2009, the company did not process their account as prior obligation and not offered to pay half of a new deposit and reconnect fee to have service restored.

One violation of WAC 480-100-128(6)(i) because the company mailed a urgent disconnect notice to this customer with prior obligation amounts on the notice on September 3, 2009.

Three violations of WAC 480-100-128(6)(d)(i) because the company mailed a second disconnect notice to this consumer with prior obligation amount on the notice on July 16, August 10, and September 2, 2009.

This complaint remains closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection Section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Please let me know if you have any questions.
Thank you.
Rachel

*** 02/08/2010 11:55 AM Violation: 480-100-123(3) -



One violation. On July 13, 2009, the company did not process their account as prior obligation and not

offered to pay half of a new deposit and reconnect fee to have service restored.

*** 02/08/2010 11:56 AM Violation: 480-100-128(6)(i) -



One violation. The company mailed a urgent disconnect notice to this customer with prior obligation amounts on the notice on September 3, 2009.

*** 02/08/2010 11:56 AM Violation: 480-100-128(6)(d)(i) -



Three violations. The company mailed a second disconnect notice to this consumer with prior obligation amount on the notice on July 16, August 10, and September 2, 2009.

*** 02/08/2010 12:14 PM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Hi Rachel,

I have a question or two, sorry just trying to get on board.

Prior is only processed once payment has been made to restore service, since they have not made payment to restore service yet, we would not process a prior at this time. It's a closed account until that time.

Do you know when they will be making the payment to restore service?

Also your November ruling indicated something different? A bit confused

Email from WUTC Staff:

"I have left a voicemail for this consumer and let them know the company was not processing their account as prior obligation because the company believed they were playing a name game with them to avoid paying the bill. I let them know the company is being generous by only requiring them to pay \$520.78 to have service restored. I told them the company now knows they are husband and wife and not roommates. I told them the company tested their meter and it is accurate."

*** 02/08/2010 01:26 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Vera Fuchs and Molly Brown



Thank you Vera,

This complaint as well as others has been relooked at by our compliance investigations staff. At the time, my focus was on the perceived customer fraud and I overlooked the prior obligation component.

The company does not have the option to hold an account once the customer has been disconnected. This consumer should have been told they would be assessed a new deposit and required to pay half of the new deposit as well as a reconnect fee to have service restored. The company needs to go back and process this account as prior obligation from July 13, 2009, when service was disconnected. Please provide information regarding what this customer's new deposit would be to have service restored.

I have not spoken to these consumers since I closed the complaint, however, if their service was not restored, how much would the new deposit be to restore service?

Washington UTC Complaint

107456

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account#

Kelly Griffin

Contact:

620 SW Little Tree Cir
Port Orchard, WA 98367

Primary Phone: (360) 621-3853

Complaint: ~~107456~~

Serviced by: **Gail Griffin-Wallace**

Opened on: 09/17/2009

Grouped by: Disputed Bill

Closed on: 09/22/2009

Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Customers service was disconnected about 5/18/09. Customer paid \$350, which she was told was the deposit to have service restored. PSE applied payment to the past due amount, requested a new deposit of \$283 and is applying payment to what should be prior obligation. Customer attempted to make an arrangement to pay \$400 but PSE refused and quoted deposit amount.

Please provide complete account history to include payment due dates.

passed to pse via email 9/17 @ 11:45 am - your initial response to this complaint is due by close of business 9/21/09

Results:

After my review, PSE transferred \$1,163.71 to prior obligation, applied payment from August 12, 2009 to current account, and the \$350 payment towards the deposit. At this time, the account balance is \$246.97.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 09/17/2009 04:09 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Customer had previous complaint with the WUTC, complaint #106123.

Service was disconnect on May 18, for \$1163.71, processed Prior Obligation for reconnect on May 18, 2009. Amount to reconnect new deposit of \$283.00 plus reconnect charge of \$37.00 total \$320.00.

Customer made a \$350.00 payment, \$30 credit balance applied to new charges owed on account not to prior obligation balance.

An installment was established with a payment of \$183.31, first payment due June 18 in addition to current charges.

Payment made on August 12, 2009 for \$211.51 applied to the installment arrangement which had two past due payments owing. We have reallocated the payment to current charges. The prior obligation charges no longer covered by the installment will be forwarded to a collection agency if left unpaid.

Total balance owed \$246.97 for current assignment

Current charges due 09/18 - \$134.73
Past Due charges due 08/18 - \$112.24

Deposit Calculation \$1696.12 by 12 X 2 = \$283

****see attachments****

***** 09/17/2009 04:54 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown**



Vera,

If customer was disconnected for \$1163.71, why did only \$1099.82 process to prior obligation? Please provide an account history removing the prior obligation amount from the total owing after the process date. Where did the remaining balance come from?

Thanks - Gail

***** 09/18/2009 10:21 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L**



The balance which was available to be claimed under prior obligation was \$1345.03. There was a deposit of \$245 plus .21 cents in interest that credited to the unpaid balance, leaving \$1099.82 for the installment.

total balance	\$1345.03
Less deposit	-245.00
Less interest	-.21
total prior	\$1099.82

<<Griffin Statement no Prior Balance.xls>>

We can offer a time payment of half in two weeks (October 2 - \$123.50) and balance in an additional two weeks (October 16 -\$123.47).

New statement issues September 29, 2009.

*****see attachments****

* revised activity statement with prior obligatin removed.

***** 09/18/2009 11:41 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Vera Fuchs**



Called company to inquiry about and final notice on 8/31. Amount of notice did not match with any of the revised figures. Company explained that because the corrections were made yesterday the notice was already sent. The entry should have been removed from the revised activity statement.

***** 09/18/2009 11:43 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer**



Called customer - lmtc

***** 09/21/2009 12:15 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer**



Called customer - lmtc today to discuss complaint resolution.

*** 09/22/2009 03:22 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



called customer - advised via voicemail that complaint will close.

*** 09/22/2009 04:14 PM Letter: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Re: 107456

September 21, 2009

Kelly Griffin
620 Southwest Little Tree Circle
Port Orchard, WA 98367

Dear Ms. Griffin:

I am responding to your complaint against Puget Sound Energy (PSE). You stated that PSE applied a \$350 payment that was supposed to be for your deposit, to your past due balance, after you were disconnected. In addition, PSE applied your \$211.51 payment to the prior obligation versus your account.

After my review, PSE transferred \$1,163.71 to prior obligation, applied your payment from August 12, 2009 to your current account, and the \$350 payment towards your deposit. At this time, your account balance is \$246.97, which is past due. Please contact PSE at 1-888-225-5773 to make arrangements on the past due amount.

At this time I have concluded my investigation and closed the complaint. Please contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

SEE ATTACHMENTS FOR SIGNED COPY OF LETTER

*** 09/22/2009 04:20 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Vera Fuchs



Vera,

I have closed this complaint with the customer advising that charges of \$246.97 are past due. I am in the process of ascertaining what violations are appropriate for violations of prior obligation regulations as well as improper notices and billing information. I am out of the office the remainder of this week, therefore, I'll advise you of the violations on 9/28/09. Please let me know if you have any questions. We can consider the complaint itself closed. Thanks - Gail

Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 11/05/2009 08:43 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> PSE



Vera,

I have recorded one violation each of WAC 480-100-178(1)(e) and WAC 480-100-178(1)(f) for failure to provide a complete and/or accurate bill (final

notice mailed 8/31/09). Please let me know if you have any questions.
Thanks - Gail

*** 11/05/2009 10:18 AM Violation: 480-100-178 (1)(e) -



for failure to provide a complete and/or accurate bill (final notice mailed 8/31/09).

*** 11/05/2009 10:21 AM Violation: 480-100-178(1)(f) -



for failure to provide a complete and/or accurate bill (final notice mailed 8/31/09).

Washington UTC Complaint

107626

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 001-451-012-7

Christopher Forberg
Contact: Jamie
43 A Ridgewood Lane
Olympia, WA 98502

Primary Phone: (360) 350-8346

Complaint: ~~107626~~

Serviced by: Dennis Shutler

Opened on: 10/14/2009

Grouped by: Disconnect

Closed on: 10/20/2009

Disposition: Company upheld with arrangements

Description:



Ms called and stated she came home today to find her electricity has been shut off by Puget Sound Energy (PSE). Ms stated she is divorcing her husband, and she also just started working for the Department of Corrections and will now be able to get caught up on her debts. Ms also stated she has an appointment today with the St Vincent DePaul who has promised to apply \$75 to her account. Ms states she never received any notice from PSE that notified her that her electricity was subject to being shut off. Ms stated she called PSE and asked for a little time to get caught up but PSE refused to work with her.

Ms has committed to pay PSE \$100 on Friday 10/16/09 before 5 p.m., and then pay PSE another \$300 on Friday 10/30/09 before 5 p.m. Ms stated she is simply asking PSE to please reconnect her electricity and work with her as she gets back onto her feet getting on top of her debt.

-URGENT- Passing a new complaint. -URGENT-

In accordance with the commission's response rule in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-173(3)(a), PSE's response is due not later than 5 p.m. PT on 10/16/09.

Please provide this customer's account history. At a minimum, the information provided should consist of: records of all communications between the company and the customer; copies (if available) of all late or disconnection notices; as well as the account billing/payment history, all throughout the period of 7/01/09 to current.

Complaint passed to PSE, via e-mail on 10/14/09, at 2:17 p.m.

Results:

Ms' electrical service was restored on Friday, 10/16/09 at 4:30 PM. PSE agreed to Ms' payment arrangements and Ms will pay \$75.20 on 11/19/09 and \$75.20 on 12/19/09 in additional to her normal monthly charges.

---VIOLATIONS NOTED---

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 10/14/2009 02:17 PM Email: Dennis Shutler >> Vera Fuchs



-URGENT- Passing a new complaint. -URGENT-

*** 10/14/2009 03:02 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Disconnect amount is \$391.10. We would be glad to reconnect based on prior obligation, I have provided a usage history for the deposit calculation to determine prior obligation. 12 months = \$1,874.98 divided by 12 X 2 = \$312 deposit plus \$37 reconnection fee.

We have not received a pledge from St Vincent at this time.

Four failed agreed to time payment arrangements since January 2009:
February 2, April 1, April 27 and August 3.

I will provide the billing/account history by tomorrow. Thank you.....

SEE ATTACHED CUSTOMER ACCOUNT HISTORY PROVIDED BY PSE:

*** 10/14/2009 03:30 PM Email: Shuttler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



You are aware of Ms' abilities, so I ask what type of arrangements is PSE willing to entertain?

Thank you.

*** 10/14/2009 04:00 PM Email: Shuttler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Half deposit \$156 plus reconnect \$37 total \$193. If she can have St Vincent call us with \$75 pledge we would be able to use that toward prior amount and reduce her part to \$118.

I will provide the notices/credit/billing history first thing tomorrow.

*** 10/14/2009 04:20 PM Phone: Dennis Shuttler >> customer



I called Ms and told her that PSE is requiring she pay half a deposit of \$156 plus a reconnect fee of \$37 for a total of \$193.

I told Ms that PSE reported if she can have St Vincent call PSE with the \$75 pledge PSE would be able to use that toward prior amount and reduce her part to \$118.

Ms stated she hadn't yet received the pledge but she was going on Friday and she would call me to let me know what she is able to obtain.

*** 10/16/2009 03:05 PM Phone: Dennis Shuttler << customer



Ms called me stating she was unable to obtain the amount PSE is requiring to reconnect her electrical service but she will continue to try all means available to her.

*** 10/19/2009 07:59 AM Voice Mail: Dennis Shuttler >> customer



I called Ms and again left her a voice message stating that PSE is requiring she pay half a deposit of \$156 plus a reconnect fee of \$37 for a total of \$193. I noted too how she would then need to pay the remaining half of the deposit within the ensuing 30 days.

I noted how she had called me on Friday and stated she was unable to obtain the amount PSE is requiring to reconnect her electrical service.

I told Ms she was aware of what she needed to do to reinstate her electrical service and that she should retain and refer to my voice message for what she needed to do.

I told Ms I was closing her complaint but she should feel free to call me in

the future should she experience further issues.

*** 10/19/2009 08:13 AM Violation: 480-100-173(3)(a) -



VIOLATION: One (1) violation of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-173(3)(a) Electric utility responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints, against Puget Sound Energy (PSE) for failing to provide staff its complete initial response to this consumer's complaint in a timely manner.

Commission staff requested but PSE has failed to provide: "this customer's account history. At a minimum, the information provided should consist of: records of all communications between the company and the customer; copies (if available) of all late or disconnection notices; as well as the account billing/payment history, all throughout the period of 7/01/09 to current."

*** 10/19/2009 08:25 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Ms Vera Fuchs, Puget Sound Energy (PSE):

Commission staff requested but PSE has failed to provide: "this customer's account history. At a minimum, the information provided should consist of: records of all communications between the company and the customer; copies (if available) of all late or disconnection notices; as well as the account billing/payment history, all throughout the period of 7/01/09 to current."

Consequently, I have recorded a violation of the commission's rule in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-173(3)(a) Electric utility responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints, against PSE, as follows:

Ø One (1) violation of WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) Electric utility responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints, against PSE for failing to provide staff its complete initial response to this consumer's complaint in a timely manner.

WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) Electric utility responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints. (3) When the commission refers an informal complaint to the utility, the utility must: (a) Investigate and report the results to the commission within two business days. The commission may grant an extension of time for responding to the complaint, if requested and warranted.

I look forward to receiving the requested documentation.
Thank you.

*** 10/19/2009 08:53 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L'



We provided the information and I have no additional requests for information?

*** 10/19/2009 09:05 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



I've attached a copy of the customer's account history Molly provides so we can follow the customer's payment history.

This is the information we need to tie together with the other usage data and billing information PSE provides.

This shows payment history and other account data.

*** 10/19/2009 02:53 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Customer has claimed and processed prior obligation.
Amount to prior in an installment is \$220.25
Deposit total is \$312 per our previous discussion and previously provided period usage.
Balance for reconnect was received by his payment of \$100 and pledges equaling \$95

SEE ATTACHED CUSTOMER ACCOUNT HISTORY PROVIDED BY PSE:

*** 10/19/2009 05:00 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Has Ms' service been reconnected, and has PSE agreed to Ms' remaining commitment to pay PSE another \$300 on Friday 10/30/09 before 5 p.m.? Or is this the amount that went prior obligation?
Thank you.

*** 10/20/2009 06:44 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



It is the amount to prior which is \$220.25. You will see on the spreadsheet provided yesterday that there was a deposit plus interest that applied which covered \$144 of the outstanding charges. Balance remaining is \$150.40 which is set in a payment arrangement for 1/2 next cycle the balance the following cycle. It is the remaining unpaid deposit.

*** 10/20/2009 07:30 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



You have failed to completely answer my question.
Again, has this customer's service been restored?
And if so, on what date and what time?
So this customer will pay \$75.20, in addition to their normal monthly charges, over the next two billing periods in order to bring their account current?
Thank you.

*** 10/20/2009 07:34 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Yes service was restored on October 16th at 4:30 PM
Yes - \$75.20 due November 19 and \$75.20 due December 19 both in addition to normal monthly charges.

*** 10/20/2009 04:50 PM Voice Mail: Dennis Shutler >> customer



I called Ms and left her a voice message stating PSE advised me that her electrical service had been restored on Friday, 10/16/09 at 4:30 PM.
I told Ms that PSE reported it had agreed to her payment arrangements and she would pay \$75.20 on 11/19/09 and \$75.20 on 12/19/09 in addition to her normal monthly charges.
I told Ms I was closing her complaint and she should feel free to call me in the future should she experience further issues.

*** 10/20/2009 04:55 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Thank you for your time and efforts in working to resolve this customer's complaint issue.
I called Ms and left her a voice message stating PSE advised me that her

electrical service had been restored on Friday, 10/16/09 at 4:30 PM.
I told Ms that PSE reported it had agreed to her payment arrangements and she would need to pay \$75.20 on 11/19/09 and \$75.20 on 12/19/09 in addition to her normal monthly charges.
I told Ms I was closing her complaint and you too may now consider this customer's complaint closed as well.

NOTE: Please note that the commission's Consumer Protection and Communication Section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Again, I thank you.

*** 01/21/2010 01:25 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



In reviewing this complaint, I see it does not show the disconnect information? Please revise the statement to include the disconnect information and the amount the customer was disconnected for.
And I wanted to verify that it was \$220.25 that went prior obligation?
Thank you.

*** 01/21/2010 03:24 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Attached is revised statement activity with the disconnected date of 10/16/09 for \$391.10.

Prior obligation calculation =
\$459.25 amount billed up through disconnect date.
- \$143 deposit
- \$ 1.00 deposit interest
- \$ 25.00 pledge
- \$70.00 pledge
= \$220.25

SEE ATTACHED REVISED STATEMENT PROVIDED BY PSE:

*** 01/21/2010 03:25 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Whoops, forgot spreadsheet.

SEE ATTACHED SPREADSHEET PROVIDED BY PSE:

*** 01/22/2010 04:33 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



One more revision.
Prior obligation is \$315.25
\$459.25 amount billed up through disconnect date.
- \$143 deposit
- \$ 1.00 deposit interest

The pledges I noted below were reapplied to his current product.

*** 01/25/2010 08:18 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Thank you very much for the update.
Question, why were the pledges reapplied, what prompted this?

Thank you.

*** 01/25/2010 08:35 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



At first CLX applied to the prior amount. PSE reapplied so they went to current product assignment.

*** 01/25/2010 09:22 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Okay, thanks.

On what date were these reapplied?

Thank you.

*** 01/25/2010 01:48 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



10/26/09 and 11/5/09.

They posted to the account on these days and applied to the deposit correctly. I don't know why I included them at first as part of the prior amount. Staff sent me quite a few follow-ups on Friday and I obviously provided the wrong information with my first email. I am sorry.

Molly

*** 01/27/2010 07:13 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Thank you for this information.

Please provide statement activity from the time of disconnect through 11/30/09, that reflects receipt and application of the pledges.

Thank you.

*** 01/28/2010 04:15 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



SEE ATTACHED-CUSTOMER ACCOUNT HISTORY PROVIDED BY PSE:

*** 02/10/2010 09:35 AM Violation: 480-100-123(3) -



VIOLATION: One (1) violation of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-123(3) Refusal of service, against Puget Sound Energy (PSE) for initially misapplying a customer's pledge to the customer's prior obligation, rather than correctly applying the pledge to the customer's current charges.

In PSE's e-mail response to staff on 1/21/10, PSE verified it applied this customer's pledges to the prior obligation amount, stating: "Attached is revised statement activity with the disconnected date of 10/16/09 for \$391.10. Prior obligation calculation = \$459.25 amount billed up through disconnect date.

- \$143 deposit
- \$ 1.00 deposit interest
- \$25.00 pledge
- \$70.00 pledge
= \$220.25"

*** 02/10/2010 09:49 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'; 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Ms Vera Fuchs, Puget Sound Energy (PSE):

In PSE's e-mail response to staff on 1/21/10, PSE verified it applied this customer's pledges to the prior obligation amount, stating: "Attached is revised statement activity with the disconnected date of 10/16/09 for \$391.10. Prior obligation calculation = \$459.25 amount billed up through disconnect date.

- \$143 deposit
- \$ 1.00 deposit interest
- \$25.00 pledge
- \$70.00 pledge
= \$220.25"

Consequently, I have recorded a violation of the commission's rule in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-123(3) Refusal of service, against PSE, as follows:

Ø One (1) violation of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-123(3) Refusal of service, against Puget Sound Energy (PSE) for initially misapplying a customer's pledge to the customer's prior obligation, rather than correctly applying the pledge to the customer's current charges.

WAC 480-100-123(3) Refusal of service. (3) An electric utility may not refuse to provide new or additional service to a residential applicant or residential customer who has a prior obligation. A prior obligation is the dollar amount, excluding deposit amounts owed, the utility has billed to the customer and for which the utility has not received payment at the time the service has been disconnected for nonpayment. The utility must provide service once the customer or applicant has paid all appropriate deposit and reconnection fees. This subsection does not apply to customers that have been disconnected for failure to honor the terms of a winter low-income payment program.

Thank you.

*** 02/12/2010 01:14 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



My review of the account indicates that we are not out of compliance on this one and the information you got might be incorrect. I would like to provide an updated statement account/notices using the new approved format for your review. I would ask that I have until Wednesday to provide the updated correct information

I checked the account, the two pledges did not go to the prior it went to deposit and reconnect fee - customer made a \$100 payment as well as the pledges.

The amount for prior to restore was \$193 we got \$195. Also verified all payment since have applied properly.

\$322.31 to prior obligation, original to prior was \$315.25 difference is the final late fees before going to collections.

New deposit charged was \$312

\$459.25 statemented at time of prior

\$143 deposit

\$ 1.00 deposit interest equals \$315.25 to prior no monies to prior balance.

*** 02/16/2010 07:31 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> Pearson, Rayne (UTC)



PSE is disputing this violation.

Saying they reported incorrectly and no amounts paid were improperly applied.

*** 02/16/2010 08:07 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



I hope the details on the attached spreadsheet helps clarify where is payment and pledges applied. The amount remaining on the prior balance is still \$322.31. No installment per customer, these are the charges that will go to collections.

thanks for letting me provide some additional information. We did provide incorrect information on the initial spreadsheet so we are in violation for that one.

Washington UTC Complaint

107696

Company: Puget Sound Energy G703

Customer: Account#

Cydnee Stockton
Contact:
4100 40th Avenue SW
Seattle, WA 98116

Primary Phone: (206) 935-6034

Secondary: 206-218-4298 (Friend - ok to leave voicemail)

Complaint: ~~107696~~

Serviced by: Rachel Stark

Opened on: 10/23/2009

Grouped by: Disconnect

Closed on: 12/10/2009

Disposition: Company upheld

Description:



Ms. was disconnected and she paid \$300 to have service restored October 8, 2009. She just received a 24-hour disconnect notice for \$441. She does not know why she owes so much. She told the company she was told by CAMP to come to their office for assistance to pay her bill. She can go next week and would like to have the company put a hold on her account until she can get more money to pay the bill. The company told her they would not put a hold on her account.

She also said the company shut off her gas for safety repairs in May 2008. She came home to use her heat and it would not work so she called the company to find out why. She was told there was no record of anything and it was her furnace. She then had no service for five months. She paid to have someone repair her furnace to discover nothing was wrong with her furnace. She called the company and was told the company had shut her service off in May and would come to reconnect.

This consumer would like to know if she can receive a credit for the period the company did not admit to their wrong doing. She would also like to know why she owes so much and why the company would not hold her account until she met with CAMP.

10/23/09 11:45 URGENT complaint passed to Vera Fuchs and Dee Walker via e-mail
Response due October 27, 2009, by 5pm PST

Results:

The company properly disconnected consumer for non-payment. Ms. does not consistently pay her bill and only pays \$25 per month when she does make a payment. Ms. has not contacted CAMP to try for assistance to pay her bill. She is resistant to asking for help. The company shut off service in 2008, for a meter sampling. Her meter failed and replaced. Ms. is not owed any credits.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 10/23/2009 11:49 AM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Molly is back and taking the new complaints, I will forward this one to her attention. I will continue to respond to the ones I started till next week when I go on vacation.

thank you for all your patience while I filled in for Molly.

Vera

*** 10/23/2009 02:26 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Vera Fuchs, Molly Brown and Dee Walker



Thank you for your hard work Vera.

I will let staff know to send complaints to Molly now.

Welcome back Molly. We missed you.

*** 10/27/2009 10:56 AM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Good Morning Rachel:

Cydnee was disconnected on 7/22/09 for \$324.93.

Since her history shows she doesn't use gas in the summer, it appears she did not call for a gas reconnect after the July disconnect.

In September she paid \$25.00 towards her bill.

In October when she called for the reconnect, she was quoted \$299.93 to be reconnected. This amount comes from the disconnect amount of \$324.93 - \$25.00 September payment.

Cydnee paid \$300 on 10/8/09 which was more than the current disconnect amount so the account was not considered prior obligation.

She was reconnected on 10/9/09.

Delinquent charges still owing = \$181.85 (noted)

A \$189 deposit was charged to the account due to the disconnect.

My calculation includes $\$1291.54 / 12 \times 2 = \215 (product history attached).

When is her CAMP appointment? I will hold credit until then. Please advise.

The customer's gas was not shut off in 2008 as a safety precaution but rather a periodic meter sampling. Her gas meter was part of a family of gas meters that when a sample were tested, failed, so the entire batch of these particular gas meters were changed out. Her meter may have been just fine. As you know, gas meters tend to slow down or stop. They don't speed up. Therefore, there is no reason for a "credit."

Her statement activity will show why she owes a balance. We can make arrangements on the deposit. When would she like her payments dues? (3-months = \$63 a month).

Please advise if you need further information.

Thank you,
Molly

SEE ATTACHED ACCOUNT INFORMATION

*** 11/06/2009 01:57 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown



Molly,

Thank you for the information regarding this filing, I will work on this and get back to you as soon as I can. Thank you for your patience, I appreciate it.

Rachel

*** 11/16/2009 08:29 AM Action: Rachel Stark



Puget Sound Energy mails their bills and notices from Texas

WAC 480-90-178(2) Bill due date requirement is 18 days.

WAC 480-90-128(6)(i) 1st notice due date requirement is 11 business days.

WAC 480-90-128(6)(ii) 2nd notice due date requirement is 6 business days.

Deposit calculation:

$\$1,291.54 / 12 = \$107.62 \times 2 = \$215.24$ - The company asked for \$189.

**The company is in compliance with deposit request.

*** 11/25/2009 09:58 AM Voice Mail: Rachel Stark >> Consumer



Called consumer - let him know I will be out of the office until Monday for the Thanksgiving holiday and will call him next week.

*** 12/02/2009 11:26 AM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Hi Rachel:

What is the status of this disconnect from October?

On 10/27/09, I offered to make arrangements on the deposit. I have not heard back so therefore no arrangements were made and she has since been mailed an Urgent notice on 11/24/09 due 12/11/09 for the deposit amount of \$189.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 12/02/2009 03:16 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown



Molly,

She's on the list. I'm working on these as fast as I can. Thank you for your patience, I appreciate it.

Rachel

*** 12/10/2009 03:34 PM Action: Rachel Stark



Created account spreadsheet and checked compliance with rules.

The company is in compliance with bill due date requirements.

The company is in compliance with all notice due date requirements.

The company was in compliance with disconnection of customer's service.

Customer does not pay bill each month and only pays \$25 per month when she pays.

SEE ATTACHED ACCOUNT SPREADSHEET

*** 12/10/2009 03:48 PM Phone: Rachel Stark >> Consumer



Spoke with consumer and she states she paid the company \$200 on December 4, 2009. Ms. asked for number to contact CAMP. I explained to her I was surprised she had not already spoken to them because when she opened the complaint she stated she was calling them. I gave her the number and also advised her to contact St. Vincent DePaul, Salvation Army, or local churches. I told her a \$25 payment on a \$220 bill each month is not enough to keep her service on. She stated she has a hard time asking for assistance but her husband walked out on her after she found she has cancer. She is a single mom trying to make it. I let her know the company is always willing to work with her and discussed the medical emergency rules for future reference. I asked her if she wanted me to set payment arrangements for her, she said she would contact the company herself. I let her know the company tested her meter in 2008 and that is why her meter was off and she is not owed a credit. She says she will also call CAMP today and get an appointment and then call the company to let them know when the appointment is. I let her know I will let the company know and close her complaint. She thanked me very much for the assistance.

*** 12/10/2009 04:15 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown



Good afternoon Molly,

I spoke with consumer and she states she paid the company \$200 on December 4, 2009. I gave her the number again to contact CAMP and also advised her to contact St. Vincent DePaul, Salvation Army, or local churches. She wanted me to let the company know she is doing the best she can and is trying to pay as much as she can. She stated she has a hard time asking for assistance but her husband walked out on her after she found she has cancer. She is a single mom trying to make it. I let her know the company is always willing to work with her and discussed the medical emergency rules for future reference. She says she will call CAMP today and get an appointment and then call the company to let them know when the appointment is.

I have completed my investigation and this complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection Section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Thank you and have a good day.
Rachel

*** 02/05/2010 08:54 AM Action: Rachel Stark



Compliance review investigation:

Customer was disconnected July 22, 2009. Billed out amounts to the customer was \$515.80. She made a \$25 payment September 4, payment which was applied to prior obligation amount. $\$515.80 - \$25 = \$490.80$ amount should be prior obligation.

Record the following violations:

One violation of WAC 480-90-123(2) because in October 2009, when she called the

company to have service reconnected, she was not told about prior obligation and not offered to pay half of a new deposit and reconnect fee to have service restored.

One violation of WAC 480-90-123(2) because when Ms. was properly disconnected on July 22, 2009, her account was not processed prior obligation.

Three violations of WAC 480-90-128(6)(i) because the company mailed a urgent disconnect notices to this customer with prior obligation amounts on the notice on August 5, September 8, and October 6, 2009.

Three violations of WAC 480-90-128(6)(d)(i) because the company mailed a second disconnect notice to this consumer with prior obligation amount on the notice on August 11, September 3, and September 18, 2009.

SEE ATTACHED UPDATED SPREADSHEET

*** 02/05/2010 09:46 AM Email: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown and Vera Fuchs



Good morning ladies,

I do not have an account number for this customer she nor did the company provide that information to me.

This customer was disconnected July 22, 2009. Her billed out amounts were \$515.80. She made a \$25 payment September 4, which was applied to amount when disconnected. However, her account was not processed prior obligation amount. Her amount billed when disconnected $\$515.80 - \$25 = \$490.80$; this amount should have been prior obligation.

I am recording the following violations:

One violation of WAC 480-90-123(2) because in October 2009, when she called the company to have service reconnected, she was not told about prior obligation and not offered to pay half of a new deposit and reconnect fee to have service restored.

One violation of WAC 480-90-123(2) because when Ms. was properly disconnected on July 22, 2009, her account was not processed prior obligation.

Three violations of WAC 480-90-128(6)(i) because the company mailed a urgent disconnect notices to this customer with prior obligation amounts on the notice on August 5, September 8, and October 6, 2009.

Three violations of WAC 480-90-128(6)(d)(i) because the company mailed a second disconnect notice to this consumer with prior obligation amount on the notice on August 11, September 3, and September 18, 2009.

This complaint remains closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection Section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Please let me know if you have any questions.
Rachel

*** 03/02/2010 03:57 PM Violation: 480-90-123(2) -



One violation. October 2009, when this consumer called the company to have service reconnected, she was not told about prior obligation and not offered to pay half of a new deposit and reconnect fee to have service restored.

*** 03/02/2010 03:58 PM Violation: 480-90-123(2) -



One violation. When Ms. was properly disconnected on July 22, 2009, her account was not processed prior obligation.

*** 03/02/2010 03:59 PM Violation: 480-90-128(6)(i) -



Three violations. The company mailed a urgent disconnect notices to this customer with prior obligation amounts on the notice on August 5, September 8, and October 6, 2009.

*** 03/02/2010 04:00 PM Violation: 480-90-128(6)(d)(i) -



Three violations. The company mailed a second disconnect notice to this consumer with prior obligation amount on the notice on August 11, September 3, and September 18, 2009.

Washington UTC Complaint

107702

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 9998771233

Angela Holmes & Patricia Martin

Contact: Patricia

4516 24th Ave SE

Lacey, WA 98503

Primary Phone: (360) 456-5448

Complaint: ~~107702~~

Serviced by: Gail Griffin-Wallace

Opened on: 10/26/2009

Grouped by: Disconnect

Closed on: 11/12/2009

Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Customer recently assumed energy bill after a disconnect. Customer says she made one payment but did not know another payment was due. Customer is trying to make arrangements to make that payment on 10/30/09 for \$132. Customer however was told that she would be required to make a payment of over \$400 to prevent the disconnect.

Please provide a 6 month payment history to include the disconnect information and what amount was sent to prior obligation.

passed to PSE via email 10/26 @ 9:05am - your initial response to this complaint is due by close of business 10/28/09

Results:

PSE posted payment for \$132 on 11/2/09, which is the balance of the deposit owed. Customer records show she has credit toward her gas service, however electric is past due. Customer has energy assistance appt 12/23/09 and was told to contact company and advise to prevent disconnection of additional services.

12/30 - Further investigation of complaint found that company did not provide proper notice on electric collectables due to un-applied pledges. In addition, prior obligation was not processed after customer was disconnected on 8/5/09 & 9/18/09. Company provided credits for reconnect charges after improper disconnect.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 10/27/2009 04:02 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Hi Gail:

The account has been in the name of Angela D Allen-Holmes since 5/1/08. We just added Patricia Martin on the spouse line (she didn't take over the account).

Customer claimed medical emergency on 9/24/09 and was reconnected under the Medical Emergency rule. Arrangements were made on the account past due balance. Medical Emergency approved.

We can certainly make arrangements on the \$132 which is additional deposit

requested on 8/29/09.

Nothing has gone prior. When the service was disconnected in August, the agent saw that there was \$1170 in pledges so PSE did not process the account prior. However, \$880 of those pledges were dedicated towards her gas collectibles, not electric so she actually only had \$290 in electric pledges. We can process the electric as prior obligation from the August disconnect.

There is nothing owing on gas collectibles due to pledges and there is \$212.72 unapplied credit that is to be applied towards her future gas charges. These are LIHEAP and PSE HELP funds and can not be reallocated towards electric charges.

The additional electric deposit request was added 8/29/09.
Calculation = $\$1242 / 12 \times 2 = \207 . CLX = \$209 (\$77 already on file and \$132 additional request).

Attached is product history and statement activity.

*** see attachments ***

*** 10/29/2009 10:42 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Called customer - lmtc w/ daughter

*** 11/03/2009 03:43 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> pse



Molly,

The electric portion should be processed as prior obligation. Please advise the amount. Also, Has the customer made payment for the remainder of the deposit request?

Thanks - Gail

*** 11/06/2009 08:30 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Electric processed prior. Prior amount = \$527.84.

Can we close?

- Molly

*** 11/06/2009 12:28 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Molly,

Customer was expected to make a payment on 10/30. Was a payment received?

Thanks - Gail

*** 11/06/2009 02:49 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



A payment for \$132 posted 11/2/09.

*** 11/12/2009 10:04 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Called customer - line busy

*** 11/12/2009 12:22 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Called customer - Advised customer balance of deposit was received. Customer said she has appt for energy assistance on 12/23/09. I told the customer to advise PSE as soon as possible to avoid receiving notice for disconnection of electric service. Cust acknowledged and advised complaint will close.

*** 11/12/2009 12:25 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Molly,
I have closed this complaint. Customer advised she has energy assistance appointment on 12/23/09 and will be calling in.
Thanks - Gail

Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 11/24/2009 03:57 PM Action: Diana Otto



Quality review completed. Feedback provided.

*** 12/15/2009 03:42 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Molly,
After reviewing this complaint I find that there are several issues that were not investigated properly.
Please identify how much of the past due balance of 3/5/09 is electric, & how much is gas.
What months were used to calculate the deposit amount request?
On payments applied to the account, What amounts went to electric and what amounts went to gas.
Were they payments from the customer or pledges to the account.
You indicated that the calculation for deposit was \$207 yet CLX charged \$209.
This is a violation of rule & regulation.
Thanks - Gail

*** 12/16/2009 03:54 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail-(UTC) << Brown, Molly



Gail:

1. \$380.26 past due gas collectibles as of 2/11/09.
\$ 71.00 past due gas deposit requested on 5/1/08
\$515.48 past due electric collectibles as of 2/11/09
<\$0.56> electric deposit interest application.
= \$966.18 as of 2/11/09.
2. Used 8/29/09 (date requested) back 12 months. Only 5 days in billing period 8/4/09 - 9/2/09.
\$1176.89 / 340 days (9/3/08 - 8/29/09) = \$3.46 a day x 365 days a year = \$1262.90. \$1262.90 / 12 x 2 = \$210.48.
CLX asked for \$209. PSE is not in violation. My earlier calculation was an estimate.
However, it appears after the prior obligation was processed, CLX requested

\$192.00.

3. See Attached statement activity.
Pledges for \$880 all towards Gas.
Payments of \$997 applied electric collectibles.

4. Prior Obligation Amount = \$527.84
Electric Collectibles Owing = \$245.18
Gas Collectibles Owing = \$0.00
<<137.91>> unapplied credit which will go towards future gas charges = \$635.11

SEE ATTACHMENTS

*STATEMENT ACTIVITY

*** 12/29/2009 11:04 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Molly,

I have recorded the following violations:
WAC 480-100-178(1)(b) - 7 for failure to show the proper amount due on notices dated 7/9-7/27-8/26-8/31-10/2-10/5-10/14
WAC 480-100-123(3) - 2 - for failure to process electric prior obligation after disconnection 8/5/09 & 9/18/09
WAC 480-100-128(3) - 2 for failure to properly notify customer prior to disconnection on 8/5/09 & 9/18/09
WAC 480-100-128(6)(ii) - 2 for failure to provide relevant information about the disconnection action on 8/5/09 & 9/18/09

A credit of \$37 will be issued for reconnect charges of 9/24/09.
Please let me know if you have any questions.
Gail

*** 12/29/2009 12:47 PM Violation: 480-10-178(1)(b) -



PSE failed to show proper amount due on notices dated 7/9-7/27-8/26-8/31-10/2-10/5-10/14

*** 12/29/2009 12:51 PM Violation: 480-100-123(3) -



PSE failed to process electric prior obligation after disconnection 8/5/09 & 9/18/09

*** 12/29/2009 12:53 PM Violation: 480-100-128(3) -



PSE failed to properly notify customer prior to disconnection on 8/5/09 & 9/18/09

*** 12/29/2009 12:54 PM Violation: 480-100-128(6)(ii) -



PSE failed to provide relevant information about the disconnection action on 8/5/09 & 9/18/09.

*** 12/29/2009 12:59 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Molly,
I have re-closed this complaint.
Thank you for your cooperation.
Gail

Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 01/07/2010 04:12 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Molly,

I have item I overlooked and need to review on this complaint. Please break out gas and electric amounts on all notices sent in 2009.

Thanks - Gail

*** 01/11/2010 04:02 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Gail:

All this information would be on the statement activity which I had previously sent. All credit notices are separated out gas and electric.

What is it you're still needing on this complaint?

Thank you,

Molly

*** 01/22/2010 11:10 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> PSE



Molly,

What I am looking for is separated statement of activity for electric & gas.

Please provide a separated statement of activity for each product for the time period from 3/5/09 to current. We are asking that they no longer be combined into one activity statement. Please let me know if you have questions.

Thanks - Gail

*** 02/08/2010 07:14 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown; vera.fuchs



Good Morning,

I've been reviewing again and I am unable to locate your response to my inquiry below. Please resent or provide this information by 2/11/10.

Thanks - Gail

*** 02/08/2010 08:42 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



I sent this 1/22/2010

SEE ATTACHMENTS

*** 02/26/2010 03:20 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> PSE



Vera,

You've not been involved in this complaint previously however, I am requesting you review this issue and provide the following information:

Customer has an amount of \$527,84 processed to prior after the complaint was opened. How did PSE arrive at this amount?

Please review the timing of the pledges the customer received and advise if the were applied to current charges or prior obligation for the following dates:

8/10 \$150

8/14 \$ 40

8/24 \$150

8/28 \$100

The pledges came in after the disconnect date of 8/5

Thanks - Gail

Please let me know if you have any questions.

*** 03/03/2010 08:54 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Hi Gail,

May I have until Friday March 5th to respond, I will try to complete earlier but want to stay compliant. This was transferred to me, I was previously unaware of the request for more info.

Thank you Vera

*** 03/03/2010 03:01 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



I understand. I'll look for your response on 3/5. Let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks - Gail

*** 03/04/2010 12:39 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Activity:

*** 02/26/2010 03:20 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> PSE

Vera,

You've not been involved in this complaint previously however, I am requesting you review this issue and provide the following information:

Customer has an amount of \$527,84 processed to prior after the complaint was opened. How did PSE arrive at this amount? It was the unpaid charges through July 2, 2009.

Please review the timing of the pledges the customer received and advise if the were applied to current charges or prior obligation for the following

dates:

8/10 \$150 Customer payment to electric for charges in prior

8/14 \$ 40 July 3 to Aug 3

8/24 \$150 there is only on \$150 pledge Salvation Army originally applied Aug 21 then closed and reapplied Nov 5 to cover charges after prior

8/28 \$100 Charges after August

Prior Date was billed through July 2.

The pledges came in after the disconnect date of 8/5

Thanks - Gail

Please let me know if you have any questions.

*** 03/11/2010 12:07 PM Action: Gail Griffin-Wallace



awaiting response from QR as what additional action may be needed.

*** 07/14/2010 02:57 PM Action: Sharon Wallace



Reviewed Quality Review document and needed changes for Suzanne Stillwell. Requested that Diana Otto check the QR button although the requested work was not completed. The complaint is significantly aged at this point and it would not be a wise use of staff time to re-open at this time; however, staff will need to complete this work should the complaint ever be needed for investigative purposes.

Washington UTC Complaint

107780

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 497-913-000-4

Kristy Bonnell
Contact:
13441 Morris Rd
Yelm, WA 98597

Primary Phone: (360) 458-6421
Secondary: (360) 878-3962

Complaint: 107780 Serviced by: Gail Griffin-Wallace
Opened on: 11/06/2009 Grouped by: Disconnect
Closed on: 11/09/2009 Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Customer has past due balance plus deposit owed. Customer wants to know what arrangements she can make to avoid disconnect.

Please provide account history.

passed to pse via email 11/6 @ 10:35a - your initial response to this complaint is due by close of business 11/10/09

Results:

PSE failed to process past due charges as prior obligation and wrongly applied deposit to past due amount owed. PSE has corrected its error and applied subsequent payment to customer's current owed and deposit balance. Violations were recorded for failing to process prior obligation and sending notices with incorrect amounts due.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 11/09/2009 11:01 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Good Morning Gail:

I'll be the first to admit PSE dropped the ball on this account/customer. Kristy was disconnected in August for \$199.86. She came into the Olympia office and made a payment of \$108 which I'm presuming was 1/2 the deposit of \$142 and the reconnect fee of \$37. Unfortunately, one of my cashiers took the payment but did not process the account prior which it should have been. Consequently, the notices from August 24th forward in my opinion are invalid.

I have requested the account be processed prior. The \$108 payment was redirected to the reconnect fee and deposit. The 10/12 payment of \$41.40 was redirected towards the deposit. The 11/3/09 payment of \$120 has been applied to usage from 10/8/09 - 11/5/09 with the balance applied to the prior balance. Account balance = \$311.89.

Prior obligation installment = \$311.89 for 6 months = \$51.99/month.

Her current statement mailed 11/6/09 shows \$21.80 owing on balance of \$311.89. This has been voided. A new statement will be reissued showing \$51.99 owing, balance \$31.89

There is nothing owing on her current collectibles.

Thank you,
Molly

SEE ATTACHMENTS

*payment & credit history
*product history

*** 11/09/2009 11:44 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



called customer - lmtc

*** 11/09/2009 01:15 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace << customer



Customer returned call - advised customer that PSE has made some errors on her account, and that monies that should have been processed a prior obligation were not. I explained prior obligation to the customer and told her that payments she made were misapplied and have been corrected. Customer was advised that 6 month arrangements have been set up on the prior obligation of \$311.89 at \$51.99. -Complaint closed.

*** 11/09/2009 02:42 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Molly,
I have closed this complaint. The customer has been advised of the prior obligation payments of \$51.99, and has been told to wait for the corrected billing.

I have recorded the following violations:

1 violations of WAC 480-100-123(3) for failure to process amounts billed as prior obligation.

6 Violations of WAC 480-100-128(6) for failure to provide the correct amount needed to avoid disconnection on 9/22/09, 9/30/09, 10/2/09, 10/12/09, 10/14/09, and 10/29/09. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks - Gail

*** 11/09/2009 02:49 PM Violation: 480-100-128(6) -



6 Violations for failure to provide the correct amount needed to avoid disconnection on 9/22/09, 9/30/09, 10/2/09, 10/12/09, 10/14/09, and 10/29/09. Please let me know if you have any questions.

*** 11/09/2009 02:50 PM Violation: 480-100-123(3) -



1 violations for failure to process amounts billed as prior obligation after customer was disconnected on 8/24/09.

*** 11/09/2009 02:50 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Nope.

Washington UTC Complaint

107889

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 350 966 000 1

Nycole Dawn

Contact:

4538 Sucia Drive #A
Ferndale, WA 98248

Primary Phone: (360) 355-9442

E-mail addr: n_dawn@live.com

Complaint: 107889

Serviced by: Mike Meeks

Opened on: 11/30/2009

Grouped by: Deposit

Closed on: 12/16/2009

Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Customer states that service was disconnected July 15, 2009. Customer says that it was cut for non-pay. Customer has had service restored as of 11/5. Customer received help from the opportunity council in the amount of \$666 to apply to the new account. Customer states that she is now being requested to pay a deposit of 189.00.

Customer says she was cut for \$150 in July. Was this prior? Where is the pledge money going? If the customer is now being asked to pay a deposit of 189.00 why is this not coming out of the pledge money? Passed to Puget at 1:45pm on 11/30. Please respond by 12/3.

Results:

When customer was disconnected in July, the entire billed amount owing should have been prior obligation. The company applied a portion of the pledge money to the prior obligation. Company was advised to apply all of the grant to the deposit and the current and future bills. Prior obligation amount is \$196.39.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 12/01/2009 11:49 AM Email: Meeks, Mike (UTC) << Brown, Molly



SEE ATTACHMENT Bill history, usage history.

Mike:

11/5/09 Pledge for \$666 called in. Reconnect ordered.

Not quite sure what the complaint is. Here are remarks dated yesterday, 11/30/09:

"Jan from Opportunity Council checking to see if a PSE help pledge will cover an account deposit. As per floor support explained it will."

Apparently Jan from the Opportunity Council did not get back to Nycole with the information.

There are no remarks that Nycole called the Company.

The account was not processed prior in July since there was no reconnect, no 1/2 deposit payment, etc. In fact, the product assignment was considered

closed and a Collection Letter was mailed out on 10/22/09 even though the amount was not sent to Collections. With the pledge called in on 11/13/09, this is more than the disconnect amount which was \$150.81, so the account would not be processed prior.

The deposit of \$189 was paid by the pledge. My deposit calculation = $\$1161 / 12 \times 2 = \193 , CLX asked for \$189.

Attached is product history and statement activity.

*** 12/01/2009 12:03 PM Email: Meeks, Mike (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Molly:

It appears that 264.12 is prior. That all of the 666.00 should go toward the current and future bills. The customer did not request that the service be disconnected, that it was disconnected for non-payment. Please advise.

Thanks,
Mike

*** 12/03/2009 04:34 PM Email: Meeks, Mike (UTC) << Brown, Molly



FYI...

Molly,

07/21/09 Nycole was disconnected for \$150.81

Jan at Opportunity Council called in pledge 11/05/09. Pledge was originally \$627.00, then upped to \$666.00.

This is more than the disconnect, so I do not see how we can process prior obligation. That only occurs if customer cannot pay full disconnect amount and then it would be either deposit + reconnect fee or minimum of 1/2 deposit + reconnect fee. Service would be ended the day of the disconnect (since this is an electric product) and restarted date of reconnect. Prior amount up to 07/21/09 would be put on installments.

I just do not understand how we could process prior any other way---the process has to be the same for all customers. Is there something I am missing here?

According to PSE's Energy Assistance Program Manager if the agency pledges the disconnected amount plus reconnect fee then it's not considered processed prior because the delinquent balance has been paid and no longer considered prior. In this case, they pledged more.

Molly

*** 12/11/2009 02:01 PM Email: Mike Meeks >> molly.brown



Molly:

It was months between the disconnection and the start of new service, the

\$264.12 is prior obligation. The deposit of \$189 needs to be taken out of the \$666 grant. The balance of the grant needs to be credited to the account for current and future bills.

Thanks,
Mike

*** 12/16/2009 10:11 AM Email: Meeks, Mike (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Mike:

This has been done.

However, we are doing so in this case as a "one-off" pending the results of our specific review of the relationship between the timing of disconnect and receipt of payment and how that payment is applied. In addition we are reviewing if there are differences in the application of payments that are dependent on the source of the funds. For example:
are pledge funds required (by contract with the agencies) to be applied to past due amounts before or after being applied to current and future charges.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 12/16/2009 01:18 PM Email: Mike Meeks >> customer



I have concluded my investigation with Puget about the application of the energy assistance funds. Of the \$666 grant, Puget agreed to apply \$189 to the deposit and the balance to the active account for current and future bills until it is exhausted. The amount that was billed prior to the disconnection of service is "prior obligation". This means that you will need to make payment arrangements with Puget for that amount (\$264.12). The company can continue to attempt to collect that amount, but they cannot threaten you active (current) service over that amount. Please contact me back if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Mike Meeks
Consumer Program Specialist
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission

*** 12/16/2009 01:29 PM Email: Mike Meeks >> Molly Brown



Molly:

This complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Thanks,
Mike

*** 12/16/2009 01:32 PM Email: Mike Meeks >> Nycole Dawn



Nycole:

I made an error in the amount that is prior obligation. The actual amount is \$196.39, not \$264.12.

Thanks,

Mike

*** 12/16/2009 04:15 PM Email: Meeks, Mike (UTC) << Nycole Dawn



Thank you Mike for your help with this. It is really appreciated.

Happy holidays,

*** 02/08/2010 11:34 AM Violation: 480-100-123(3) -



Customer received grant money but it was applied to the prior obligation instead of the current service. Company did not follow the rule per the definition of prior obligation in the rule.

*** 02/08/2010 11:49 AM Email: Mike Meeks >> Molly Brown



Molly, Vera:

I have recorded a violation of WAC 480100-123(3) for applying the customer's grant money to the prior obligation.

Thanks,

Mike

APPENDIX E



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
1300 S. Evergreen Park Dr. S.W., P.O. Box 47250 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7250
(360) 664-1160 • TTY (360) 586-8203

January 26, 2010

Tom DeBoer
Director, Rates and Regulatory Affairs
Puget Sound Energy
P.O. Box 97034
MS: PSE-08N
Bellevue, WA 98009-9734

Dear Mr. DeBoer:

The Utilities and Transportation Commission is conducting an investigation into the business practices of Puget Sound Energy (PSE) related to disconnection of electric and natural gas services for nonpayment.

Under Washington state law, RCW 80.04.090, the commission has the right to inspect the accounts, books, papers and documents of any investor-owned electric or natural gas company doing business in this state.

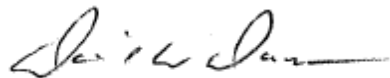
In order to complete this investigation, commission staff requires the following documents and information:

1. A list of all customers (electric and natural gas) in Washington state who were disconnected for nonpayment during the two-week period of October 15 through 31, 2009.
2. For each customer listed, provide a document or worksheet that shows the complete statement of debit and credit activity for the period of August 1 through December 31, 2009. This includes late fees, current charges, pledges, payments, reconnect fees, disconnect fees, etc. and the balances owing after each application. Please separate the account histories by product (gas or electric), and by account number or address, if different.

3. The name, title, telephone number, and e-mail address of the PSE contact person that our staff can work with directly for questions that may arise concerning any details of the data.

Please provide all requested documents and information by February 19, 2010. The response should be directed to Rayne Pearson, Compliance Investigator, Consumer Protection. Ms. Pearson can be reached at (360) 664-1111, or by e-mail at rpearson@utc.wa.gov. You may also contact Ms. Pearson if you have any questions regarding this data request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David W. Danner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David W. Danner
Executive Director and Secretary

cc: Michael Hobbs, Director, Operations

APPENDIX F

APPENDIX G

Washington UTC Complaint

106708

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account#

Amber Smith

Contact:

7922 150th St E.

Puyallup, WA 98375

Primary Phone: (253) 495-5527

Complaint: ~~106708~~

Serviced by: **Nancy Paulson**

Opened on: 06/09/2009

Grouped by: Customer Service

Closed on: 06/15/2009

Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Customer's service was transferred to her new residence (address above) on 4/30/09. She called today to get her new charges as she could not access on-line as her account was not updated. The rep refused to give her any information on her account unless she gave a driver's license number. PSE has the last four digits of her social security number on file as the identifier. Customer wants to know why PSE refused to review her account with her?

Passed to company 6/9/09. Response due 6/11/09.

Results:

A driver's license number is not required as a personal identifier.

VIOLATION NOTED.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 06/09/2009 04:29 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown/PSE



Good Afternoon: Passing new complaint. See details below.Thank you. (sent complaint description).

*** 06/11/2009 03:37 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



SEE ATTACHMENT BELOW.

Nancy:

In May, PSE established a new policy for required information from customers who request service within PSE territory. Picture ID is now required whenever service is established (moves) or service connection.

If picture ID is not provided, service will be refused. This is for the protection of all consumers to eliminate any identify theft.

In this case, this was a recent move-in for this existing customer and the WA I.D. information was not in our records. The agents are required to ask for it if the information is missing from the established records.

At the same time, the agent could proceed with providing account information once the customer has verified themselves with other information (ss#, birthdate, mailing address, etc.) We recognize that

there is some clarification needed to the agents about this new policy and this is being addressed.

Remarks dated 6/9/09: "Amber refused to give WA DL#..I explained it is a requirement B4 we can disclose any info on a customers acct."

*** 06/15/2009 04:34 PM Voice Mail: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Left a detailed voice mail that PSE rep made an error in refusing to give customer information on her account. Customer service reps will be notified. If she has further problems with getting account information over the phone, please call me. Closing the complaint.

*** 06/15/2009 05:05 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Thank you Molly. However, it does not state in the Refusal of Service rule, WAC 480-100-123, that picture id is a requirement. Nor is it required under Application of Service WAC 480-100-108(d). Picture id must be in the list that the customer may choose from. This complaint is now closed. Please note that the UTC Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 06/16/2009 08:47 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Nancy:

WAC 480-100/90-108(d) states the list MUST include a driver's license or other picture ID.

*** 06/16/2009 03:40 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Good Afternoon: Yes, I see that. How many pieces of ID does PSE require of an applicant? Thank you.

*** 08/03/2009 02:39 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Hi Molly: I was reviewing this complaint and did not receive an answer from my 6/16/09 e-mail (see below). The rule states a picture ID must be included in the list but it does not state that a customer must choose the picture id. Thank you. (sent 6/16/09 email).

*** 08/03/2009 03:07 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Nancy:

I do not have that email in the closed complaint file I have. Application for Service allows the applicant to choose from a list of sources and the list must include a drivers license. The other sources of ID would include: Washington State ID, Military ID, Passport, Other state ID.

*** 08/03/2009 03:19 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Thank you. In a 6/11/09 e-mail, you said that the customer would be refused service or transfer of service unless he/she supplied a picture id. In this same e-mail, you included an account note from 6/9/09 that stated that the agent noted a driver's license is required in order to verify an existing account. I am recording one violation of WAC 480-100-108(d) for requiring a WA driver's license number. It is only one of many choices.

*** 08/03/2009 03:20 PM Violation: 480-120-108(2)(d) -



Proof of identification. The utility must allow the applicant to choose from a list, provided by the utility, of at least five sources of identification. The list must include a current driver's license or other picture identification. The customer was told that her WA driver's license number was a requirement before any account information could be disclosed.

*** 08/03/2009 04:01 PM Violation: 480-100-173(3)(c) -



Respond to the commission's request for additional informal complaint information within three business days of the request or at a date specified by the commission. Request sent 6/16/09, response due 6/19/09. Response received 8/3/09 after another e-mail requesting the information.

*** 08/03/2009 04:08 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Good Afternoon: I am recording 30 violations of WAC 480-100-173(3)(c) for failure to respond to the commission's request for additional informal complaint information within three business days of the request or at a date specified by the commission. Request sent 6/16/09, response due 6/19/09. Response received 8/3/09 after another e-mail requesting the information.

*** 08/03/2009 04:09 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



PSE will dispute since I did not receive the email for some reason or another.
- Molly

Washington UTC -Complaint

106843

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 1230281006

Dana Fox
Contact:
24135 Madura Dr NE
Kingston, WA 98346

Primary Phone: (206) 607-5643

Complaint: ~~106843~~ Serviced by: Gail Griffin-Wallace
Opened on: 06/26/2009 Grouped by: Customer Service
Closed on: 07/07/2009 Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Customer called to make inquiry about his statement and how to read his bill. Customer provided his date of birth and account number. The representative insisted that the customer provide his drivers licence number and was told that UTC required it. Customer is on a budget plan and does not understand why when he has a credit at true up time, his base payment continues to go up.

What rule, regulation or tariff addresses what information must be obtained when a customer calls in to make an inquiry.

Please provide any customer log.

Please provide and explanation of how this customers bill id calculated.

passed to pse via email 6/26 @ 3:15pm - your initial response to this complaint is due by close of business 6/30/09

Results:

In the opinion of the attorney general office, PSE may not insist on the production of a driver's license for account inquiries.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 06/30/2009 01:54 PM Attachment: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Good Afternoon Gail:

The budget payment monthly amount is based on the last twelve months of actual usage. Dana's last twelve months of actual usage equals \$829.57. Divide by 12 = \$69.00 a month.

At June settlement, the credit/debit is not considered in determining the new budget amount, only the actual prior 12 months usage. The credit/debit comes into play when determining what payment is requested from the customer. This customer has had an on-going credit and therefore his statements since April 2007 mailed each month have shown nothing owed.

With Mr. Fox's credit of <<\$532.09>> PSE would suggest he be removed from the budget payment plan and pay what he feels appropriate or we could refund the credit and have him continue to pay the monthly budget amount.

Attached is product history and statement activity.

PSE is taking new steps to prevent ID theft and therefore now asking for more detailed information when customers establish new or move their energy services. The change is in compliance with new federal identity theft prevention rules which require utilities and other creditors to implement a formal policy for detecting and preventing identity theft.

The agents are also instructed to get updated information from customer's whose records are not complete. One piece of personal information the agents are now asking for is a customer's driver's license for verification of that customer's identity.

WAC 480-100-90/108(1)(d) allows PSE to ask for a picture ID such as a driver's license.

PSE protects the confidentiality of private consumer information and complies with all laws governing the privacy and security of customer information.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 07/07/2009 07:44 AM Email: Gail-Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Molly,

It is the opinion of the attorney general's office that PSE may not insist on the production of a driver's license for account inquiries. Therefore, I am recording a violation of WAC 480-100-108(2)(d). Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks -Gail

*** 07/07/2009 07:56 AM Violation: 480-100-108(2)(d) -



2) The utility may require the following information when an applicant applies for service:

(d) Proof of identification. The utility must allow the applicant to choose from a list, provided by the utility, of at least five sources of identification. The list must include a current driver's license or other picture identification; and

Customer attempted to make an inquiry regarding his account on 6/26/09. Customer provided date of birth & account #. PSE insisted customer provide a SS# and drivers license # before providing any information.

*** 07/07/2009 08:18 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Are you closing this complaint?

*** 07/07/2009 08:25 AM Phone: Gail-Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Called customer and advised that it is the opinion of the commission that requiring a drivers license # is a violation of rule. Provided customer with options regarding the balance on his account. I also explained to the customer how to read his billing statement.

Complaint closed.

*** 07/07/2009 08:50 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Molly,

Yes, I have closed the complaint.

Thanks - Gail

Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 07/07/2009 08:50 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Molly,

I have closed the complaint.

Thanks - Gail

Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Washington UTC Complaint

106932

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 6280359057

Aileen Kelly

Contact:

18230 240 Avenue SE
Maple Valley, WA 98038

Secondary: 206-321-2834 (cell)

E-mail addr: aileenkelly@msn.com

Complaint: 106932

Serviced by: Roger Kouchi

Opened on: 07/08/2009

Grouped by: Miscellaneous

Closed on: 07/13/2009

Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Upset that PSE is demanding that she provide the following information (date of birth, driver's license number, cell phone number, e-mail address, work phone, where she works, etc.). Company is saying that they need this information to protect her. Wants to know how providing this information would help her. She has been a customer for 11 years now.

- All she did was to call in to find out if her payment today (7/8/09; 2:30 pm) of \$332.63 posted to her account. Confirmation #40122610.

Passed complaint to PSE via e-mail on 7/8/09 (3:10 pm)

Initial response due 7/10/09.

Results:

My investigation revealed that PSE did not allow the consumer to opt out of providing personal information. I recorded a violation of WAC 480-100-108(2)(d). It is the opinion of the attorney general's office that PSE may not insist on the production of a driver's license for account inquiries, new service, etc. The rule clearly contemplates that a customer may produce "other picture identification," and choose among "at least five sources of identification."

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 07/08/2009 03:23 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> Molly Brown



Molly - Please respond to this complaint by 7/10/09. Thank you.

*** 07/10/2009 01:06 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Puget Sound Energy is managing our process and expectations for customer identification collected with new and existing customers.

The process is intended to collect personal identification data from each customer so that when the customer contacts us we are able to assure ourselves that we really are speaking with our customer and not someone else. This is for our customer's safety and security.

Some of this data is also necessary as sound business practices. We are extending credit to each of our customers and obtaining specific customer

identification information is an expectation of any business.

PSE invests significant resources training customer service representatives reinforcing "why" we are collecting the identity information and "how" to ask for it without offending our customers and in particular, ensuring that we are consistent in the way we apply all of our processes.

We continue to review our customer information collection process with the intent of being flexible and learning from our customer needs. Steps still in process:

1. ensure the list of customer data required is compliant with WAC rules as well as federal "Red Flag" ID Theft rules. We expect to be complete week of 7/13.
2. ensure that data we request is clearly differentiated from the data that is required. That means that some personal data is simply requested - so for example, we are better able to contact our customers - that is why we request cell phones, email, etc
3. ensure it is clear which category of customer we apply our requests to. For example, long term customers (such as Ms Kelly) we ask for emergency contact -type information and new customers need to provide more information (to establish credit for example)
4. improve our methods of "presenting" the requested personal data so it is clear to the customers why we are asking for it and that it is simply a request.

We have reviewed this specific case with the representative that handled the customer's call and we can see that the customer did receive the information she called for, including establishment of a due date extension payment arrangement. We have reviewed the circumstances of this situation with the representative and are confident she understands our identity collection policy and applies it consistently and in a way to help the customer.

Dee Walker
Manager Escalated Complaints
PUGET SOUND ENERGY
425.424.6684

*** 07/10/2009 01:21 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> Molly Brown



Molly - Thank you for your response. Please confirm that PSE allows the consumers to refuse to provide the personal data requests if they feel uncomfortable about providing the information to PSE. Also, please tell me the specific data that PSE requests consumers to provide. Thank you.

*** 07/10/2009 01:57 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> Molly Brown



Molly - I would like to see the complete list of information requested by PSE (i.e., date of birth, driver's license, etc.). Please complete the list. Thank you.

*** 07/10/2009 02:13 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly



PSE does allow customers to refuse to provide personal data that we request - this includes things such as employer, cell phone, email address etc.

We do have a list of things that the customer may chose from that we do need to properly establish credit and provide for ID security for the customer when they contact us.

For these, the customer may choose one item from the following list:

Driver's license

Washington state id

other state id

Military id

Passport

Social Security (last 4)

NOTE: We are evaluating this list and it may change somewhat in the next week (see the note in the initial response re week of July 13) BUT if the items change, we will still have a list of at least 5 items that the customer may choose one from.

*** 07/13/2009 08:31 AM Voice Mail: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



LWTC on VM. Asked her to confirm that PSE did or did not allow her to refuse to provide the requested information (i.e., personal info). Left my name and toll-free number along with direct line.

*** 07/13/2009 08:33 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



I left you a VM message on your cell. Just need to confirm whether PSE gave you the option to refuse to provide the personal info. PSE informed me that it does allow consumers to refuse to provide the requested information. Thanks for your help.

*** 07/13/2009 10:28 AM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Aileen Kelly



They did not give me that option, and the woman told me that others had been negligent if they hadn't been asking me that information in the past. She said there is pressure on them to get this information and every time I call I will be asked the same information.

I continually told her this information was none of their business and she insisted it was for my protection and that I had to give it to them. If this information was optional, every time I said it was none of their business, shouldn't she have said that I didn't have to give it to them. Well she didn't and further insisted that my birth date and license number was a mandate from the Public Utilities commission.

She was incredibly rude and wouldn't let me confirm that they had recieved

my payment unless, she went through her script of questions.

After reading the response from PSE, I was never given a satisfactory answer as to why they needed all that information. To protect me is not a satisfactory answer, who are they protecting me from? Who is going to call PSE and present themselves as me and for what reason? Not only have I been a customer at my present address for 11 years, I was a customer in Federal way for 13 years, prior to moving here.

Unfortunately, PSE has a monopoly in this area, and we are forced to use them. However it shouldn't give them the right to ask questions, such as my license number or many of the other questions they asked.

*** 07/13/2009 10:34 AM Violation: 480-100-108(2)(d) -



Based on the consumer's response (below). I have recorded a violation of WAC 480-100-108(2)(d). It is the opinion of the attorney general's office that PSE may not insist on the production of a driver's license for account inquiries, new service, etc. The rule clearly contemplates that a customer may produce "other picture identification," and choose among "at least five sources of identification."

Consumer's Response:

They did not give me that option, and the woman told me that others had been negligent if they hadn't been asking me that information in the past. She said there is pressure on them to get this information and every time I call I will be asked the same information.

I continually told her this information was none of their business and she insisted it was for my protection and that I had to give it to them. If this information was optional, every time I said it was none of their business, shouldn't she have said that I didn't have to give it to them. Well she didn't and further insisted that my birth date and license number was a mandate from the Public Utilities commission.

She was incredibly rude and wouldn't let me confirm that they had received my payment unless, she went through her script of questions.

After reading the response from PSE, I was never given a satisfactory answer as to why they needed all that information. To protect me is not a satisfactory answer, who are they protecting me from? Who is going to call PSE and present themselves as me and for what reason? Not only have I been a customer at my present address for 11 years, I was a customer in Federal way for 13 years, prior to moving here.

Unfortunately, PSE has a monopoly in this area, and we are forced to use them. However it shouldn't give them the right to ask questions, such as my license number or many of the other questions they asked.

*** 07/13/2009 10:37 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown



Molly - Based on the consumer's response, I have recorded a violation of WAC 480-100-108(2)(d). It is the opinion of the attorney general's office that PSE may not insist on the production of a driver's license for account inquiries, new service, etc. The rule clearly contemplates that a customer may produce "other picture identification," and choose among "at least five sources of identification."

Thank you. This complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 07/13/2009 10:40 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



Based on the information you provided, I recorded a violation of WAC 480-100-108(2)(d). It is the opinion of the attorney general's office that PSE may not insist on the production of a driver's license for account inquiries, new service, etc. The rule clearly contemplates that a customer may produce "other picture identification," and choose among "at least five sources of identification." If PSE continues to demand personal information such as date of birth, e-mail address, work phone number, employers name, etc., please let me know. I have closed my investigation at this time. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you.

*** 07/13/2009 12:33 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Aileen Kelly



I would like them to take my personal information out of their files. They don't need to know my license number, where I work or any other personal information, they insisted they had to have.

A recorded violation, means nothing to me. The other forms of ID they said I could produce was a Wa state ID or my passport number. If it is picture id what good is it over the phone?
Does anything happen to them at all?

*** 07/13/2009 12:36 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



I will go back to PSE and request that your personal information be removed from their files. I will get back to you.

*** 07/13/2009 12:37 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown



Molly - The consumer has requested that PSE remove her personal information from its files. Please confirm that this has been done. Thank you.

*** 07/15/2009 12:12 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Upper Management is meeting this week to clearly define what personal ID data we require and to ensure it complies with WAC rules. Once that is clear we will adjust this customer's records accordingly.

*** 07/17/2009 02:08 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



We have reviewed the customer's file and removed cell phone, Date of Birth, WDL, and employer.

Name, address, phone, service type and last 4 of Social security remain.

If the customer would rather leave a different personal ID instead of last 4 of SS, we can accept any of:

Driver's License
Passport
WA state ID
Military ID

*** 07/17/2009 02:13 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



PSE confirmed that it has removed your personal information regarding cell

phone, date of birth, Washington driver's license, and employer. Please let me know if you have questions. Thank you.

*** 07/17/2009 02:15 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> dee walker and molly brown



Dee - Thank you. The complaint was closed on 7/13/09. The consumer had a follow up request on 7/13/09. I have reclosed the complaint at this time. Thank you for your assistance.

Washington UTC Complaint

108066

Company: Puget Sound Energy G703

Customer: Account# 594-267496-0

Sally G. Brown

Contact:
3019 Hoadly St. SE
Olympia, WA 98501

Primary Phone: (360) 664-1193
E-mail addr: sbrown@utc.wa.gov

Complaint: ~~108066~~ Serviced by: **Suzanne Stillwell**
Opened on: 12/31/2009 Grouped by: Disputed Bill
Closed on: 01/05/2010 Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Two issues: One, customer called company to advise them she thinks there is a problem with her bill. She believes there is something wrong with her meter since she hasn't been billed for gas useage since May. Two, she provided the rep her name, employer, last 4 digits of her soc. sec. #, date of birth, account number, and street address. She was also asked for her phone number. Customer said, "no, I have already provided enough personal information to you" to confirm who I am. The company asked for her phone number 2 or 3 times, and would not discuss her account unless she gave them her phone #.

12/31/09 3:32 pm passed complaint to company. Response due by 5pm 1/5/09.

Results:

Customer's meter will be replaced on 1/21/09. Company will address issue of asking for too much personal information. Phone number is necessary because of need to get back to customer in instances like this. Company acknowledged they could have done a better job of explaining the need for the phone number.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 12/31/2009 03:32 PM Email: Suzanne Stillwell >> Vera Fuchs; cc: Dee Walker



Forwarded complaint to company.

*** 01/04/2010 12:45 PM Phone: Suzanne Stillwell << Customer



Received voicemail to change out the meter on the 19th. Needs a more definate time; or call 10 minutes ahead of time. Obviously they have her phone number in their records since they left a voicemail on both numbers.

*** 01/04/2010 02:14 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Good Afternoon Suzanne, we scheduled a meter investigation on 1/19/10, we agree it appears to be a non registering meter natural gas meter. We left a message for Sally at both her work and home numbers letting her know when we would be out to investigate.

We will address the fact that she was asked for both her birth date and last four, policy is to ask for one for the following identifying pieces and when the customer is willing verify any other information listed on the account:

1. Last 4 of social security number
2. Date of birth
3. Driver's license number and State of issue
4. State ID number and State of issue
5. Passport number
6. Last 4 Military ID number (enter into social security number field in CLX)

Phone number is always verified in case a call back is necessary like in this case. It allows us to notify customer of issues with their accounts or establish service calls when needed. I am sure that the exchange could have been handled better on our agents part. Like explaining why the phone number was important. Vera

ATTACHED - account summary

*** 01/04/2010 02:22 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Hi Vera. Sally let me know that the company left her a voice message and scheduled a day to change out the meter. She needs to have a more specific time period than 8 - 430pm; or the technician can call her at work when he/she is on the way, and she can run over to the house. She works very close to home.

*** 01/04/2010 02:24 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



I will add a 10 minute call before for her work phone, my concern is we got her voice mail last time we tried it and that won't work. Is there a possibility of a cell phone number for the call before?

*** 01/04/2010 02:26 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> customer



How about a cell phone number; or rather, what is the easiest number to reach you on the 19th?

*** 01/04/2010 02:48 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Customer



I'm not available on the 19th and will need to reschedule. Is someone available on the 21st or 22nd?
My work number is the best number to reach me. If I do not answer my phone, the caller may press zero and reach a live body who can find me.

*** 01/04/2010 02:52 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Sally is not available on the 19th and will need to reschedule. Is someone available on the 21st or 22nd? Sally's work number is the best number to reach her. If she does not answer the phone, the caller may press zero and reach a live body who can find her (360-664-1193).

*** 01/04/2010 03:39 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



We have rescheduled to 01/20/09 with special instructions to call 360-664-1193, and press "0" 10 minutes before arrival. Hopefully this will work for her.
Thanks Vera

*** 01/04/2010 03:43 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Customer



Perfect. Thank you.

*** 01/05/2010 05:05 PM Violation: 480-90-178(1)(e) -



Customer's bills did not show the correct current and previous meter reads, nor did the bill show the total amount of therms used for the period of May through December 2009; 8 counts.

*** 01/05/2010 05:10 PM Violation: 480-90-178(1)(f) -



Customer's bills did not show the correct amount of therms used for each billing rate, the applicable billing rates per therm for the period of May through December 2009; 8 counts.

*** 01/05/2010 05:24 PM Email: Suzanne Stillwell >> Vera Fuchs



Vera, I am going to go ahead and close out this complaint since there is a date scheduled for the meter replacement. I will be recording the following violations in the complaint:

8 counts of 480-90-178(1)(e) for failing to bill the correct current and prior meter reads, nor the total amount of therms used for the period of May through December 2009.

8 counts of 480-90-178(1)(f) for failing to show the correct amount of therms used for each billing rate, the applicable billing rates per therms for the period of May through December 2009.

Please note that the Consumer Protection Section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening. Thanks, Suzanne

*** 01/08/2010 10:17 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << customer



I need it to be on the 21st, per your e-mail, not the 20th. Also, I received a letter from PSE yesterday saying the technician will arrive on the 19th and if no one is home, will shut off my heat. Is that consistent with commission rules?

*** 01/08/2010 11:45 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> customer



They have to shut off the meter to replace it. That is why they want someone there.

*** 01/08/2010 11:48 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Vera, Sally needs to change the meter replacement to the 21st. Also, she received a letter from PSE yesterday saying the technician will arrive on the 19th. That is not consistent with the directions we scheduled; even though now it needs to be changed to the 19th (intent is the 21st). Please verify that the meter replacement can be done on the 21st, and that the technician has her work phone number to call before he/she arrives. Thanks, Suzanne

*** 01/08/2010 11:52 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << customer



But if I'm not there they can simply shut off the gas until I am there? That's what the letter says.

*** 01/08/2010 11:52 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Customer



It "needs to be changed" to the 21st, not the 19th. Thanks!

*** 01/08/2010 11:56 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> Customer



My experience is that they need you there to turn the gas back on to ensure your gas appliances are up and running again (pilot lights, etc).

*** 01/08/2010 11:59 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



I made an error in one of my sentences. The meter replacement needs to be changed to the 21st. Please confirm back with the change. Thx

*** 01/08/2010 12:06 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Customer



I understand that. That's not my point. The company picks a random date and I'm a no show because I'm on vacation in Paris for two weeks. The company arrives and shuts off my gas. My cats die of the cold. That's lawful?

*** 01/08/2010 12:16 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> customer



First off, they fouled up by picking a date different than what you selected. That issue, I will address in your complaint. Normally, the customer and the company are coordinating and agree on a date together.

In your scenario, yes, by disconnecting they will have broken the rules by disconnecting prior to the scheduled date. If the cat died, the customer would have to sue.

*** 01/08/2010 01:27 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L'



I have changed the meter exchange to 01/21 with the same instructions: call ahead.

*** 01/08/2010 01:47 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Vera, can you find out why after we scheduled it for a certain date, the letter went out with the wrong date. Thx.

*** 01/08/2010 01:50 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L'



The original date was the 19th and the letter had already been processed before we received the first change request. Vera

*** 01/08/2010 02:00 PM Phone: Suzanne Stillwell >> Customer



Advised reason why letter said 19th. She is also concerned about what happens if the company never made contact with her. Would they disconnect the power? What if she was gone for days or weeks? Could cause a major problem.

*** 01/08/2010 04:06 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Vera, attached is the letter that was sent to Sally. Initially, the company missed her by phone and sent her this letter with a date that the company chose. What would happen if she had never received the letter; perhaps she was out of town for awhile? Would her gas have been disconnected and left off? Or,

would the company leave it be and come back another day? Suzanne

SEE ATTACHMENT

*** 01/11/2010 12:28 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



I am having systems issues and can not determine if I responded to this or not. Sorry if this is a repeat.

The contact was initiated by Sally allowing us to assure access (reason for original complaint) since we were working with the commission. We do our best to not interrupt service if we have been unable to make contact with a customer when this type of issue is found in a routine check. Vera

*** 01/11/2010 12:53 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



In your statement, "We do our best to not interrupt service" if we have been unable to make contact with a customer when this type of issue is found in a routine check. What is the company's policy? Do you disconnect the gas, or not, if you have not had contact with the customer?

*** 01/11/2010 03:02 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



We always check the module first. If replacing the module doesn't work or it's a bad meter, we will attempt to contact the customer by phone then by mail. If they don't contact us we still exchange the meter and leave off & locked if there is no access when the CFS tech does the exchange.

*** 01/11/2010 03:07 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



So, the customer has to call you to turn it back on? What happens if someone is gone for weeks at a time?

*** 01/11/2010 03:16 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



That is correct, the service remains off until access is provided.

*** 01/11/2010 03:18 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Do you get very many complaints if people have been out of town for awhile and then come back to find their power off?

*** 01/11/2010 03:24 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Just to clarify on my part I have been referring to gas meters not electric (power) meters, but no we have not had a lot of complaints when people come home to their gas being off. They understand the safety issue with gas as compared to electric.

*** 01/11/2010 03:32 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Yes, I understand it's gas and not electric. I am thinking more about someone that has been out of town for awhile and comes back to no power, because they did not receive your calls, or letters.

*** 01/21/2010 04:32 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> Walker, Dee -Kirby



From: Dennis Shutler [mailto:dshutler@wutc.wa.gov]
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2010 4:32 PM
To: Fuchs, Vera L
Cc: Walker, Dee -Kirby; Brown, Molly
Subject: Fw: WA - UTC complaint 108066 for Sally G. Brown

This is Suzanne, I've shut down my computer. The company failed to call her as we scheduled so she was not at home when they replaced the meter. Thus, her power is off and her house is very cold, and she is not happy. 'wants her power on tonight. Can someone please ensure that this will be taken care of promptly. Thank you. I am on my way home and you can call me on my blackberry, 360-528-7132 to verify that the gas will be turned on.

*** 01/21/2010 05:54 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L to Dee W.



Just checked with dispatch and this reconnection was completed at 5:30 . I called Suzanne and let her know it was done.

thanks Dee for getting it to the point phone, the instructions were very clear about the call before. I will investigate what the issue was in the morning. No CLX from home.

*** 01/22/2010 08:53 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



We have checked with the supervisor of the PSE Tech who did the meter install at Ms Brown's home yesterday. He has followed up with the Tech about why the call was not made.

Our techs get electronic copies of their service orders. The text on the service order for Ms Brown's meter included the requirement to call ahead so that piece was addressed properly. The Tech did not scroll through the entire text on his lap top screen and as a result did not see the call ahead requirement and that is where the gap occurred.

The supervisor is addressing this with the Tech. This is the first time I have heard of anything like this happening. I will still be sure our Gas and Electric folks get a heads up to be sure they are aware of this risk. Dee

*** 01/22/2010 09:07 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> customer



fyi...'glad they got there early last evening.

*** 01/22/2010 09:29 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << customer



I do not believe Dee's recitation of the facts is accurate. The woman I spoke with last evening specifically told me that the very first entry on the service order was the instruction to call me.

*** 01/22/2010 11:47 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> customer



The important thing is that they are personally addressing it with the technician.

*** 01/22/2010 05:37 PM Violation: 480-100-108(2)(d) -



WAC 480-100-108(2)(d) Proof of identification rule clearly contemplates that a customer may produce proof of identification and choose among a list of at least five sources of identification. Company asked for both birthdate and social security number; should only ask for one piece of ID.

*** 01/22/2010 06:00 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Vera, I will be citing one violation of WAC 480-100-108(2)(d), Proof of identification rule, for asking for both birth date and social security number; should only ask for one piece of ID from a list of five. At this time, the complaint can be reclosed. Suzanne

APPENDIX H

Washington UTC Complaint

107326

Company: Puget Sound Energy G703

Customer: Account# 0851778001

Midori Quartermaine

Contact:

4154 California Avenue SW
Seattle, WA 98116

Primary Phone: (206) 933-0488

Complaint: ~~107326~~

Serviced by: **Rachel Stark**

Opened on: 08/28/2009

Grouped by: Disputed Bill

Closed on: 10/01/2009

Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Ms. cancelled her gas service January 2009. Since then, she has been billed a monthly service fee of \$32.00. She called the company and inquired why she had to pay the monthly fee. The company told her she would need to remove the gas meter in order to no longer charge her the fee. She paid the bill, however, asked the company again, when they will remove the meter, they did not know when, however, they said they would stop the monthly service fee bill. Ms. would like to have a refund of all the charges for the monthly service fee since January 2009, because that is when she cancelled service.

8/28/09 1:25 Complaint passed to Molly Brown via email.

Response due September 1, 2009, by 5:00pm PST

Results:

The company did not remove the meter per requested by consumer January 23, 2009. The company continued to bill the consumer in error. Consumer was mailed a refund check August 31, 2009, in the amount of \$259.12. Meter will be removed and the monthly billing has been stopped.

8 total violations noted.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 08/31/2009 11:07 AM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Good Morning Rachel:

PSE responded to an Odor/Gas Emergency request on 1/23/09. PSE red-tagged the roof top heating unit since it was not working. This was the only appliance that used gas. There has been no gas usage since that day 1/23/09.

On 8/31/09 resolved; PSE changed the stop date to 1/23/09 and requested a refund check for \$259.12.

Account balance is \$0.00.

ATTACHED IS STATEMENT ACCOUNT AND PRODUCT HISTORY.

*** 09/04/2009 04:17 PM Voice Mail: Rachel Stark >> Consumer



Left voicemail for consumer to return call.

*** 09/09/2009 05:17 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown



I am out of the office tomorrow and will get back to you on this complaint when I return.

Thank you.

Rachel

*** 09/16/2009 03:23 PM Voice Mail: Rachel Stark >> Consumer



Left voicemail for consumer to return call - did the company remove meter?

*** 09/23/2009 09:25 AM Voice Mail: Rachel Stark >> Consumer



Called consumer - please return call - company send refund.

*** 09/30/2009 03:26 PM Voice Mail: Rachel Stark >> Consumer



Left voicemail for consumer and let her know because I have not heard from her I wanted to let her know the company gave her a credit on her account back to January 23, 2009. She will receive a refund check in the amount of \$259.12. I told her I am closing her complaint.

*** 09/30/2009 03:31 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Vera Fuchs



Good afternoon Vera,

Can you confirm something for me with this complaint and then I believe we can close.

Molly stated the company gave this customer a credit on her account back to January 23, 2009. She will receive a refund check in the amount of \$259.12. Did the company remove the meter? I just want to make sure this consumer does not start being billed in the future for monthly charges.

Response due October 5, 2009, by 5:00pm PST

Thank you.

Rachel

*** 09/30/2009 03:44 PM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



We have not removed the meter, but I created a service order to do just that. I will personally monitor and guarantee it is completed.

Refund issued for \$259.12 August 31.

Vera

*** 10/01/2009 10:50 AM Email: Rachel Stark >> Vera Fuchs



Thank you Vera.

Can you also tell me, the customer was billed \$138.21 in February; the monthly service fee is \$32.01 for March, April, May, July, August; in June \$32.00; those totals add up to \$330.26. How come the consumer received a refund of \$259.12?

Response due October 6, 2009, by 5:00pm PST
Thank you.
Rachel

*** 10/01/2009 11:11 AM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



The account was ended effective January 23, 2009 last day of gas usage. These usage charges were \$71.14 from January 13, 2009 to January 23, 2009.

\$330.26 minus \$71.14 equals \$259.12

*** 10/01/2009 11:13 AM Email: Rachel Stark >> Vera Fuchs



Thank you Vera,

Numbers match now. I have advised the consumer she will receive a refund check in the mail and the meter will be removed.

I am recording 7 violations of WAC 480-90-178(b) because the company continued to bill this consumer February to August 2009; and the customer requested the meter be removed and monthly service charge stop. The company agreed to remove the meter January 23, 2009, and stop the monthly fee, however, the company did not.

I have completed my investigation and this complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection Section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Rachel

*** 10/01/2009 11:13 AM Violation: 480-90-178(b) -



7 violations. The company continued to bill this consumer February to August 2009; and the customer requested the meter be removed and monthly service charge stop. The company agreed to remove the meter January 23, 2009, and stop the monthly fee, however, the company did not.

*** 10/02/2009 02:30 PM Voice Mail: Rachel Stark << Consumer



Consumer left voicemail stating she is very happy with the assistance. She said she had been trying to resolve the issue with the company for so long and now she already has a refund check in her hand and the issue is resolved. She said thank you very much.

*** 07/06/2010 04:32 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Stacey Hammond



Good afternoon Stacey,

I wanted to let you know after a review was completed regarding this complaint, I am recording one violation of WAC 480-90-128(1) because this customer requested to have her meter removed and the service cancelled January 23, 2009, and the company failed to remove the meter and cancel service per the customer's request.

This complaint remains closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection Section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Thank you and please let me know if you have any questions.
Rachel

*** 07/06/2010 04:32 PM Violation: 480-90-128(1) -



One violation. This customer requested to have her meter removed and the service cancelled January 23, 2009, and the company failed to remove the meter and cancel service per the customer's request.

Washington UTC Complaint

107409

Company: Puget Sound Energy G703

Customer: Account# 602-331-300-7

Yogendra Trivedi

Contact:
24202 3rd Place West
Bothell, WA 98021

Primary Phone: (732) 651-0690
Secondary: (732) 491-1773
E-mail addr: ytrivedi72@yahoo.com

Complaint: **107409** Serviced by: **Gail Griffin-Wallace**
Opened on: 09/11/2009 Grouped by: Disputed Bill
Closed on: 09/15/2009 Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Customer says they terminated service from 8/2008 until 7/2009. When customer re-established service, they were billed for charges when they were not supposed to have service.

Please provide account history from June, 2008 to present.
Please provide any customer log.

passed to pse via email 9/11 @ 9am - your initial response to this complaint is due by close of business 9/15/09.

Results:

Customer was given credits from 12/1/08 thru 6/25/09. Violations were recorded for billing customer after he requested disconnection.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 09/11/2009 08:36 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace << customer



Please explain your complaint in detail.

I had terminated my natural gas services on August 2008. Company instead suspended my bills. In March 2009, they finally terminated service for non-payment. In July 2009, I had reactivated the service, I was told only of reconnection fee not any past due charges. I just recieved a bill \$666.91, which include charges for months that I didn't know I had service. Because these were winter months, charges are astronomical.

Did you speak to a supervisor from your utility or transportation company?
Yes

If 'Yes', what was the result?

I did speak numerous times with the company requesting them to revert the charges. They agree that it was company's mistake not to terminate the service back in August 2008, but refuse to revert the charges.

What do you think the company should do to resolve your complaint?

Revert the charges for months that I didn't have the service. I should be paying \$11.95 for month of July and \$37 reconnection fees.

*** 09/11/2009 08:59 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Dear Ms. Trivedi:

Thank you for contacting the Utilities and Transportation Commission regarding your complaint against Puget Sound Energy. I have opened an informal complaint investigation on your behalf, and will work with the company to resolve your complaint. Complaints usually take between two and four weeks to complete, depending on the complexity. If you have questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 1-888-333-WUTC (9882).

Gail Griffin-Wallace
Consumer Program Specialist
Email: ggriffin@utc.wa.gov

*** 09/11/2009 09:19 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << ytrivedi72@yahoo.com



Your message was delivered to the recipient.

*** 09/15/2009 02:15 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Good Afternoon Gail:

Remarks dated 11/25/08: "Yogendra Trivedi called to 'suspend service' as the house will be vacant as of 12/01/08. Moved out as of that date & advised that when they want to start billing again there will be a \$6.10 billing initiation fee."

When the customer asked to suspend the service and did not use the word "disconnect" the agent took the service out of Yogendra's name and did not order a manual disconnect. Since the service wasn't disconnected, usage was being measured. When Yogendra called to start service on 6/26/09, the agent billed the customer the basic charge and usage from November forward.

PSE has agreed to adjust off the usage charges since Yogendra's intent was to have the service disconnected. The basic charge was billed.

The credit adjustment is <<\$610.41>>.

Balance owing is \$7.55.

I think we can close.

- Molly

****SEE ATTACHMENTS****

*activity statement

*** 09/15/2009 03:16 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



called customer and advised PSE will credit.

*** 09/15/2009 03:37 PM Violation: 480-90-128(1) -



Company billed customer after the date he requested disconnection from 12/1/08 to 6/26/09.

*** 09/15/2009 03:55 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> pse



Molly,

I have closed this complaint. I am recording 144 (# excludes weekends & state holidays) violations of WAC 480-90-128(1) for billing the customer after he requested disconnection from 12/1/08 thru 6/25/09. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks - Gail

*** 09/15/2009 04:02 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Gail:

I will argue this. HE did not request a disconnect. We reversed off the charges as a good faith effort because I felt that was his intent. He DID NOT request a disconnect.

Remarks dated 11/25/08: "Yogendra Trivedi called to 'suspend service' as the house will be vacant as of 12/01/08. Moved out as of that date & advised that when they want to start billing again there will be a \$6.10 billing initiation fee."

Molly

*** 09/15/2009 04:02 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



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Molly

*** 09/15/2009 04:02 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Gail:

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Remarks dated 11/25/08: "Yogendra Trivedi called to 'suspend service' as the house will be vacant as of 12/01/08. Moved out as of that date & advised that when they want to start billing again there will be a \$6.10 billing initiation fee."

Molly

*** 09/16/2009 03:32 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Molly,

Could you point me to a procedure for suspending service in the tariff? I'm not sure what the difference would be.

Thanks - Gail

*** 09/16/2009 03:55 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Gail:

Please see the attached document. We have talked about this in past complaints. The tariff states the minimum bill per month shall be the monthly customer charge (Schedule 23-G). There are times when customers do not want their gas service (seasonal/temporary) but do not want to pay the monthly charge. In these cases, PSE will take the service out of their name so they don't get billed. We don't physically disconnect unless asked to do so. If the customer uses gas within a year, then they are back billed the monthly customer charge plus any gas that was used. The other type of customer are those who request to have service permanently taken out of their name. This is when PSE would shut-off the gas and lock the meter.

In Mr. Trivedi's case he indicated to the agent that house was going to be vacant starting 12/1/08 and advised that when they want to start billing again there will be a \$6.10 billing initiation fee. The agent moved him out as of that date. He never mentioned that he wanted gas permanently taken out of his name. The word disconnect did not come up in that conversation.

It was only after he called after we had billed him for the retro usage that he used the word disconnect. That is when I made a decision to charge off the usage. We could have gone back and forth but as a goodwill gesture, I requested to have the charges removed.

Thank you for your consideration.

-Molly

SEE ATTACHMENTS

Issue:

Schedule 23, Section 3, Rate provides that "The minimum bill per month shall be the Basic Charge. The minimum bill for this service shall not be subject to cancellation or reduction for seasonal or temporary periods." This wording also appears in Schedule 53, Section 5. Rule 23, Section 1, provides that "Service under this schedule is provided on an annual basis." The requirement that Customers pay the minimum bill is at times highly contested.

There are two types of Customers that want to have service taken out of their name, even though both types continue to reside in the home. The first type (Type 1) are those Customers who only consume gas during certain seasons of the year, for example Customers with only gas heat may want to avoid paying the monthly Basic

Charge during the summer months when they do not use gas. Other Type 1 Customers may want to temporarily stop gas service at other times during the year. Type 1 Customers want billing stopped for a seasonal or temporary period.

The second type (Type 2) are those Customers who permanently do not want (or no longer want) to be natural gas Customers. These Type 2 Customers may have taken gas service for some time but now want to permanently stop gas service or, they may be new Customers that have moved into a residence and permanently do not want gas service, for example renters may want to permanently not have gas service, especially if the service is only for a fireplace or an appliance they do not use.

Interpretation:

These two types of Customers are treated differently under the tariff.

Type 1 (no service for seasonal or temporary periods - a seasonal or temporary period is any period of one year or less) Customers who want to avoid being billed (perhaps for convenience or a desire to try to avoid the cost of the Basic Charge) can have service taken out of their name for the seasonal or temporary period during which they do not want service. The Customer should be informed that they are still considered to be Customers during this period and will be billed (retro) for usage and the Basic Charge back to the date service was taken out of their name until service is put back in their name, so they can make a decision based on the economics of the situation. The meter should not be physically shut off at the MSA (meter set assembly) valve and locked unless specifically requested by the Customer. The Type 1 Customer will be billed

all the Basic Charges (and any gas usage) for the seasonal or temporary period when they re-sign for service (or at any time in the future when usage great enough for follow-up is noticed by the Company). In addition to billing for Basic Charges and any usage they will be billed the Billing Initiation Charge and, if the service was disconnected, the Reconnection Charge.

Type 2 Customers are characterized by requesting that service be permanently (longer than one year) taken out of their name. When a Customer makes a request to have service permanently taken out of their name the meter should be physically shut off at the MSA (meter set assembly) valve and locked, and the customer name removed from the billing. Should the Customer request that service be reconnected within 12 months they will be treated as a Type 1 Customer in that they will be billed for the Basic Charges for the duration of the period of disconnection and other appropriate charges described above. The 12 month period is from the date that service is taken out of the Customers name until the date service is put back in the Customer's name. If the Customer requests that service be reconnected after 12 months has expired they should be billed a Connection Charge (but not Basic Charges for the duration period of disconnection) and the Billing Initiation Charge. If the Customer moves then the new tenant (if they request gas service), should be billed the Connection Charge (and Billing Initiation Charge).

APPENDIX I

Washington UTC Complaint

106758

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 880-170-503-2

Elisabeth Brown

Contact:

131st ave ne

bellevue, wa 98005

Primary Phone: (425) 636-8281

Secondary: (206) 218-6299

E-mail addr: lbenestad@gmail.com

Complaint: ~~106758~~

Serviced by: **Gail Griffin-Wallace**

Opened on: 06/15/2009

Grouped by: Disputed Bill

Closed on: 09/22/2009

Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Customer believes she has been disconnected for an amount that is prior obligation. In addition, she believes she has been overcharged for her deposits.

Please provide a 12 month account history.

Please provide calculations for any deposit request in 2009

passed to pse via email 6/15 @ 2:40pm - your initial response to this complaint is due by close of business 6/17/09

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 06/14/2009 02:37 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace << customer



Please explain your complaint in detail.

This started in Jan with my first bill for \$2300. for 1 month, this was current charges and an \$1126. deposit plus \$276. from June at a previous residence I vacated in APRIL, so I never saw or recieved that bill. I did not have enough to cover this bill. I could only cover the current .or deposit not both. I started calling pse in beginning of Feb. to try and work this out. Took till the end of March to get an answer. Which of course was no. No one ever offered to let me pay the month ahead. So I spoke with Rachael and did exactly what she told me to do. They shut us off Mar 30th. I paid 1/2 the deposit and reconnect. Only they had added another \$200 plus to the deposit. Anyway I paid the ballance of the deposit as agreed. I've also paid the current charges on time since Mar 30th. I also specifically stated the bill before Mar 30 is prior obligation, said that 3 times also emailed so I cannot be shut off twice for that amount and I have till Oct 15th to pay it off. Since Mar 30th I have paid PSE \$2744. I finished paying the dep in May today payed the current bill of \$522. Due 6/10/09. So all kosher? Hell no Mr greedy PSE They sent me a bill for May demanding now a \$2300. deposit and \$1100. past due plus my \$500 current for a total of \$4070. They have done the most screwed up bookeeping and I will send you copies. It's incredible the blatant disregard for my rights as a consumer the deposit is 5 times my monthly bill, and they credited the deposit I just paid and all my current charge payments to the back

so they can threaten me with another shut off and this totally out of control deposit. As current charges. My next stop is an attorneys office. I don't expect a free ride nor am I asking for hand outs, what is supposed to be a public utilities, but private company. So no other choice for us the public, does not have the right to blatantly charge, credit and recharge and credit and recharge the one time late fee for the charge than credit than one more one time late fee for the same charge they just credited than credit the deposit they charge 3times in 4 months than credit. Are you confused yet. Good than read my bills. It's so unbelievable. By the way I also saw the paper today about the woman w/stage 4 cancer, who PSE is going to shut off for under \$400. Which would cost her her life. They don't give a rats ass. It's all about \$\$\$\$\$\$

The working poor don't count right???? Please give me some faith in our government, and set this right so I can keep my house. the 7 people that live here deserve to get public utilities for the public not the rich. PSE needs to be dropped kicked and shook up. They are not god nor should they be allowed to act like it. Times are real tough for all of us, so a fair shake should not be too much to ask.

Did you speak to a supervisor from your utility or transportation company?
No

If 'Yes', what was the result?

What do you think the company should do to resolve your complaint?

This has been harrassment for me since Jan I go to bed stressed about it and wake up stressed about it. None of us make much money, we are constantly searching for work, the increase of prices for everything is not reflected in our pay. I think PSE should skip the deposit as long as I stay current on current charges and let me pay the back by Oct 15th. If I fail than kick in the deposit. They are not depending on my \$\$ to keep their doors open, they wan't this huge deposit for their slush fund. This will put not only me but 6 other people out of our home. I owe them \$1100. to the back and could clear that by Aug/Sept. My life has been living hell since Dec/Jan over this staggering \$4000 bill which is 3 times what we actually owe them. Our average is \$5 to \$700 a month. I think \$2700 in 2 months is a hell of an effort to resolve this and that it is time for them to step up and act reasonable.

*** 06/15/2009 02:42 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Dear Ms. Brown:

Thank you for contacting the Utilities and Transportation Commission regarding your complaint against Puget Sound Energy. I have opened an informal complaint investigation on your behalf, and will work with the company to resolve your complaint. Complaints usually take between two and four weeks to complete, depending on the complexity. If you have questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 1-800-562-6150.

Sincerely,
gpg-w

*** 06/17/2009 06:49 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << lis brown



Thank you very much for looking in to this. Any help will be great, this has been an ongoing frustration all spring and is a serious threat to the stability of my household. It is a struggle to make the rent and utilities every month as is. That deposit is out of my reach. Enjoy your reading, I just hope you make sense out of it. Please note I paid the \$1344. deposit amount, I don't know where the \$2000. they credited in May came from. Call me if you have questions, and I will wait to hear from you. Thank you again for your time on this.

Lis Brown

SEE ATTACHMENTS

*** 06/17/2009 02:10 PM Attachment: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << molly brown pse



Gail:

Please refer to Complaint #105881 for background up through March. I will provide account information from March forward. This complaint also has the deposit calculations.

Remarks dated 5/5/09: "On March 27th Elisabeth was disconnected for both her gas and electric deposits. She was reconnected and the acct was processed as prior obligation. Per WAC rules #480-100-123 for electric and #480-90-123 for gas, since it was a deposit she was disc for she would not qualify for prior. If she is disconnected for usage down the road, then of course she could go prior ob".

You will see a number of entries on 3/27/09 which was the agent processing the account as prior obligation. However, in May, the account was reviewed and reprocessed since a customer can not go prior obligation on the deposits. Also appears new deposit amounts have been charged.

My calculations:

Gas Deposit = $3526/12 \times 2 \times 1.132$ charge factor = \$665, CLX asked for \$647.

Electric Deposit = $\$4432 / 12 \times 2 = \738 , CLX asked for \$697.

Both Deposits have been paid in full.

Electric Collectibles owing = \$1758.99

Gas Collectibles owing = \$1951.86

Before PSE would make any arrangements, both gas and electric past due charges over 90 days old needs to be paid in full.

Electric needing to be paid before arrangements made = \$487.29.

Gas charges needing to be paid before arrangements made = \$772.19.

*** 06/22/2009 03:47 PM Action: Gail Griffin-Wallace



Requested DO review to determine if statements by PSE are correct.


*** 06/24/2009 09:16 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown





Molly, can you point me to where it states a customer can not go prior on deposits. Do you have an opinion from previous meeting with staff?
Thanks - Gail

*** 06/24/2009 09:49 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly

WAC 480-90/100-123(3).

*** 06/30/2009 10:42 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown

Molly,
Was the customer disconnected? When?

*** 07/01/2009 03:43 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly

Gail:
Please see my email dated 6/17/09 which stated "On March 27th , Elisabeth was disconnected for both gas and electric deposits." Even though she was disconnected for the deposits, PSE processed the full account as prior. She has not been disconnected again but is up for disconnection for both gas and electric usage (\$487.29 Electric and \$722.19 Gas).

*** 07/10/2009 03:21 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> pse

Molly,
I am having a great deal of difficulty trying to figure out the activity. What was the amount billed at time of disconnect? How much went to prior obligation. If deposit amount were billed, they still go into prior and PSE can request a new deposit. I need an activity accounting with the prior removed.
Thanks - Gail

*** 07/13/2009 05:00 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly

Gail:

Elisabeth was disconnected for the deposits, NOT usage.

As you are aware, WAC 480-100-123 (2) states:
An electric utility may not refuse to provide new or additional service to a residential applicant or residential customer who has a prior obligation. A prior obligation is the dollar amount, excluding deposit amounts owed, the utility has billed to the customer and for which the utility has not received payment at the time the service has been disconnected for nonpayment. The utility must provide service once the customer or applicant has paid all appropriate deposit and reconnection fees. This subsection does not apply to customers that have been disconnected for failure to honor the terms of a winter low-income payment program.

PSE does not feel that this customer meets the prior obligation criteria since she was disconnected for the deposits.

Perhaps we need further clarification. Please provide PSE with an interpretation of this WAC rule that states the deposit would be considered a prior obligation.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 07/17/2009 03:34 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << lis brown



Gail,

I am getting the shut off notices again from PSE. The bill is still sitting at \$4000. with current charges for June of \$379. They are still asking for the 2400 deposit which is an unbelievable amount to expect from a resident. That is 6 months worth of useage. I struggled very hard to get them the original 1300. deposit. Since they did there creative bookeeping and ignored the prior obligation before March 30th. I know keeping the current charges paid makes no difference to them. They just want that deposit again. I am very worried they will shut us off, and I will not be able to raise the money to turn it back on. I know they don't really care, for us it's home or street. The economy has yet to rebound enough for rent increases or jobs. I also have a guy who was hurt last week and faces surgery next week so now his rent is on hold. No insurance either. I do not go for public welfare I choose to earn my own way, it's not an easy one but it's mine and I'm ok with that. We are the working poor, but we still do work. Having this black clouds hanging over me for the last 6 months is wearing me out the stress is hell. We are all constantly searching for any work we can find to keep our house going. I have one person with a honest legitimate 9 to 5 job. One on unemployment, 3 of us do peice work. We've made it this far but that not so jolly fatassed giant PSE can step on us anytime we will be done. This situation could very easily throw me and those with me in the street literally. Any help you can get us would be so wonderful or at least some sort of reasonable arrangement that we can live with. Oh and did you make sense of my bills I sent you? Thank you so much for your time and efforts,
Lis Brown
206-218-6299 or 425-636-8281

*** 07/21/2009 11:57 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> molly brown



Had conversation with PSE after discussing another complaint by phone. PSE explained that the customer was never disconnected for usage that the disconnect was for deposit amounts only. As a result, customer payments were applied to the deposit and not the balance owed.

*** 07/21/2009 12:21 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> pse



Molly,

Is there a balance on the deposit at this time? Please provide an update on the account history as of May 31, 2009.

Thanks- Gail

*** 07/21/2009 12:26 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> cust



called customer - lmtc

*** 07/21/2009 12:46 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Both gas and electric deposits have been satisfied.
Attached is statement activity from 5/31/09 to current.

I would recommend she get disconnected and go prior.

*** 07/30/2009 03:27 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace << customer



Customer returned call - advised customer that due to the complexity of the complaint I would need to re-familiarize myself with it before talking to her. Customer agreed to call tomorrow morning for update.

*** 07/31/2009 11:06 AM Attachment: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Sorry.

see attachments

*** 07/31/2009 12:04 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



customer called and advised gas was disconnected yesterday evening.

*** 07/31/2009 12:56 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << lis brown



Gail,
You mentioned adding up the gas and electric useage. Well I added them up
Gas for 7 months \$1857,66 ave \$265.38x2= \$530.76

PSE \$1329.19 ?

That's only \$798.46 overcharge for just the gas deposit.

Electric for 7 mo.\$2030.25 ave \$290.05x2=\$580.10

PSE \$1035.42

That's only \$455.32 overcharge for electric.
So they would have tied up an extra \$1253.78 of my hard earned desperatley needed money. For more than a year. In case they haven't figured it out the overcharge comes from the creative tap dancing in Mays bill. Causing them to add each month twice ie once on the monthly and duplicated on Mays bill. I can find some time to help them w math. Hopefully this is not a common occurrence.. Not to mention the orig \$1100 was in line the \$1344. I paid a stretch, and the \$2300. they want now , 3 fries short of a happy meal.

*** 07/31/2009 01:04 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) >> 'lis brown'



I need to talk to you as soon as possible - please call

*** 07/31/2009 01:55 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



I feel bad about the disconnect but as I said credit was held until July 21st with the expectation that a disconnect complaint would be reviewed and closed before 30 days. Unfortunately, I did not baby-sit the credit suspension.

Gas Deposit is calculated at roughly \$577 so 1/2 would be \$288.50. PSE will waive the reconnect charges.

If she chooses not to go prior, the PSE will ask for 50% of the past due collectibles owing immediately before PSE would offer new arrangements. The amount Elisabeth would need to pay would be \$745. So it would appear the prior obligation is the way to proceed with this customer.

The electric is also subject to disconnect for \$450.25 however, I canceled the disconnect order but that won't stop the credit action (delinquent notices).

Please advise me what you would like me to do. We need to get a reconnect order in for gas before 3:00 PM.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 07/31/2009 03:13 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



called customer - provided PSE options. Customer still believes that the amount owed is incorrect and will send copies of bill statements and notices from 1/2009. Customer however agreed to pay the \$288 half deposit for reconnection of gas. I told customer I will review her bill statements when they arrive.

*** 07/31/2009 03:47 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Once she calls in her payment and gives PSE a confirmation # PSE will order the reconnect. If she calls in before I leave, I then can assist in the ordering of the reconnect. I will remark the account to process prior, to order reconnect and to try and get it done tonight.

*** 08/03/2009 10:07 AM Action: Gail Griffin-Wallace



Referred complaint to DO to review.

1. are there amounts that should have been prior obligation?
2. What would be the best approach to explain this to the consumer/

*** 08/05/2009 11:30 AM Email: Diana Otto >> Dee Walker, cc: Stillwell, Wallace, Barard, bc: Gail



Dee, Gail Griffin Wallace requested that I review one of her complaints. It is a billing dispute, and the customer does not believe the deposit amounts were warranted, or that she owes the amounts being requested on the disconnect notices. As I reviewed the complaint, I noticed several issues that we have had previous discussions about, however, it appears as if the company continues to not understand the application of several rules.

1. Refer to the activity on 6/17/09 2:10 p.m. PSE states that the account could not go prior because the customer was disconnected for deposit amounts, rather than usage amounts. PSE quotes WAC 480-90/100-123 as the basis for this decision. PSE's interpretation of the rule is incorrect. The rule states that any deposit amount owing does not become part of the prior obligation. Example: Customer has been billed a combined amount of \$400.00 for gas and electric service. The customer also was billed \$200 for a deposit, which has not yet been paid. The customer is disconnected for not paying the

deposit. Only \$400 of usage becomes prior obligation because you are to "exclude the deposit owing."

Please correct the account to reflect usage as prior obligation amounts after the disconnection of service for deposits unpaid. I'm not sure why PSE developed this incorrect interpretation especially given all the discussions with our staff, and, the years this rule has been in place. This is the first time I've ever seen it interpreted this way by PSE. We also attended your prior obligation training and it did not contain any information telling your staff that deposit disconnects would cause there to be no prior obligation. I will be recording violations of WAC 480-90-123(2) and 480-100-123(2) on this complaint. Please correct this going forward on all accounts immediately to avoid additional violations of the rule.

2. Through-out the text of the complaint, Molly quoted WAC 480-90/100-123(3) when referring to this rule. Please note, it should be paragraph (2).

3. On 7/30/09, the customer was disconnected while the complaint was open. This is a violation of WAC 480-90-128(9), remedy and appeals, to disconnect the service. The deposit paid to restore service should not have been collected, and the amounts owing should not go to prior obligation. The service should have been restored immediately upon finding the error. There should be no reconnection fee, and if there was a fee charged, reverse it and advise Gail of the amount.

You must start the disconnection process over. While you are allowed to send late notices during the complaint process, you are not allowed to act upon them. There are too many variables regarding the amounts owing on this account to consider before this complaint may be closed. I will be recording the violation of WAC 480-90-128(9) in the complaint. Please transfer the deposit amount collected, for restoral of service, to the current account balance, not prior obligation. Please do this after prior obligation has been separated from the live account. I will have Gail explain to the customer what is required of PSE to correct this.

4. Refer to the activity on 7/31/09 1:55 p.m. Molly wrote that she felt bad about the disconnect, but she had held credit until July 21 with the expectation that a disconnect complaint would be reviewed and closed before 30 days. She went on to state that it is unfortunate that she did not baby-sit the credit suspension. I'm not sure where Molly got the idea that she could hold credit only until a specific day, such as July 21, or that it would be closed within 30 days. That is an error on her part. We have never promised that complaints will be closed in any specific time frame. It is our goal, to close as soon as possible, but never before a thorough investigation is complete, whether it takes 30 days or more. If Molly is being told that from our staff, please advise Suzanne. Our staff's directions is to advise your staff when the complaint is okay to close. At that point, credit holds may be lifted from the account. If PSE believes the investigation is complete, but staff has not advised her to close the complaint, Molly should contact the assigned UTC staff to clarify whether it is closed, or not. There is no reason for disconnections outside of the rules if we all communicate with each other.

5. Finally, also in the above e-mail, Molly states that "If she [the customer] chooses not to go prior, the [then] PSE will ask for 50% of the past due collectibles owing immediately before PSE would offer new arrangements."

New arrangements on what? I thought it was perfectly clear during previous meetings between PSE and our staff that the customer must pay all amounts owing on the disconnect notice to be restored, or, all amounts billed at the time of disconnect are prior obligation. If the full amount of the disconnect notice is not paid, the account goes prior, and the customer must be allowed to pay no more than one-half of a new deposit, plus, a reconnect fee to restore service. It appears PSE still does not understand prior obligation.

Dee, please have Molly finish the complaint with Gail. However, if you have any questions about the above information, please contact me.

Thank you.
Diana
1-360-664-1104

*** 08/05/2009 11:47 AM Email: Otto, Diana (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Thank you for the synopsis of this complaint.

I will follow up with Molly to be sure that the details are sorted out properly and that she and Gail are in complete agreement on getting this addressed promptly.

I will also give you my feedback once I have had a chance to review the details.

Dee Walker

*** 08/05/2009 01:11 PM Violation: 480-90-123(2) -



Violation: WAC 480-90-123(2) for not moving the billed amounts to prior obligation when the customer was disconnected for nonpayment of deposit amounts after the gas and electric was disconnected on 3/24/09. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/05/2009 01:36 PM Violation: 480-100-128(2) -



Violation: WAC 480-100-128(2) for failure to move the amounts billed to prior obligation after the disconnection on 3/27/09 for nonpayment of deposit amounts. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/05/2009 01:39 PM Violation: 480-90-128(9) -



WAC 480-90-128(9) for disconnecting the customer's service while she was seeking remedy and appeals through this complaint. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/05/2009 01:40 PM Violation: WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) -



WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) for an incomplete response to the complaint. The company neglected to provide bill due date with its account history. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/11/2009 09:13 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



called customer - lmtc

*** 08/20/2009 01:42 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << lis brown



Hi Gail,
I cannot find your phone number, I didn't get your message from last week till Mon
(no excuse for my delay) so I'm trying to call you and can't find the number.
Would \
please e-mail it to me or give me a call. Thanks
Lis 425=636-8281

*** 08/20/2009 03:04 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) >> 'lis brown'



Hi Lis,

You can reach me at either 1-888-333-WUTC(9882) or 1-800-562-6150. I have asked to have my supervisor review your complaint and have asked for some Attorney General opinions on some of the issues. What this means is that there may be some monies that should have gone to prior obligation. I am still reviewing and coordination with all the parties that have become involved. If you have any questions or new information, feel free to call or email.

Gail

*** 08/27/2009 01:25 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Gail:

PSE has corrected this account according to Diana's attached email.

Both gas and electric product assignments have been processed prior obligation back to the March 2009 disconnect date. Payments have been re-directed to pay the deposits and applicable charges since March 27th billing. The customer's current charges owing include:

Gas = \$0.00 (nothing)

Electric:

\$86.74 balance owing from charges for usage from 5/20/09 - 6/18/09.

\$197.71 charges for usage from 6/19/09 - 7/20/09.

\$222.54 charges for usage from 7/21/09 - 8/18/09.

= \$506.99.

A six-month install was set up on the prior obligation collectibles of \$3,414.82.

*** 09/17/2009 08:29 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Called customer - lmtc

*** 09/17/2009 10:34 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> PSE



I have a call into the customer for confirmation. There are a couple of thing I need to request. You said a 6 month installment plan was set up on the prior

of \$3414.82, when does that begin and what is the amount? Also, could I have a corrected account history from Jan, 09.

Thanks - Gail

*** 09/17/2009 11:03 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Gail:

6-month installment on \$3414.82 @ \$569.14 starts with her 9/21/09 statement. Attached is statement activity from January.

As I indicated in my 8/27/09 email, nothing is owing on gas and \$506.99 owing on electric (not prior obligation).

Molly

SEE ATTACHMENTS

*corrected activity statement

*** 09/18/2009 10:12 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Called customer - lmtc

*** 09/21/2009 09:10 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



called customer - Im stating complaint will close 9/22 if no response.

*** 09/21/2009 04:43 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace << customer



Customer returned call. I advised the customer of corrections made to the account regarding what is prior and what arrangement the company made. Because today is 9/21/09, customer asked if the 1st payment could be extended to October 1.

*** 09/21/2009 04:52 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Vera/Dee

I have been unable to contact the customer until today regarding the 6 month installment arrangement on the prior obligation. Customer wants to keep this arrangement and asks if the 1st installment of \$569.14 could be postponed until 10/1/09 and thereafter on the due date beginning 10/21/09.

Thanks - Gail

*** 09/22/2009 07:43 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Hi Gail,

I have altered the installment for the first payment to be due after the 20th of the month. The update will appear on the next statement October 20, 2009.

Thanks Vera

*** 09/22/2009 04:38 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace << customer



Customer returned call and was advised that the company will accept and October start date for the first installment payment to the prior obligation. I explained to the customer that because this is prior obligation that should she not be able to keep the installment arrangements, the amount will be sent to collections, and she cannot be disconnected for this amount again. Complaint closed with customer.

*** 09/22/2009 04:49 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Molly,

I have closed this complaint.
Thanks - Gail

Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Washington UTC Complaint

106820

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account#

Mary Alice Mitchell

Contact:

10302 98th St SW
Lakewood, WA 98498

Primary Phone: (253) 589-2712

Secondary: 253-255-0915 cell

Complaint: 106820

Serviced by: Nancy Paulson

Opened on: 06/25/2009

Grouped by: Disconnect

Closed on: 07/01/2009

Disposition: Company upheld

Description:



Customer has disconnect notice for 6/30/09, \$294 gas and \$107 electric. She also received a bill for \$353.95 and \$143.71 both due now. She pays \$150 every two weeks so wonders why her bill isn't decreasing. Also, in 2000 DSHS paid her entire bill, approximately \$4000 and customer had a zero balance. PSE shows it is still in collections.

Please send billing/payment/notice history.
Please clarify collections amount.

Passed to company as URGENT 6/25/09. Response due 6/29/09.

Results:

Past due collectible amount for gas and electric is \$471.42, includes April gas and electric and May electric. No pledges are called in. Customer payments do not cover current and past due amounts. Her lowest balance was \$119.95 in October 2000. In 2000, she received \$338.17 in pledges, not \$4000. There were no pledges from DSHS. PSE disconnected during a commission complaint. It reconnected gas service and waived the \$37 reconnect fee.

VIOLATION RECORDED.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 06/25/2009 08:29 AM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Good Morning: Passing new complaint. See details below. Thank you. (sent complaint description).

*** 06/25/2009 12:03 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



SEE ATTACHMENTS BELOW.

Good Morning Nancy:

Mary Alice Mitchell. 9 Prior Obligations. \$3748.13 in bad debt (Collections). Current Balance Owing \$5079.49 (includes bad debt).

Past due collectibles that need to be paid within 3 days to stop the disconnect is \$471.42. This includes May past due electric collectibles of \$143.47, \$150.14 gas past due collectibles from April and \$177.81 past due gas

collectibles from May.

Once these are paid, we can make arrangements on the past due June gas and electric collectibles of \$402.

Her bill isn't decreasing because she's not making her payments. Her last payment of \$26 is not enough to stop the disconnects.

Concerning her amount in collections and a zero balance, she's never had a zero balance on this account. The closest she came to a zero balance was October 2000 when a payment decreased her balance to \$119.95. After that, it never went down.

In 2000, she received \$338.17 in pledges, not \$4000. None of those were from DSHS.

The account balance on 12/31/00 was \$508.21
12/31/01 account balance = \$1618.13
12/31/02 account balance = 1740.81
12/31/03 account balance = 2331.47
12/31/04 account balance = 2453.24
12/31/05 account balance = 2548.45
12/31/06 account balance = 3683.39
12/31/07 account balance = 4201.35
12/31/08 account balance = 5002.60

We will not be holding credit until payment is made.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 06/25/2009 12:47 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



SEE ATTACHMENTS BELOW.

Nancy:

I need to revise the statement activity. I am waiting on information regarding the dialer calls and I sent response without this information.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 06/29/2009 03:42 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Gas Deposit \$372. Prior obligation for gas would be \$186.00 which is half deposit. I won't charge \$37 reconnect fee since gas was disconnected while complaint open. There are no pledges on the account. I've held credit until 7/5/09.

*** 06/29/2009 03:46 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



She is expecting pledges. So, are you saying you ordered a gas reconnect now and she has until 7/5/09 to pay deposit? Thank you.

*** 06/29/2009 03:54 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



No. I didn't order a gas reconnect. I provided the minimum to be reconnected. I just held credit to avoid her electric from being disconnected

and waiting on pledges. I won't order gas reconnect until we hear from the pledging agencies.

*** 06/29/2009 04:05 PM Action: Nancy Paulson



Discussed with Diana Otto/CP staff.

*** 06/29/2009 04:17 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Gas should not have been disconnected while a complaint was open. Secondly, the date on the notice is 6/30/09.

I just discussed this with Diana. Service must be restored today and the disconnect notice process must start over. There is no prior obligation in this case.

*** 06/29/2009 04:35 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Is someone going to be home this evening? I am unable to order a reconnect unless we have access.

*** 06/29/2009 04:45 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Will customer be home tonight so technician can re-light pilot lights? Yes.

*** 06/29/2009 04:46 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Yes, she will be home this evening. Thank you.

*** 06/29/2009 04:49 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Please note credit suspension has come off so credit action can start again.

*** 06/30/2009 12:58 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC)



Nancy is here this week

----- Original Message -----

From: Brown, Molly <molly.brown@pse.com>

To: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC)

Cc: Walker, Dee -Kirby <Dee.Walker@pse.com>

Sent: Tue Jun 30 09:58:27 2009

Subject: FW: URGENT - WA - UTC complaint 106820 for Mary Alice Mitchell

Suzanne:

Nancy has left on vacation and left this disconnect complaint open. In our response on 6/25/09 we advised staff that we would not be holding credit unless payment was made. PSE did not hear back from staff until yesterday at which time customer's gas had disconnected due to non-payment. Staff requested PSE to reconnect gas without payment since it was an open complaint. Staff indicated that this was not a prior obligation situation and that credit activity would need to start over again. PSE reconnected without payment even though this customer owes PSE over \$5000. PSE asked staff if complaint could be closed so PSE could continue credit activity as requested by staff. PSE did not hear back from staff.

I am requesting that this complaint be closed so credit activity can continue on this customer.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 06/30/2009 05:30 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Let customer know that customer notice process must start over before gas can be disconnected. Electric is due for disconnect today. Customer says she will pay \$75 toward electric tomorrow and call the Salvation Army and Hope Sparks. I urged her to take her disconnect notice to them and have them call in a pledge if funds are available and if she is eligible. Once the past due is paid for both gas and electric, \$471.42, PSE is willing to make arrangements on the June past due, \$402. Her current electric bill is \$370.02 and current gas is \$71.30. I will let PSE she will pay \$75 tomorrow. I stated again that her payments are not keeping up with her current bill and she has a large past due. In 2000, she received \$338.17 in pledges, not \$4000. None of those were from DSHS. This is all I can do and I am closing the complaint.

*** 07/01/2009 08:05 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



FYI.....

From: McGarrity, Kathleen A
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2009 7:07 PM
To: Brown, Molly
Subject: MARY ALICE MITCHELL

6/30/09
Hi Molly,

Just a heads up. Mary called today and informed a CSR that she is planning on filing commission complaint every time she is up for disconnect or when she is disconnect as a way to avoid payment and to get reconnected without payment. Looks like she has a fail medical emergency. Mary has actually laughed at our collectors when we have been out to disconnect stating that she will just go prior.

Acct # 989784000
Service address: 10302 98TH ST SW
TACOMA, WA 98498

Thanks,
Kathy McGarrity 81-6710

*** 07/01/2009 10:01 AM Violation: 480-90-128(9) -



Service may not be disconnected while the customer is pursuing any remedy or appeal provided by these rules or while engaged in discussions with the utility's representatives or with the commission. Commission complaint was opened 6/25/09, and customer's gas was disconnected late that afternoon.

*** 07/01/2009 10:09 AM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Thank you Molly. Customer said she will pay \$75 today and contact energy assistance organizations.

Customer was advised that the disconnect notice process must start over. She was also advised that her electric service is in jeopardy. I am recording one violation of WAC 480-90-128(9) for disconnecting gas service while a complaint was open. Service may not be disconnected while the customer is pursuing any remedy or appeal provided by these rules or while engaged in discussions with the utility's representatives or with the commission. Commission complaint was opened 6/25/09, and customer's gas was disconnected late that afternoon. This complaint is now closed. Please note that the UTC Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 07/01/2009 10:25 AM Action: Nancy Paulson



Although a violation was recorded for disconnecting while a complaint was open, the disposition is company upheld. The customer was not making adequate payments that covered her current and past due collectibles.

*** 07/13/2009 10:00 AM Phone: Suzanne Stillwell << Customer



Transferred to me since Nancy was unavailable. It was difficult to understand at first what she was concerned about. I clarified that she was not disconnected, nor threatened for disconnect. She said that there is this old bill that keeps showing up. I asked her if she talked with Nancy about the outcome of the complaint, and she said she had not. So, I told her that I would have Nancy call her back to discuss the outcome of the recent complaint with her, and address the old bill.

*** 07/13/2009 12:59 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson << customer



Customer called to say that she paid \$80 on 7/3. She received a gas disconnect notice for 7/6/09, dated 6/25/09. I said that sounds as if that referred to the previous disconnect not an imminent disconnect. She has an energy assistance appointment tomorrow, 7/14, at 10 a.m. with the Salvation Army. She has not heard back from Hope Sparks yet but will call me as soon as she has an appointment with them. She said she called PSE twice to inform them of the Salvation Army appointment. She said the agent kept talking about the large bill. Customer said again that DSHS paid \$4000 in September 2000. She called DSHS and its records do not go back that far. I said that PSE records show that her lowest balance was \$119 in October 2000. The high bill now in question accrued since that date. She said it did not. I said I will get a statement history going back several years (as far back as PSE can go) and mail it to her. I will also send Molly an e-mail about the energy appointment.

*** 07/13/2009 02:19 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Hi Molly: The customer called to say that she paid \$80 on 7/3. She received a gas disconnect notice for 7/6/09, dated 6/25/09. I said that sounds as if that referred to the previous disconnect not an imminent disconnect. Please clarify that notice. She has an energy assistance appointment tomorrow, 7/14, at 10 a.m. with the Salvation Army. She has not heard back from Hope Sparks yet but will call me as soon as she has an appointment with them. She said she called PSE twice to inform them of the Salvation Army appointment. Customer said again that DSHS paid \$4000 in September 2000. She called DSHS and its records do not go back that far. I said that PSE records show that her lowest balance was \$119.95 in October 2000. The high bill now in question accrued since that date. How far back can you supply me with a statement history? I would like to send it to her. Thank you.

*** 07/14/2009 03:02 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



SEE ATTACHMENT BELOW.

Mary Alice Mitchell has disconnect notices for \$360.53 gas and \$438.13 for electric. PSE is not holding credit for her appointment due to her payment and credit history.

Attached is history back to 2000.

*** 07/14/2009 03:09 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Thank you. I understand. For my record, what are the dates and amounts on notices? The notices she mentioned were dated 6/25/09 due 7/6/09. Gas was disconnected in error 6/26/09 so notice process should have been restarted. Please clarify.

*** 07/14/2009 03:36 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Nancy:

Welcome back. Gas was not disconnected in error due to notice error. So I don't see why credit process would start all over again. I don't see that any where in the WAC rule on appeals and disputes. Please clarify for me. Gas Final Notice mailed 6/25 due 7/7 for \$435.53 - \$75 Pledge - \$100 Pledge today = \$260.53 Electric Final Notice mailed 6/25/09 due 7/7/09 for \$438.13.

*** 07/14/2009 03:47 PM Action: Nancy Paulson



Discussed with Diana Otto/CP Staff. Where does it state the notice process must start over when a customer is disconnected while there is an open complaint? Company issued a notice 6/25/09, disconnect date 7/7/09. Since service was disconnect 6/26/09 (after complaint opened), doesn't disconnect process start over? Diana said not if there were notices already out. The company can act on those notices. This is my error as I may not have explained to Diana that customer was in the notice stage.

*** 07/14/2009 04:16 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Hi Molly: There was a miscommunication between Diana and I when I asked her about a disconnect when a complaint was open. I just asked her again for a WAC reference and she said that if a notice is already issued, no further notice is necessary. My apology.

*** 07/16/2009 12:06 PM Voice Mail: Nancy Paulson << customer



Urgent. Technician was out to disconnect about 11 a.m. Is coming back at 2 p.m. Salvation Army pledged \$100 towards electric but it was applied to gas. How can she stop disconnect?

*** 07/16/2009 12:23 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> customer



She was on the other line with PSE. What can I do to stop disconnect? I told her there is no more I can do since she owes has a past due amount and broken payment arrangements. She said how she made a payment every two weeks. I again pointed out that her payments do not cover even her current bills. She mentioned that I said since she was disconnected while a complaint was open, the notice process had to start over. I apologized and said I was wrong about that. She said she could pay the full electric amount and South Sound Energy Assistance will pay as well. The technician is coming back at 2 pm to disconnect. I said I would call Molly to find out the exact amount past due. Meeting until 2:30 pm.

*** 07/16/2009 12:57 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Please clarify past due amount, collectible? Molly verified eElectric is \$338.13 and gas is \$360.53. I told Molly that the customer was on phone with PSE earlier when I was speaking with her. What do account notes show? Molly said that notes show that customer called PSE several times and was told the same thing each time, pay or disconnect at 2 p.m. today.

*** 07/16/2009 03:00 PM Action: Nancy Paulson



Mailed usage history to customer. Did not call customer back as it is useless. She goes over and over the same information.

*** 09/23/2009 09:51 AM Phone: Roger Kouchi << consumer



PSE disconnected her electricity for \$318. She maintained that PSE did not send her a notice. However, she was aware that she owed approximately \$318 which was past due.

- She informed me that she paid \$400 recently.
- She understood that there was approximately \$5,000 in collections.

Consumer was upset because PSE continues to bill her for the \$5,000 even though it was in collections. She believed that was against the law. I informed the consumer that I was not aware of any law that prohibited PSE from attempting to collect a just debt from a consumer. PSE is not required to take the collectible off a consumer's bill simply because it is in collections.

- She informed me that she was going to call PSE and go prior obligation. She will pay 1/2 deposit plus reconnect fee to have her electric service restored.

APPENDIX J

Washington UTC Complaint

106690

Company: Puget Sound Energy G703

Customer: Account# 8213668703

Regina and Noah Friedland

Contact:

5775 S. Eddy

Seattle, WA 98118

Primary Phone: 206-722-0512 service

Secondary: 206-760-9487 (Noah)

Complaint: ~~106690~~

Serviced by: Pam Smith

Opened on: 06/08/2009

Grouped by: Disputed Bill

Closed on: 06/24/2009

Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Customer owns a vacant house. She pays a very minimum amount every month. For the time frame from 12/15/08-12/30/08 she was billed \$525.00 (approx.) Customer has spent the last 6 months trying to figure out why the bill for that two weeks was so high. PSE has tested the meter and can offer no explanation. PSE told the amount of usage was considered industrial usage.

6/9 12:53 Molly, please check through the records. Please stop collections. Customer is willing to pay the amount that is not in dispute. Please tell me the amount that she was billed for that two week time frame and she will pay the difference prior to the close of complaint. She does not want to be sent to collections. This response is due 6/10/09

Results:

Meter was tested, it tested accurate. PSE made arrangements

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 06/10/2009 04:52 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Pam,

It appears The Friedland's are disputing their December bill for \$507.05. This was for usage from 11/27/08 - 12/29/08. The gas meter is read automatically and according to remarks, the daily usage from 12/10/08 - 12/29/09 was between 23 - 24 Kwhs a day. So something or someone was using the gas during this period.

The removed gas meter was tested on 3/13/09 and tested accurate: 100.6% on Open Test and 101.4% on Check Test.

The gas has been off since January per Regina's request.

*** 06/10/2009 04:55 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Account balance is \$703.63 - \$507.05 = \$196.58 not in dispute.

*** 06/16/2009 01:26 PM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly



Molly, are there any notes on the acct. about a tech going out and checking

the house for problems?

Pam

*** 06/16/2009 01:38 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Remarks dated 1/27/09 by Gas First Response Tech " VERIFIED THAT METER WAS SHOWING USAGE AND THE CURRENT READ 8909. NOTIFIED TINA IN THE CALL CENTER TO SEE IF METER NEEDED TO BE SHUT OFF DUE TO HOUSE BEING VACANT AND METER IS SHOWING USAGE AND CUSTOMER IS UPSET ABOUT BILL."

1/27/09 - Gas Shut off per customer request.

Service Order 2/10/09 : NOTE: gas will need reconnected while testing the w/heater - house empty. Please check the w/heater - something seemed to happen around 12/10/08 - & stopped 12/30/08. THE ONLY gas appliance going was the w/heater on pilot. The Friedland's had a water leak & it may be possible that the leak finally caused the t-stat on the w/heater to go out. The leak was not discovered until 01/02/09 a few days after the usage stopped. Could the w/heater be checked to see if t-stat is working any more."

2/17/09 Service Order Task Completed: "FOUND METER OFF AND TURNED MTR ON AND FIRED UP FURNACE OK CLOKED AT 113K AND IT IS RATED AT 110K OK AND RANGE NOT ON AND NO WATER TO HOUSE AND VALVE OFF AT WATER HEATER CANT CHECK SHUT VALVES OFF
SPOT CHECK OK 25MIN NO MOVEMENT REMOVED MTR SPEC TEST."

2/17/09 - Meter was exchanged.

3/13/09 - Meter tested accurate.

*** 06/18/2009 01:14 PM Phone: Pam Smith >> customer



called - left message to call will be back Monday, please call.

*** 06/23/2009 12:05 PM Phone: Pam Smith >> customer



She was very upset, she thinks there was a software error. I explained the meter tested accurate. Company responsibility ends at the meter. She said the leak was very small and there was no one at the house. She will discuss payment arrangements with her husband. I suggested 3 month arrangements at 234.54/month. First payment due now. She will call back.

*** 06/24/2009 08:08 AM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly



Molly the customer wants 3 month pay arrangements. That would be 234.54 for 3 months. Will that work?

Also, you response mentioned KWH, I believe you meant therms?

Pam Smith

*** 06/24/2009 08:37 AM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Pam:

I can set up the balance for 3 months but I thought they were only disputing the December bill and said they would pay what wasn't in

dispute. I provided you the figure that wasn't in dispute. So now we're going to set up arrangements on the full account balance, is this correct?

Yes, I meant terms.

*** 06/24/2009 09:01 AM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



Yes, that is what I would like to do.

*** 06/24/2009 09:23 AM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Done.

3-month installment on balance of \$703.63 @ \$234.55 a month. The installment plan will show up on their 6/30/09 statement.

*** 06/24/2009 01:20 PM Phone: Pam Smith >> customer



left message - PSE will accept pay arrangements of 3 months. Gave amount of arrangement, it will be on the 6/30 bill. I am closing, call if questions.

*** 06/24/2009 01:26 PM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



This complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 06/24/2009 04:11 PM Violation: 480-90-173 3(a) -



Company's initial response on 6/10/09 did not include service order notes or visit notes. In the initial request I asked that all records be reviewed. Molly has been informed of violation.

*** 06/24/2009 04:13 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Please show me that on the complaint text you sent on 6/8/09.

*** 06/24/2009 04:27 PM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



bolded the initial complaint text requesting her to check through all the records.

*** 06/24/2009 04:27 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Pam:

The complaint text you sent me on 6/8/09 does not indicate service orders or notes to be sent to you. I did not interpret "Molly, please check through the records" as please send me service orders and account notes.

On June 16, 2009 you email me and said "are there any notes on the account about a tech going out and check the house for problems."

I sent you what our records showed the same day.

So I will argue the violation that my initial response was not complete.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 06/24/2009 04:33 PM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly



Molly, on a **high bill complaint or service complaint** response anytime a tech has gone out to **the house** that should be included in the **initial response**. I will note your disagreement in the record.

Pam -

Washington UTC Complaint

106758

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 880-170-503-2

Elisabeth Brown

Contact:

131st ave ne
bellevue, wa 98005

Primary Phone: (425) 636-8281

Secondary: (206) 218-6299

E-mail addr: lbenestad@gmail.com

Complaint: ~~106758~~ Serviced by: **Gail Griffin-Wallace**
Opened on: 06/15/2009 Grouped by: Disputed Bill
Closed on: 09/22/2009 Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Customer believes she has been disconnected for an amount that is prior obligation. In addition, she believes she has been overcharged for her deposits.

Please provide a 12 month account history.
Please provide calculations for any deposit request in 2009

passed to pse via email 6/15 @ 2:40pm - your initial response to this complaint is due by close of business 6/17/09

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 06/14/2009 02:37 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace << customer



Please explain your complaint in detail.

This started in Jan with my first bill for \$2300. for 1 month, this was current charges and an \$1126. deposit plus \$276. from June at a previous residence I vacated in APRIL, so I never saw or recieved that bill. I did not have enough to cover this bill. I could only cover the current .or deposit not both. I started calling pse in beginning of Feb. to try and work this out. Took till the end of March to get an answer. Which of course was no. No one ever offered to let me pay the month ahead. So I spoke with Rachael and did exactly what she told me to do. They shut us off Mar 30th. I paid 1/2 the deposit and reconnect. Only they had added another \$200 plus to the deposit. Anyway I paid the ballance of the deposit as agreed. I've also paid the current charges on time since Mar 30th. I also specifically stated the bill before Mar 30 is prior obligation, said that 3 times also emailed so I cannot be shut off twice for that amount and I have till Oct 15th to pay it off. Since Mar 30th I have paid PSE \$2744. I finished paying the dep in May today payed the current bill of \$522. Due 6/10/09. So all kosher? Hell no Mr greedy PSE
They sent me a bill for May demanding now a \$2300. deposit and \$1100. past due plus my \$500 current for a total of \$4070. They have done the most screwed up bookeeping and I will send you copies. It's incredible the blatant disregard for my rights as a consumer the deposit is 5 times my monthly bill, and they credited the deposit I just paid and all my current charge payments to the back

so they can threaten me with another shut off and this totally out of control deposit. As current charges. My next stop is an attorneys office. I don't expect a free ride nor am I asking for hand outs, what is supposed to be a public utilities, but private company. So no other choice for us the public, does not have the right to blatantly

charge, credit and recharge and credit and recharge the one time late fee for the charge than credit than one more one time late fee for the same charge they just credited than credit the deposit they charge 3times in 4 months than credit. Are you confused yet. Good than read my bills. It's so unbelievable. By the way I also saw the paper today about the woman w/stage 4 cancer, who PSE is going to shut off for under \$400. Which would cost her her life. They don't give a rats ass. It's all about \$\$\$\$\$

The working poor don't count right???? Please give me some faith in our government, and set this right so I can keep my house. the 7 people that live here deserve to get public utilities for the public not the rich. PSE needs to be dropped kicked and shook up. They are not god nor should they be allowed to act like it. Times are real tough for all of us, so a fair shake should not be too much to ask.

Did you speak to a supervisor from your utility or transportation company?

No

If 'Yes', what was the result?

What do you think the company should do to resolve your complaint?

This has been harrassment for me since Jan I go to bed stressed about it and wake up stressed about it. None of us make much money, we are constantly searching for work, the increase of prices for everything is not reflected in our pay. I think PSE should skip the deposit as long as I stay current on current charges and let me pay the back by Oct 15th. If I fail than kick in the deposit. They are not depending on my \$\$ to keep their doors open, they wan't this huge deposit for their slussh fund. This will put not only me but 6 other people out of our home. I owe them \$1100. to the back and could clear that by Aug/Sept. My life has been living hell since Dec/Jan over this staggering \$4000 bill which is 3 times what we actually owe them. Our average is \$5 to \$700 a month. I think \$2700 in 2 months is a hell of an effort to resolve this and that it is time for them to step up and act reasonable.

*** 06/15/2009 02:42 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Dear Ms. Brown:

Thank you for contacting the Utilities and Transportation Commission regarding your complaint against Puget Sound Energy. I have opened an informal complaint investigation on your behalf, and will work with the company to resolve your complaint. Complaints usually take between two and four weeks to complete, depending on the complexity. If you have questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 1-800-562-6150.

Sincerely,
gpg-w

*** 06/17/2009 06:49 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << lis brown



Thank you very much for looking in to this. Any help will be grerat, this has been an ongoing frustration all spring and is a serious threat to the stability of my household. It is a struggle to make the rent and utilities every month as is. That depsoit is out of my reach. Enjoy your reading, I just hope you make sense out of it. Please note I paid the \$1344. deposit amount, I don't know where the \$2000. they credited in May came from. Call me if you have questions, and I will wait to hear from you. Thank you agai for your time on this.
Lis Brown

SEE ATTACHMENTS

*** 06/17/2009 02:10 PM Attachment: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << molly brown pse



Gail:

Please refer to Complaint #105881 for background up through March. I will provide account information from March forward. This complaint also has the deposit calculations.

Remarks dated 5/5/09: "On March 27th Elisabeth was disconnected for both her gas and electric deposits. She was reconnected and the acct was processed as prior obligation. Per WAC rules #480-100-123 for electric and #480-90-123 for gas, since it was a deposit she was disc for she would not qualify for prior. If she is disconnected for usage down the road, then of course she could go prior ob".

You will see a number of entries on 3/27/09 which was the agent processing the account as prior obligation. However, in May, the account was reviewed and reprocessed since a customer can not go prior obligation on the deposits. Also appears new deposit amounts have been charged.

My calculations:

Gas Deposit = $3526/12 \times 2 \times 1.132$ charge factor = \$665, CLX asked for \$647.
Electric Deposit = $\$4432 / 12 \times 2 = \738 , CLX asked for \$697.

Both Deposits have been paid in full.

Electric Collectibles owing = \$1758.99

Gas Collectibles owing = \$1951.86

Before PSE would make any arrangements, both gas and electric past due charges over 90 days old needs to be paid in full.

Electric needing to be paid before arrangements made = \$487.29.

Gas charges needing to be paid before arrangements made = \$772.19.

*** 06/22/2009 03:47 PM Action: Gail Griffin-Wallace



Requested DO review to determine if statements by PSE are correct.


*** 06/24/2009 09:16 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown





Molly, can you point me to where it states a customer can not go prior on deposits. Do you have an opinion from previous meeting with staff?
Thanks - Gail


*** 06/24/2009 09:49 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly

WAC 480-90/100-123(3).

*** 06/30/2009 10:42 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown

Molly,
Was the customer disconnected? When?

*** 07/01/2009 03:43 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly

Gail:
Please see my email dated 6/17/09 which stated "On March 27th , Elisabeth was disconnected for both gas and electric deposits." Even though she was disconnected for the deposits, PSE processed the full account as prior. She has not been disconnected again but is up for disconnection for both gas and electric usage (\$487.29 Electric and \$722.19 Gas).

*** 07/10/2009 03:21 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> pse

Molly,
I am having a great deal of difficulty trying to figure out the activity. What was the amount billed at time of disconnect? How much went to prior obligation. If deposit amount were billed, they still go into prior and PSE can request a new deposit. I need an activity accounting with the prior removed.
Thanks - Gail

*** 07/13/2009 05:00 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly

Gail:

Elisabeth was disconnected for the deposits, NOT usage.

As you are aware, WAC 480-100-123 (2) states:
An electric utility may not refuse to provide new or additional service to a residential applicant or residential customer who has a prior obligation. A prior obligation is the dollar amount, excluding deposit amounts owed, the utility has billed to the customer and for which the utility has not received payment at the time the service has been disconnected for nonpayment. The utility must provide service once the customer or applicant has paid all appropriate deposit and reconnection fees. This subsection does not apply to customers that have been disconnected for failure to honor the terms of a winter low-income payment program.

PSE does not feel that this customer meets the prior obligation criteria since she was disconnected for the deposits.

Perhaps we need further clarification. Please provide PSE with an interpretation of this WAC rule that states the deposit would be considered a prior obligation.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 07/17/2009 03:34 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << lis brown



Gail,

I am getting the shut off notices again from PSE. The bill is still sitting at \$4000. with current charges for June of \$379. They are still asking for the 2400 deposit which is an unbelievable amount to expect from a resident. That is 6 months worth of useage. I struggled very hard to get them the original 1300. deposit. Since they did there creative bookeeping and ignored the prior obligation before March 30th. I know keeping the current charges paid makes no difference to them. They just want that deposit again. I am very worried they will shut us off, and I will not be able to raise the money to turn it back on. I know they don't really care, for us it's home or street. The economy has yet to rebound enough for rent increases or jobs. I also have a guy who was hurt last week and faces surgery next week so now his rent is on hold. No insurance either. I do not go for public welfare I choose to earn my own way, it's not an easy one but it's mine and I'm ok with that. We are the working poor, but we still do work. Having this black clouds hanging over me for the last 6 months is wearing me out the stress is hell. We are all constantly searching for any work we can find to keep our house going. I have one person with a honest legitimate 9 to 5 job. One on unemployment, 3 of us do peice work. We've made it this far but that not so jolly fatassed giant PSE can step on us anytime we will be done. This situation could very easily throw me and those with me in the street literally. Any help you can get us would be so wonderful or at least some sort of reasonable arrangement that we can live with. Oh and did you make sense of my bills I sent you? Thank you so much for your time and efforts,
Lis Brown
206-218-6299 or 425-636-8281

*** 07/21/2009 11:57 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> molly brown



Had conversation with PSE after discussing another complaint by phone. PSE explained that the customer was never disconnected for usage that the disconnect was for deposit amounts only. As a result, customer payments were applied to the deposit and not the balance owed.

*** 07/21/2009 12:21 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> pse



Molly,

Is there a balance on the deposit at this time? Please provide an update on the account history as of May 31, 2009.
Thanks- Gail

*** 07/21/2009 12:26 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> cust



called customer - lmtc

*** 07/21/2009 12:46 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Both gas and electric deposits have been satisfied.
Attached is statement activity from 5/31/09 to current.

I would recommend she get disconnected and go prior.

*** 07/30/2009 03:27 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace << customer



Customer returned call - advised customer that due to the complexity of the complaint I would need to re-familiarize myself with it before talking to her. Customer agreed to call tomorrow morning for update.

*** 07/31/2009 11:06 AM Attachment: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Sorry.

see attachments

*** 07/31/2009 12:04 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



customer called and advised gas was disconnected yesterday evening.

*** 07/31/2009 12:56 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << lis brown



Gail,
You mentioned adding up the gas and electric usage. Well I added them up
Gas for 7 months \$1857.66 ave \$265.38x2= \$530.76

PSE \$1329.19 ?

That's only \$798.46 overcharge for just the gas deposit.

Electric for 7 mo. \$2030.25 ave \$290.05x2=\$580.10

PSE \$1035.42

That's only \$455.32 overcharge for electric.
So they would have tied up an extra \$1253.78 of my hard earned desperately needed money. For more than a year. In case they haven't figured it out the overcharge comes from the creative tap dancing in Mays bill. Causing them to add each month twice ie once on the monthly and duplicated on Mays bill. I can find some time to help them w math. Hopefully this is not a common occurrence.. Not to mention the orig \$1100 was in line the \$1344. I paid a stretch, and the \$2300. they want now , 3 fries short of a happy meal.

*** 07/31/2009 01:04 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) >> 'lis brown'



I need to talk to you as soon as possible - please call

*** 07/31/2009 01:55 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



I feel bad about the disconnect but as I said credit was held until July 21st with the expectation that a disconnect complaint would be reviewed and closed before 30 days. Unfortunately, I did not baby-sit the credit suspension.

Gas Deposit is calculated at roughly \$577 so 1/2 would be \$288.50. PSE will waive the reconnect charges.

If she chooses not to go prior, the PSE will ask for 50% of the past due collectibles owing immediately before PSE would offer new arrangements. The amount Elisabeth would need to pay would be \$745. So it would appear the prior obligation is the way to proceed with this customer.

The electric is also subject to disconnect for \$450.25 however, I canceled the disconnect order but that won't stop the credit action (delinquent notices).

Please advise me what you would like me to do. We need to get a reconnect order in for gas before 3:00 PM.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 07/31/2009 03:13 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



called customer - provided PSE options. Customer still believes that the amount owed is incorrect and will send copies of bill statements and notices from 1/2009. Customer however agreed to pay the \$288 half deposit for reconnection of gas. I told customer I will review her bill statements when they arrive.

*** 07/31/2009 03:47 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Once she calls in her payment and gives PSE a confirmation # PSE will order the reconnect. If she calls in before I leave, I then can assist in the ordering of the reconnect. I will remark the account to process prior, to order reconnect and to try and get it done tonight.

*** 08/03/2009 10:07 AM Action: Gail Griffin-Wallace



Referred complaint to DO to review.

1. are there amounts that should have been prior obligation?
2. What would be the best approach to explain this to the consumer/

*** 08/05/2009 11:30 AM Email: Diana Otto >> Dee Walker, cc: Stillwell, Wallace, Barard, bc: Gail



Dee, Gail Griffin Wallace requested that I review one of her complaints. It is a billing dispute, and the customer does not believe the deposit amounts were warranted, or that she owes the amounts being requested on the disconnect notices. As I reviewed the complaint, I noticed several issues that we have had previous discussions about, however, it appears as if the company continues to not understand the application of several rules.

1. Refer to the activity on 6/17/09 2:10 p.m. PSE states that the account could not go prior because the customer was disconnected for deposit amounts, rather than usage amounts. PSE quotes WAC 480-90/100-123 as the basis for this decision. PSE's interpretation of the rule is incorrect. The rule states that any deposit amount owing does not become part of the prior obligation. Example: Customer has been billed a combined amount of \$400.00 for gas and electric service. The customer also was billed \$200 for a deposit, which has not yet been paid. The customer is disconnected for not paying the

deposit. Only \$400 of usage becomes prior obligation because you are to "exclude the deposit owing."

Please correct the account to reflect usage as prior obligation amounts after the disconnection of service for deposits unpaid. I'm not sure why PSE developed this incorrect interpretation especially given all the discussions with our staff, and, the years this rule has been in place. This is the first time I've ever seen it interpreted this way by PSE. We also attended your prior obligation training and it did not contain any information telling your staff that deposit disconnects would cause there to be no prior obligation. I will be recording violations of WAC 480-90-123(2) and 480-100-123(2) on this complaint. Please correct this going forward on all accounts immediately to avoid additional violations of the rule.

2. Through-out the text of the complaint, Molly quoted WAC 480-90/100-123(3) when referring to this rule. Please note, it should be paragraph (2).

3. On 7/30/09, the customer was disconnected while the complaint was open. This is a violation of WAC 480-90-128(9), remedy and appeals, to disconnect the service. The deposit paid to restore service should not have been collected, and the amounts owing should not go to prior obligation. The service should have been restored immediately upon finding the error. There should be no reconnection fee, and if there was a fee charged, reverse it and advise Gail of the amount.

You must start the disconnection process over. While you are allowed to send late notices during the complaint process, you are not allowed to act upon them. There are too many variables regarding the amounts owing on this account to consider before this complaint may be closed. I will be recording the violation of WAC 480-90-128(9) in the complaint. Please transfer the deposit amount collected, for restoral of service, to the current account balance, not prior obligation. Please do this after prior obligation has been separated from the live account. I will have Gail explain to the customer what is required of PSE to correct this.

4. Refer to the activity on 7/31/09 1:55 p.m. Molly wrote that she felt bad about the disconnect, but she had held credit until July 21 with the expectation that a disconnect complaint would be reviewed and closed before 30 days. She went on to state that it is unfortunate that she did not baby-sit the credit suspension. I'm not sure where Molly got the idea that she could hold credit only until a specific day, such as July 21, or that it would be closed within 30 days. That is an error on her part. We have never promised that complaints will be closed in any specific time frame. It is our goal, to close as soon as possible, but never before a thorough investigation is complete, whether it takes 30 days or more. If Molly is being told that from our staff, please advise Suzanne. Our staff's directions is to advise your staff when the complaint is okay to close. At that point, credit holds may be lifted from the account. If PSE believes the investigation is complete, but staff has not advised her to close the complaint, Molly should contact the assigned UTC staff to clarify whether it is closed, or not. There is no reason for disconnections outside of the rules if we all communicate with each other.

5. Finally, also in the above e-mail, Molly states that "If she [the customer] chooses not to go prior, the [then] PSE will ask for 50% of the past due collectibles owing immediately before PSE would offer new arrangements."

New arrangements on what? I thought it was perfectly clear during previous meetings between PSE and our staff that the customer must pay all amounts owing on the disconnect notice to be restored, or, all amounts billed at the time of disconnect are prior obligation. If the full amount of the disconnect notice is not paid, the account goes prior, and the customer must be allowed to pay no more than one-half of a new deposit, plus, a reconnect fee to restore service. It appears PSE still does not understand prior obligation.

Dee, please have Molly finish the complaint with Gail. However, if you have any questions about the above information, please contact me.

Thank you.
Diana
1-360-664-1104

*** 08/05/2009 11:47 AM Email: Otto, Diana (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Thank you for the synopsis of this complaint.

I will follow up with Molly to be sure that the details are sorted out properly and that she and Gail are in complete agreement on getting this addressed promptly.

I will also give you my feedback once I have had a chance to review the details.

Dee Walker

*** 08/05/2009 01:11 PM Violation: 480-90-123(2) -



Violation: WAC 480-90-123(2) for not moving the billed amounts to prior obligation when the customer was disconnected for nonpayment of deposit amounts after the gas and electric was disconnected on 3/24/09. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/05/2009 01:36 PM Violation: 480-100-128(2) -



Violation: WAC 480-100-128(2) for failure to move the amounts billed to prior obligation after the disconnection on 3/27/09 for nonpayment of deposit amounts. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/05/2009 01:39 PM Violation: 480-90-128(9) -



WAC 480-90-128(9) for disconnecting the customer's service while she was seeking remedy and appeals through this complaint. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/05/2009 01:40 PM Violation: WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) -



WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) for an incomplete response to the complaint. The company neglected to provide bill due date with its account history. The company was notified of the violation.

*** 08/11/2009 09:13 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



called customer - lmtc

*** 08/20/2009 01:42 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << lis brown



He Gail,
I cannot find your phone number, I didn't get your message from last week till
Mon
(no excuse for my delay) so I'm trying to call you and can't find the number.
Would \
please e-mail it to me or give me a call. Thanks
Lis 425=636-8281

*** 08/20/2009 03:04 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) >> 'lis brown'



Hi Lis,

You can reach me at either 1-888-333-WUTC(9882) or 1-800-562-6150. I have asked
to have my supervisor review your complaint and have asked for some Attorney
General opinions on some of the issues. What this means is that there may be
some monies that should have gone to prior obligation. I am still reviewing and
coordination with all the parties that have become involved. If you have any
questions or new information, feel free to call or email.

Gail

*** 08/27/2009 01:25 PM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Gail:

PSE has corrected this account according to Diana's attached email.

Both gas and electric product assignments have been processed prior obligation
back to the March 2009 disconnect date. Payments have been re-directed to pay
the deposits and applicable charges since March 27th
billing. The customer's current charges owing include:

Gas = \$0.00 (nothing)

Electric:

\$86.74 balance owing from charges for usage from 5/20/09 - 6/18/09.

\$197.71 charges for usage from 6/19/09 - 7/20/09.

\$222.54 charges for usage from 7/21/09 - 8/18/09.

= \$506.99.

A six-month install was set up on the prior obligation collectibles of
\$3,414.82.

*** 09/17/2009 08:29 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Called customer - lmtc

*** 09/17/2009 10:34 AM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> PSE



I have a call into the customer for confirmation. There are a couple of thing
I need to request. You said a 6 month installment plan was set up on the prior

of \$3414.82, when does that begin and what is the amount? Also, could I have a corrected account history from Jan, 09.

Thanks - Gail

*** 09/17/2009 11:03 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Gail:

6-month installment on \$3414.82 @ \$569.14 starts with her 9/21/09 statement. Attached is statement activity from January.

As I indicated in my 8/27/09 email, nothing is owing on gas and \$506.99 owing on electric (not prior obligation).

Molly

SEE ATTACHMENTS

*corrected activity statement

*** 09/18/2009 10:12 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Called customer - lmtc

*** 09/21/2009 09:10 AM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



called customer - lm stating complaint will close 9/22 if no response.

*** 09/21/2009 04:43 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace << customer



Customer returned call. I advised the customer of corrections made to the account regarding what is prior and what arrangement the company made. Because today is 9/21/09, customer asked if the 1st payment could be extended to October 1.

*** 09/21/2009 04:52 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Vera/Dee

I have been unable to contact the customer until today regarding the 6 month installment arrangement on the prior obligation. Customer wants to keep this arrangement and asks if the 1st installment of \$569.14 could be postponed until 10/1/09 and thereafter on the due date beginning 10/21/09.

Thanks - Gail

*** 09/22/2009 07:43 AM Email: Griffin-Wallace, Gail (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Hi Gail,

I have altered the installment for the first payment to be due after the 20th of the month. The update will appear on the next statement October 20, 2009.

Thanks Vera

*** 09/22/2009 04:38 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace << customer



Customer returned call and was advised that the company will accept and October start date for the first installment payment to the prior obligation. I explained to the customer that because this is prior obligation that should she not be able to keep the installment arrangements, the amount will be sent to collections, and she cannot be disconnected for this amount again. Complaint closed with customer.

*** 09/22/2009 04:49 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> Molly Brown



Molly,

I have closed this complaint.
Thanks - Gail

Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Washington UTC Complaint

106774

Company: Puget Sound Energy G703

Customer: Account# 097-777-735-8

Amanda Norling
Contact:
2407 Pleasanton Ct SE
Lacey, WA 98503

Primary Phone: (360) 455-0717
E-mail addr: ajam_1999@yahoo.com

Complaint: ~~106774~~ Serviced by: Dennis Shutler
Opened on: 06/16/2009 Grouped by: Disputed Bill
Closed on: 06/25/2009 Disposition: Company upheld

Description:



Ms states she moved into her newly built home on 12/27/08. Ms just received a courtesy call that her meter has never been working properly since she moved in and is now expected to pay \$994.04 that is not in Ms' budget. Ms does not believe it's fair to estimate the gas she used.

Mr believes this bill needs to be reduced, it's PSE's meter, PSE has the equipment and expertise to tell when it's not working, PSE left faulty equipment on Mr's home for 18 months.

In accordance with the commission's response rule in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-90-173(3)(a), PSE's response is due not later than 5 p.m. PT on 6/18/09.

Please provide this customer's account history beginning 11/01/08 to current. At a minimum, the information provided should consist of: records of all communications between the company and the customer; copies (if available) of all late or disconnection notices; as well as the account billing/payment history, all throughout the period of 11/01/08 to current. I look forward to your response.

Complaint passed to PSE on 6/16/09, at 4:00 p.m.:

Results:

PSE reported Ms' gas meter stopped due to a broken drive gear. PSE offered Ms 18 months to pay the backbilled charges.

---VIOLATIONS NOTED---

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 06/16/2009 03:51 PM Email: Dennis Shutler << Ms



Complaint Information

Please explain your complaint in detail.

My family moved into our newly built home in 12-27-2008. We paid our PSE bills as they were mailed to us in their entirety each month. I just received a "courtesy call" that our meter has never been working properly since we moved in. I am now expected to pay \$994.04 that is NOT in our budget.

I don't understand how it's anywhere near fair to estimate the gas I used. Nobody knows what goes on in my home or how I heat or what I use. How can they

get away with just guessing how much money they are going to try to take from me??? They don't have any hard evidence of what I used.

Did you speak to a supervisor from your utility or transportation company?

If "Yes", what was the result?

The "courtesy call" from Carol Arroyo and she so kindly offered me an interest free payment plan. Why is that a good thing for me? This is NOT my problem or my fault. I am not excited for interest free anything. I specifically asked her if I was to set up a payment plan with her and she clearly told me to wait until I received the bill and letter in the mail. That letter would have her information on it to contact her when I received it. Her reason for calling, according to her, was give us a head's up since we would receive the letter on a weekend and she didn't want us to not be able to talk to anyone since it would have been a weekend. Out of that conversation, I received a letter and it indicated that I had set up a payment plan with her which I did no such thing.

What do you think the company should do to resolve your complaint?

I understand that I used the gas. I did what I was asked to do and that was to pay my bill as indicated by PSE by the due date indicated by PSE. I did that. My bill needs to be reduced. I feel that it's PSE's meter, they have the equipment and expertise to tell when it's not working they left faulty equipment on my home for 18 months, they should be penalized like I'm being penalized.

*** 06/16/2009 04:00 PM Email: Dennis Shutler >> Molly Brown



Passing a new complaint.

NOTE: PLEASE REVIEW MS' COMMENTS BELOW IN FULL DETAIL:

*** 06/18/2009 08:55 AM Violation: 480-90-178(1)(e) -



VIOLATION: Sixteen (16) violations of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-90-178(1)(e) Billing requirements and payment date, against Puget Sound Energy (PSE) for failing to issue this customer monthly billing statements accurately listing the total amount of therms used by the customer for the billing period.

In its e-mail response to staff on 6/19/09, PSE states, in part: "2. Dates for the back-bill -1/1/08 to 5/1/09." (16 billing periods = 16 violations)

*** 06/18/2009 08:57 AM Violation: 480-90-178(1)(f) -



VIOLATION: Sixteen (16) violations of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-90-178(1)(f) Billing requirements and payment date, against Puget Sound Energy (PSE) for failing to issue this customer monthly billing statements accurately listing the amount of therms used and applicable billing rates per therm for the billing period. Without the accurate amount of therms used, PSE was unable to accurately bill this customer the correct charges due.

In its e-mail response to staff on 6/19/09, PSE states, in part: "2. Dates for the back-bill -1/1/08 to 5/1/09." (16 billing periods = 16 violations)

*** 06/18/2009 01:23 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



We could probably do a rework on this backbill since the customer stated they were in Hawaii for 10 days and also made several one week trips to Oregon and VA. If they could provide us with dates for these trips, we can do a rework. Thank you.

*** 06/19/2009 03:41 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



1. What was the reason for the back-bill? - Stopped meter due to a broken drive gear.
2. Dates for the back-bill -1/1/08 to 5/1/09.
3. Was this actual or estimated usage? Estimated - The correction was estimated based on PSE's gas tariff, Rule No. 8, section 7(c) that states "the use of gas in a similar period of like use under similar conditions when the meter was registering accurately. Used lowest history from 3 neighbors to estimate usage due to no history at this location.
4. Were any adjustments provided? - No. However as I indicated, we can do a rework of the bill once we get the dates they were on their trips.
5. Was an installment plan provided? -Yes- Customer agreed to \$55.23 for 18 months. Charges from the back billing totaling \$994.04 did not include current electric and gas charges for June \$63.95 Gas and \$65.97 Electric.

SEE ATTACHED CUSTOMER ACCOUNT HISTORY PROVIDED BY PSE:

*** 06/25/2009 01:00 PM Phone: Dennis Shutler >> Ms



I called Ms and told her that PSE reported it used the lowest history from three of her neighbors to estimate her usage due to no history at her new residence.

Ms stated she didn't believe she should be charged based on another customer's usage, not knowing their number of family members residing in the residence or their usage patterns.

Ms stated she could not recall any dates of her family vacations to provide PSE.

Ms stated she did not agree to any such amount or payment arrangements when PSE called her to let her know she would receive a sizeable backbill due to PSE's meter failing.

Ms stated PSE called her regarding the backbilled charges while she was out shopping, that she would first have had to confer with her husband before agreeing to any specific amount or payment arrangements.

I told Ms that PSE estimated her charges according to PSE's tariff and the commission's rules.

I told Ms she could contact PSE and request her electric and gas meters be inspected for accuracy as often as once every twelve months at no cost to her.

Ms stated she would record this on their calendar for future scheduling.

I told Ms I was closing her complaint but she should feel free to call me in the future should she experience further issues.

*** 06/25/2009 01:59 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Molly Brown, Puget Sound Energy (PSE):

Thank you for your time and efforts in working to resolve this customer's complaint issue.

I called Ms and told her that PSE reported it used the lowest history from three of her neighbors to estimate her usage due to no history at her new residence.

Ms stated she didn't believe she should be charged based on another customer's usage, not knowing their number of family members residing in their residence or their usage patterns.

Ms stated she could not recall any dates of her family vacations to provide PSE.

Ms stated she did not agree to any such amount or payment arrangements when PSE called her to let her know she would receive a sizeable backbill due to PSE's meter failing.

Ms stated PSE called her regarding the backbilled charges while she was out shopping, that she would first have had to confer with her husband before agreeing to any specific amount or payment arrangements.

I told Ms that PSE estimated her charges according to PSE's tariff and the commission's rules.

I told Ms she could contact PSE and request her electric and gas meters be inspected for accuracy as often as once every twelve months at no cost to her.

Ms stated she would record this on their calendar for future scheduling.

Ms stated she would call PSE on 6/26/09 to negotiate payment arrangements on the charges billed.

I told Ms I was closing her complaint and you too may now consider this customer's complaint closed as well.

However, during the course of my investigation into Ms' complaint, I found PSE operating in violation of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-90. Consequently, I have recorded violations of the commission's rule in WAC 480-90, against PSE, as follows:

Sixteen (16) violations of WAC 480-90-178(1)(e) Billing requirements and payment date, against PSE for failing to issue this customer monthly billing statements accurately listing the total amount of therms used by the customer for the billing period.

In its e-mail response to staff on 6/19/09, PSE states, in part: "2. Dates for the back-bill -1/1/08 to 5/1/09." (16 billing periods = 16 violations)

WAC 480-90-178(1)(e) Billing requirements and payment date. (1) Customer bills must: (e) Show the current and previous meter readings, the current read date, and the total amount of therms used.

Sixteen (16) violations of WAC 480-90-178(1)(f) Billing requirements and payment date, against PSE for failing to issue this customer monthly billing statements accurately listing the amount of therms used and applicable billing rates per therm for the billing period. Without the accurate amount of therms used, PSE was unable to accurately bill this customer the correct charges due.

In its e-mail response to staff on 6/19/09, PSE states, in part: "2. Dates for the back-bill -1/1/08 to 5/1/09." (16 billing periods = 16 violations)

WAC 480-90-178(1)(f) Billing requirements and payment date. (1) Customer bills must: (f) Show the amount of therms used for each billing rate, the applicable billing rates per therm, the basic charge or minimum bill.

One (1) violation of WAC 480-90-138(1) Payment arrangements, against PSE for stating this customer agreed with what PSE was offering, when Ms stated she did not agree to any such amount or payment arrangements. Ms stated she was contacted by PSE regarding the backbilled charges while she was out shopping, that she would first have had to confer with her husband

before agreeing to any amount or payment arrangement. While the company must offer payment arrangements, there is no arrangement unless the customer has agreed to it.

In PSE's e-mail response to staff on 6/19/09, PSE reported Ms agreed to both the backbilled amount and terms, as follows: "5. Was an installment plan provided? -Yes- Customer agreed to \$55.23 for 18 months."

WAC 480-90-138(1) Remedy and appeals, states, in part: (1) If a gas utility is delayed in billing a residential customer, the utility must offer payment arrangements that are equal to the length of time the bill was delayed, unless the utility determines that the customer used service prior to applying for service as outlined in WAC 480-90-128(2)(f), Disconnection of service.

NOTE: Please note that the commission's Consumer Protection and Communication Section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Again, I thank you.

*** 06/25/2009 03:42 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



PSE will argue the violation to WAC 480-90-138(1) Payment Arrangements per the following remarks dated 6/3/09.

"6/03/09 spoke with Amanda Jamison, discussed back billing and installment plan option. Amanda verbally accepted corrected billing and installment plan for 18 months @ \$ 55.23 per month. Letter, bill detail to be mailed out, waiting for statement."

Thank you,

*** 06/25/2009 04:11 PM Violation: 480-90-173(3)(a) -



VIOLATION: One (1) violation of WAC 480-90-173(3)(a) Gas utility's responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints, against PSE for failing to provide staff a complete initial response regarding this consumer's complaint.

In PSE's e-mail response to staff on 6/25/09, PSE provided staff this customer's communication record between PSE and this customer, as follows: "6/03/09 spoke with Amanda Jamison, discussed back billing and installment plan option. Amanda verbally accepted corrected billing and installment plan for 18 months @ \$ 55.23 per month. Letter, bill detail to be mailed out, waiting for statement."

WAC 480-90-173(3)(a) Gas utility's responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints. (3) When the commission refers an informal complaint to the utility, the utility must: (a) Investigate and report the results to the commission within two business days. The commission may grant an extension of time for responding to the complaint, if requested and warranted.

*** 06/25/2009 04:18 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'; 'Walker, Dee -Kirby'



Good afternoon Molly:

This is a customer contact record, which I initially requested when I opened and passed this customer's complaint to PSE on 6/16/09.

Why am I just now receiving this earlier requested information today?

Were there other communication records between this customer and PSE that I

have not been provided?

With this clarifying information I will remove the earlier recorded violation of WAC 480-90-138(1) Payment Arrangements.

Please provide this customer's account history beginning 11/01/08 to current. At a minimum, the information provided should consist of: records of all communications between the company and the customer; copies (if available) of all late or disconnection notices; as well as the account billing/payment history, all throughout the period of 11/01/08 to current. I look forward to your response.

However, staff had requested this very information from PSE in its initial passing of this customer's complaint on 6/16/09. Consequently, I have recorded a violation of the commission's rule in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-90-173(3)(a) Gas utility's responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints, against PSE, as follows:

One (1) violation of WAC 480-90-173(3)(a) Gas utility's responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints, against PSE for failing to provide staff a complete initial response regarding this consumer's complaint.

In PSE's e-mail response to staff on 6/25/09, PSE provided staff this customer's communication record between PSE and this customer, as follows: "6/03/09 spoke with Amanda Jamison, discussed back billing and installment plan option. Amanda verbally accepted corrected billing and installment plan for 18 months @ \$ 55.23 per month. Letter, bill detail to be mailed out, waiting for statement."

WAC 480-90-173(3)(a) Gas utility's responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints. (3) When the commission refers an informal complaint to the utility, the utility must: (a) Investigate and report the results to the commission within two business days. The commission may grant an extension of time for responding to the complaint, if requested and warranted.

Thank you.

*** 10/07/2009 04:38 PM Action: Anna Gill



Returned customer survey attached.

Washington UTC Complaint

107601

Company: Puget Sound Energy G703

Customer: Account# 315-556-500-9

Ana Ples

Contact:

4230 Crescent Avenue

Everett, WA 98203

Primary Phone: 425-252-5345 (call after 4)

Complaint: ~~107601~~

Serviced by: **Rachel Stark**

Opened on: 10/09/2009

Grouped by: Disputed Bill

Closed on: 11/02/2009

Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Ms. arrived home 9/25/09, and had no gas service. She called the company to inquire why. She was told her meter was not working correctly and they had to replace it so they had to shut off her gas. Ms. wants to know why the company did this without informing her and then she came home to no service and no note on her door. The company told her they left her a voicemail. Ms. told them she does not have voicemail nor does she have an answering machine so that is not a true statement. The company then sent her a letter on October 2, 2009, the letter was dated September 4, 2009. Ms. said she did not receive this Sept. 4, letter. She believes the company back-dated this letter to cover their tracks.

The company told her the meter was not working for the period Jan-Sept. 2009. She received a back bill for \$733.34. Ms. would like to know how the company came up with this amount because she believes she paid her bill she received each month.

Also, this is the second time the company has stated her meter was not working (Sept. 2008 she had to pay for 6 months of a non-working meter \$544.98).

Please provide account information for both non-working meters.

10/9/09 4:10 Complaint passed to Vera Fuchs and Dee Walker at PSE via e-mail

Response due October 13, 2009, by 5pm, PST

Results:

The company has a record they send the consumer a letter dated September 4, 2009, regarding her meter needing to be replaced and is unable to determine why the consumer did not have a copy. The company does not have a complete record of whether they left a voicemail or spoke with someone at her home. The customer's first non-working meter was estimated use and the second back bill is based on actual use. The company did not correctly bill this consumer for the periods of March to November 2008, and a second time for the periods January to September 2009. Ms. wanted to contact the company herself to set payment arrangements. Violations noted.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 10/14/2009 03:04 PM Phone: Rachel Stark << Consumer



Consumer called. I checked for a response and do not show a response. I told her I will double check and if I don't have one, I will contact the company again. I told her I would contact her tomorrow and let her know what I found out. I told her to call me if she wants on Friday if I don't call her tomorrow.

*** 10/15/2009 04:04 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Vera Fuchs and Dee Walker



Good afternoon Vera,

The attached complaint was forwarded to your company October 9, 2009, with a response date of October 13, 2009. I have not seen a response to this complaint.

I am recording 2 violations of WAC 480-90-173(3)(a) because I have not seen a response nor have I received a request for an extension to file a response. I will continue to record daily violations until I receive the response.

Thank you and please let me know if you have any questions.
Rachel

*** 10/15/2009 04:04 PM Violation: 480-90-173(3)(a) -



Puget Sound Energy was sent an initial complaint October 9, 2009, with a response date of October 13, 2009. UTC staff have not seen a response nor have staff received a request for an extension to file a response.

*** 10/15/2009 04:15 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Vera Fuchs



I am sorry, I am not sure where the response went, you will have it first thing AM.

Vera

*** 10/15/2009 04:17 PM Phone: Rachel Stark << Vera Fuchs



Vera called and said the person who receives the complaints was out of the office with the flu and she was sorry this complaint was missed. She said she expedited the response and requested an extension to file the response until October 16, 2009. I told her I would grant the extension.

*** 10/15/2009 04:26 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Vera Fuchs



Hi Vera,

I just wanted to confirm, per our phone conversation, I am granting your request for an extension to file the response to this complaint until October 16, 2009.

Have a good night.
Rachel

*** 10/16/2009 06:04 AM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Good Morning Rachel,

In response to the customers concerns regarding notification of the meter change, included is a copy of the letter that was sent. The letter was created on and sent 9/04/09. The letter was not changed in any way. It's unfortunate that it took until 10/02/09 for the customer to receive it, we are sorry but delivery is beyond our control, it was provided in a timely manner. In addition the agent did try to call. The agent called (425)252-5345

at approximately 4:25pm on 9/4/09 and left a message. The customer states that they do not have a machine or voicemail, we asked the agent and they were unable to remember if it was left on a machine or with a person who answered the phone. There are notes indicating another agent also left a message when calling (425)252-5345. Perhaps we have an incorrect phone number for the customer but it does appear to be the same one she gave to the commission.

1. What was the reason for the back-bill? (meter-mix, stopped meter, lost meter, module malfunction, stopped module)
1st Back Bill- Stopped meter from broken pins
2nd Back Bill- Slowed then stopped module

2. Dates for the back-bill
1st Back Bill- 2/27/08 to 10/27/08
2nd Back Bill- 1/26/09 to 9/28/09

3. Was this actual or estimated usage?
1st Back Bill- This was estimated. The correction was estimated based on PSE's gas tariff, Rule No. 8, section 7(c) that states "the use of gas in a similar period of like use under similar conditions when the meter was registering accurately.

2nd Back Bill- This is actual usage.

3.5 Were any adjustments provided?
1st Back Bill- Yes, 30% for a total of \$64.45 due to the fact the customer was gone from the house for 2 months.
2nd Back Bill- No adjustment available as this is actual usage.

4. Was an installment plan provided?
1st Back Bill- Yes, the customer contacted us and we set up an installment plan per their request for \$26.98 a month for 8 months.

2nd Back Bill- No installment plan yet as the customer has not agreed to one.

5. Copy of both bill details, both worksheets, meter change letter for second back bill and statements attached

SEE ATTACHED COPY OF ACCOUNT INFORMATION

*** 10/16/2009 09:09 AM Email: Rachel Stark >> Vera Fuchs



Thank you Vera,

I also need to know the dates the meters were not working.

Response due October 21, 2009, by 5pm PST

Thank you.

Rachel

*** 10/16/2009 11:36 AM Email: Stark, Rachel (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



We are able to see a drop in usage over previous years for both the rebills starting with the cycles we rebilled, an exact date is not available, the rebill cycle is the first that presented zero usage.

1st Back Bill- 2/27/08 to 10/27/08
2nd Back Bill-1/26/09 to 9/28/09

*** 10/26/2009 12:17 PM Voice Mail: Rachel Stark << Consumer



Consumer left voicemail to return call.

*** 11/02/2009 03:07 PM Phone: Rachel Stark >> Consumer



Spoke with consumer.

I asked her the spelling of her name: Fix consumer's spelling - her name is "Ana" not "Anna".

I discussed with her the company stating they sent her the letter dated September 4, 2009, and they do not know why she received the letter October 2, 2009. I let her know the company does not have a complete record of whether they left a voicemail or spoke with someone at her home. She says she is the only one home and does not have a machine. I let her know the company told me her first non-working meter was estimated use because it completely stopped working and the second back bill is based on actual use because the meter stopped sending the usage information to the company however, continued to record what she was using. I let her know I would record violations against the company for not billing her correctly for both non-working meters. She said she would call the company to set payment arrangements but she was not happy. I told her I could do it, but she said she would do it. I explained to her the importance of reading her bill thoroughly because the usage will show each month. She felt she does. I told her I am closing her complaint and will let the company know she will contact them for payment arrangements.

*** 11/02/2009 04:40 PM Email: Rachel Stark >> Molly Brown



Good afternoon Molly,

I spoke with this consumer and let her know the company shows actual use for the second non-working meter. I asked her if she wanted me to set up payment arrangements and she stated she would contact the company herself to set them up. She stated she is not happy about doing this a second time.

I also asked her the spelling of her name; please fix the spelling of her name in the system her name is "Ana" not "Anna".

I recording 18 violations of WAC 480-90-178(1)(e) because this customer's bills did not show the correct current and previous meter reads, nor did the bill show the total amount of kilowatt hours used for the periods of March to November 2008 and then again January to September 2009.

I am also recording 18 violations of WAC 480-90-178(1)(f) because this customer's bills did not show the correct amount of kilowatt hours used for each billing rate, the applicable billing rates per kilowatt hour for the periods of March to November 2008 and then again January to September 2009.

I have completed my investigation and this complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection Section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Rachel

*** 11/02/2009 04:40 PM Violation: 480-90-178(1)(e) -



18 violations. This customer's bills did not show the correct current and previous meter reads, nor did the bill show the total amount of kilowatt hours used for the periods of March to November 2008 and then again January to September 2009.

*** 11/02/2009 04:41 PM Violation: 480-90-178(1)(f) -



18 violations. This customer's bills did not show the correct amount of kilowatt hours used for each billing rate, the applicable billing rates per kilowatt hour for the periods of March to November 2008 and then again January to September 2009.

Washington UTC Complaint

107620

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 855-300-796-7

Sheila Jellison

Contact:

3220 Orleans St., #A101

Bellingham, WA 98226

Primary Phone: (360) 671-7226

Complaint: 107620

Serviced by: Nancy Paulson

Opened on: 10/13/2009

Grouped by: Disconnect

Closed on: 10/20/2009

Disposition: Company upheld

Description:



About the end of September the customer claimed medical due to her daughter's medical issues. Customer paid the \$55 that was required within five business days but the doctor will not fax the certificate back. This is not her regular physician but a substitute as the regular doctor is out of town. A PSE rep told her today that she needs to pay \$125 plus the current \$80 bill to avoid disconnect. Customer did not know the disconnect date. She can schedule an appointment with the Opportunity Council the first week of November. Customer said she can get a note from her personal doctor for herself but PSE said it must be for the daughter. Please clarify.

Please send billing/payment/notice history.

Passed to company as URGENT 10/13/09. Response due 10/15/09 by 5 p.m.

Results:

PSE set up payment arrangements on past due amount per medical waiver although the medical certificate was not received. Customer is not in jeopardy of disconnect at this time.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 10/13/2009 04:31 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Vera Fuchs/PSE



Good Afternoon: Passing new complaint. See details below. Thank you. (sent complaint description).

*** 10/15/2009 01:54 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



SEE ATTACHMENT BELOW.

We are confused by the request, there is a time payment arrangement in place even with the failed medical. Total amount of time payment arrangement is \$557.98 established October 5. Next payment to arrangement is for \$125.55 due November 5. Current charges of \$122.15 due November 2nd. The medical failed due to no doctor letter. We are sorry but this is the second failed medical in 120 days, first one was July 24 for the same reason no doctor letter. There no amount currently in jeopardy of disconnect.

Thanks Vera

*** 10/19/2009 11:42 AM Phone: Nancy Paulson << customer



Customer called for update. I explained that there is no disconnect pending at this time. The current medical request was her second request within 120 days, the last one in July 2009. She said neither doctor would write one as he/she was not the regular physician. I said that it still counted as a medical request and the company made payment arrangements based on the medical claim and allowed her to pay 10 percent within five business days to stop the disconnect. I explained that the current bill \$122.15 is due 11/2/09 and the first arrangement on past due, \$125.55, is due 11/5/09. I went over again the provisions of the medical waiver. Although the company did not receive the medical certificate, it did set up payment arrangements. She said she does not have the money. She committed to me to pay \$50 on 11/3/09 when her check arrives. She will have an appointment with the Opportunity Council by the second week in November. She said they only take phone calls for appointments on Saturdays. Her daughter was in the hospital Saturday 10,17/09 for an emergency.

*** 10/19/2009 02:03 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> Opportunity Council



Called to verify if Saturday only phone calls for appointments. Yes, unless it is for Head Start, E-Cap. All others must call Saturdays only starting 11/7/09, between 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., for an appointment.

*** 10/19/2009 03:05 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Vera Fuchs



Thank you Vera. I was not aware that payment arrangements were made per the medical request even though there was no medical certificate. I just spoke with the customer and she is waiting for an energy assistance appointment from the Opportunity Council. The council is not making appointments until Saturday, 11/7, by phone. I verified that information. Customer committed to a \$50 payment on 11/3, payday. She will call for an energy assistance appointment on 11/7. Her fear was that she believed she was scheduled for imminent disconnect. Since her current bill is not due until 11/2 and the arrangement amount isn't due until 11/5, she won't be disconnected prior to calling energy assistance on 11/7. Hopefully she will get an appointment right away. If she is disconnected after a notice goes out, what is the deposit amount if she went prior? Please send calculation figures. I don't think there is anything else we can do for her at this time. Suggestions?

*** 10/20/2009 09:05 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



SEE ATTACHMENT BELOW.

\$2,066.63 divided by 12 X 2 equals \$344.00 deposit. If she makes the \$50 payment she agreed to things should be ok for her. No disconnect will happen unless the time payment arrangement defaults or on going bills remain unpaid. Thanks Vera

*** 10/20/2009 10:50 AM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Explained to customer that PSE will expect \$50 payment by 11/3. However, it will not hold disconnect proceedings until she gets an assistance appointment. What will happen is when she misses the payment arrangement due 11/5, a notice may be generated. However, there will be no immediate disconnect as it is a weekend. On 11/7, Saturday, when she gets an energy appointment, she needs to call PSE and let them know the appointment date. Call me as well if she likes. Let her know again that at this time, a medical certificate is a moot point since she has claimed medical twice in the past 120 days and no medical certificate was received either time. She said if she gets a disconnect notice, that is ok as she can get an immediate appointment with energy assistance. This is all I can do at this time and I am closing the complaint.

*** 10/20/2009 11:31 AM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Vera Fuchs



Thank you Vera. This complaint is now closed. Please note that the UTC Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 10/20/2009 03:54 PM Action: Diana Otto



Quality review done. Feedback provided.

*** 10/20/2009 05:30 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Vera Fuchs



Good Afternoon Vera: Due to a quality review, I have reopened this complaint. 1. On the deposit calculation, I need the past 12 months that the deposit was calculated on. What month's figures was \$2066.63 based on? 2. Are notices mailed from Washington or out-of-state? Does mailing state vary depending on urgent or final notice? I will probably have more questions tomorrow. Thanks!

*** 10/21/2009 07:58 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



SEE ATTACHMENT BELOW.

Hi Nancy, The attached period usage provided yesterday morning indicates the months used to figure deposit.

I am concerned the attachment not come through? I have had a few issues with email the last few days. Sorry

All mailing is done from Washington State.

Ready for any other question, have a good day!

*** 10/21/2009 08:32 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Hi Vera: Thank you. My error, again, the attachment was there yesterday. My apologies.

*** 10/21/2009 08:37 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



So have I, my email has done some funky stuff! Of course it can't have been operator error.....thanks for all you patience while I filled in for Molly. She should be back in the next few days.

*** 11/05/2009 12:49 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> molly.brown



Hi Molly: This complaint was chosen for a quality review. 1. The due dates were missing in the initial response. I received them later in the usage history that the deposit calculation was based on but they should have been included in the initial response. I will be recording a violation for incomplete response.2. Vera said that the current (at that time) bill due 11/2/09 was \$122.15. Usage history shows current charges \$117.42. Please clarify. Thank you.

*** 11/05/2009 03:41 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Late fees of \$4.73 + usage = \$122.15

*** 11/09/2009 11:30 AM Phone: Nancy Paulson << customer



Customer called to say she did not make the \$50 payment in October. The Opportunity Council is not taking appointments until December. Customer is ill and will try to go into PSE office Thursday or Friday of this week to pay the \$50. She did not know if she had a disconnect notice or not. I said I will find out and call her back today or tomorrow.

*** 11/09/2009 11:50 AM Email: Nancy Paulson >> molly.brown



Hi Molly: Update: The customer just called and said she did not make the \$50 payment on 11/3/09 that she committed to. She called the Opportunity Council and they are not taking appointments until December. Customer said she is now ill and will make the \$50 this Thursday or Friday. She said she has not received a disconnect notice. What do your records show? Thank you.

*** 11/09/2009 11:56 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



May I have an address or account number please?

Thank you,

Molly

*** 11/09/2009 12:11 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



855-300-796-7.

*** 11/09/2009 12:28 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



There is no delinquent notice mailed since the payment arrangements have not gone delinquent yet. Once they go delinquent, an Urgent Notice will be mailed. Molly

*** 11/13/2009 12:57 PM Phone: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> customer



Customer called and said she was still sick and would not be able to make the payment today. I suggested that customer find someone to make the payment for her at a payment station. Customer said she could work on that. I advised the customer that I would let the company know however, I could not say if it would be acceptable. Advised customer that Nancy will be in on Monday.

*** 11/13/2009 01:01 PM Email: Gail Griffin-Wallace >> pse



Molly,

Nancy is out of the office today. This customer called to say she was still very sick and was unable to make the payment due today. Customer said that she would definitely make the payment on Monday. I told the customer I would give that information to PSE however, I was not working her complaint.

*** 11/13/2009 04:07 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Payment of \$125.55 (time payment arrangement) was actually due November 5th. Current charges due November 2 were \$122.15 which also remain unpaid, giving us a total due of \$237.70. Time payment arrangement has defaulted. We received a payment of \$50.00 November 13.

*** 11/18/2009 01:57 PM Violation: 480-100-173(3)(a) -



Investigate and report the results to the commission within two business days.

Incomplete response violation for lack of due dates on account history that was received on 10/15/09.

Correct dates received on 10/20/09.

*** 11/18/2009 02:26 PM Voice Mail: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Left a detailed message. Although she made a \$50 payment on 11/13, her current bill, \$122.15, due 11/2, and the arrangement of \$125.55, due 11/5 have defaulted. PSE will send disconnect notices. Has she gotten an energy assistance appointment yet? If not, it may be easier to get an appointment with a disconnect notice in hand. Please let me know.

*** 11/18/2009 02:39 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> molly.brown



Hi Molly: I left a voice mail for the customer letting her know that the \$50 payment wasn't enough to keep the arrangements and current bill from defaulting. I asked her to advise me if she has an energy assistance appointment with the Opportunity Council. Upon review, I am recording one violation of WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) for incomplete response. There were no due dates on the account history I received on 10/15/09. Due dates were included on the account history received on 10/20/09. This complaint is still under review and I will advise you when it can reclose. Thanks!

*** 11/24/2009 01:25 PM Voice Mail: Nancy Paulson << customer



Paid \$50. Overlooked the information for other payments/arrangements I went over with her.

*** 11/24/2009 03:06 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Returned her call. Although she paid \$50, it was not enough to hold disconnect. She had a current bill, \$122.15, due 11/2 and a payment arrangement due 11/5, \$125.55. Does she have an energy assistance appointment yet with the Opportunity Council? No, They only take calls on Saturday and she will call 12/5. She doesn't think she has a notice, just a phone call from PSE yesterday, 11/23. She is afraid she will be disconnected before Thanksgiving. Hold on the line and I will call PSE.

Called Molly at PSE. No disconnects will be done today or tomorrow. No disconnects for anyone until Monday. Customer received one dialer call yesterday, no written notice yet.

Told customer this information. Told her that when she receives a disconnect notice or is disconnected, take that information to the Opportunity Council. There is nothing else I can do for her.

*** 12/03/2009 04:05 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson << customer



Customer says she cannot get an appointment with the Opportunity Council until the end of December. I told her there is nothing else I can do, that without payment, the company can disconnect with proper notice. She doesn't know if she got a notice yet, other than the dialer call. I suggested she call PSE. She said she did and has trouble getting through. She says it is too cold to disconnect. I stated again that without payment, PSE may do so. I said once she has a notice and/or is disconnected, an energy assistance agency will usually give an emergency appointment. I will find out if a written notice is mailed and call her back today.

*** 12/03/2009 04:13 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown

Disconnect note was mailed 11/24/09, disconnect date 12/5, \$574.13. An order will be written on 12/5 and disconnect will take place within ten business days. Customer cannot get an appointment at the Opportunity Council yet. Molly said once she has a confirmed appointment, PSE will hold disconnect as long as appointment is within 30 days. Molly also thinks that having a notice or a disconnect makes a customer eligible for an emergency appointment.

*** 12/08/2009 11:08 AM Phone: Rachel Stark << Consumer



Consumer called stating she spoke with the company and they told her to send the medical form to their office by December 15, 2009, with a payment of \$76.99. She spoke with a Melissa in the resolution center. Melissa told her to send in the ambulance report from the paramedics.

*** 12/14/2009 09:00 AM Phone: Roger Kouchi << consumer



Wanted to confirm that PSE received the doctor's certificate. I agreed to check but asked her to leave a message for Nancy to follow up.

*** 12/14/2009 09:02 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown



Molly - The complaint remains closed (... unless Nancy reopens it). However, the consumer wanted confirmation that PSE has received the doctor's certificate. Her doctor fax'd the emergency medical certificate to 425-424-6722 (Melissa). Please respond to Nancy Paulson. Thank you.

*** 12/14/2009 09:02 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Roger Kouchi/WUTC@WUTC



Molly - The complaint remains closed (... unless Nancy reopens it). However, the consumer wanted confirmation that PSE has received the doctor's certificate. Her doctor fax'd the emergency medical certificate to 425-424-6722 (Melissa). Please respond to Nancy Paulson. Thank you.

*** 12/14/2009 12:07 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly



FYI...

-----Original Message-----

From: Southard, Melissa

Sent: Monday, December 14, 2009 11:04 AM

To: Brown, Molly

Hi Molly, I got it this morning. Account is already noted.

*** 12/18/2009 11:53 AM Phone: Nancy Paulson << customer



Customer called and said she paid \$76.99 at the PSE office on 12/17/09. She was to pay earlier but could not get out due to ice. This morning, 12/18, she received an automated call that she would be disconnected in three days. Customer made payment arrangements on past due per medical waiver provision plus current bill. She has no money and is trying to get an appointment with the Opportunity Council. They are not even taking calls for appointments until the end of December. Customer spoke with a rep there and was told that she must be disconnected before they will assist. She is ill and cannot be disconnected.

*** 12/18/2009 12:03 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> molly.brown



Hi Molly: Customer called and said she paid \$76.99 at the PSE office on 12/17/09. She was to pay earlier but could not get out due to ice. This morning, 12/18, she received an automated call that she would be disconnected in three days. Customer made payment arrangements on past due per medical waiver provision plus current bill. She has no money and is trying to get an appointment with the Opportunity Council. They are not even taking calls for appointments until the end of December. Customer spoke with a rep there and was told that she must be disconnected before they will assist. She is ill and cannot be disconnected. Why did she get a dialer call? Has the payment made yesterday not posted? I did not reopen this. She continues to call me. Please clarify what arrangements she made with PSE. Thank you.

*** 12/18/2009 03:53 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Nancy: Because credit suspension came off on 12/15/09 which was the 5th day and the due date for payment, the medical emergency arrangements defaulted due to no payment. Because there were no arrangements on the account on 12/17/09, her payment was applied to the oldest collectibles leaving a past due amount which prompted the dialer call.

I have asked that the medical emergency arrangements be reset. Please advise Sheila that if these arrangements are not kept, she will not be eligible for new arrangements or another medical emergency.

We will not be disconnecting on Monday. She needs to continue to call for an energy assistance appointment.

Molly

*** 12/18/2009 05:20 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Spoke with customer to let her know that medical waiver is in place. She can ignore the dialer call she received for a three day disconnect. She will not be disconnected at this time.

*** 12/22/2009 02:22 PM Voice Mail: Nancy Paulson << customer



Customer has energy assistance appointment. Please call for details.

*** 12/23/2009 04:09 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Returned call. Customer has 2/25/10 appointment with the Opportunity Council. They said that is one of the first appointments they are giving out. Customer will not be able to keep her payment arrangements per medical that begin in January 2010.. Can we work out an alternate arrangement with PSE? I will contact them today and ask and notify of appointment.

*** 12/23/2009 04:12 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> molly.brown



Hi Molly: The customer has an appointment with the Opportunity Council on 2/25/10. Apparently that is the soonest they are making appointments. Customer is on a medical and knows she will not be able to keep the arrangements that start in January. She cannot remember how much and due dates. Will you send me that information please? This is not reopened. Thank you.

*** 12/28/2009 08:46 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Nancy:

The payment arrangements include:

\$173.24 due 1/7/2010

\$173.24 due 2/6/2010

\$173.24 due 3/8/2010

\$173.23 due 4/7/2010

*** 01/04/2010 04:00 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Customer cannot keep payment arrangements for January 7 and February 7. She is confident the Opportunity Council will pay her bill but the appointment is not until February 25. She said she may be able to pay \$100 by January 7. Is that certain? No. She said PSE has the doctor's note that she needs power. I explained several times that the doctor's note is one part of the medical waiver; the other part is keeping the payment arrangements. Her first medical waiver defaulted and I cannot force PSE to accept an alternate arrangement or not to disconnect if the arrangement is not kept. PSE has already stated it will not accept further arrangements if these are not kept. I will find out the deposit required if she is disconnected. She said she cannot pay a deposit. I then mentioned that how is she going to pay \$100 then? She may need to get that to put toward a deposit. I will call her.

*** 01/04/2010 04:38 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Vera Fuchs



Good Afternoon Vera: I reopened this complaint and Molly was assisting. Would you please recalculate the deposit required if she is disconnected. Customer cannot keep payment arrangements for January 7 and February 7. She is confident the Opportunity Council will pay her bill but the appointment is not until February 25. She said she may be able to pay \$100 by January 7. She said PSE has the doctor's note that she needs power. I explained several times that the doctor's note is one part of the medical waiver; the other part is keeping the payment arrangements. I don't know what more we can do for her especially when she cannot commit to payment arrangements. Thank you for deposit information.

*** 01/05/2010 08:14 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



SEE ATTACHMENT BELOW.

\$2,037.42 divided by 12 X 2 = \$339 deposit

Thanks Vera

*** 01/07/2010 03:00 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson << customer



Customer called and I explained how much deposit she would need to pay if disconnected. She went over again how she cannot get an appointment before 2/25/10 with the OAC and will not be able to keep her payment arrangements. I explained that if she breaks the arrangements, PSE has the right to disconnect.

*** 01/25/2010 09:00 AM Phone: Nancy Paulson << customer



Customer said she made the 1/7/2010 payment arrangement but has no money for the remainder of the arrangements, next one due 2/7/2010. She wondered if she should call the OAC again. I urged her to do so and see if she can get an appointment sooner than 2/25/10. She keeps asking if PSE will stop the disconnect as she has no money. She says she is getting evicted and what can she do? I went over the PSE issues with her and I cannot assist her further.

*** 02/08/2010 02:00 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson << customer



Customer received disconnect notice for today, \$250+. She has no money. Had to pay her rent to avoid being evicted. Will company accept \$100 tomorrow? Should she call the Opportunity Council? I said that she had payment arrangements set up due to the medical waiver. Although she paid arrangement due 1/6/10, there was another due 2/7/10 plus current bills. There is no more I can do although I will certainly ask PSE. I told her that I advised her all along to contact the Opportunity Council since she has a disconnect notice. I urged her to call them as soon as she and I got off the phone. She said she would. I will call her as soon as I hear back from PSE. Went over the deposit amount she would need to pay for reconnect. Deposit request is \$339 so she would need to pay one-half up front, \$169.50, plus \$37 reconnect fee. Total \$206.50.

*** 02/08/2010 02:32 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Vera Fuchs



Good Afternoon: The customer called today and said she has disconnect notice for today. She defaulted on the medical payment arrangement due 2/6/10. She says she thinks she can pay \$100 tomorrow, 2/9/10. She is checking with Opportunity Council today for an appointment sooner than the one she has for 2/25/10. What amount is on the notice? Will you hold disconnect with promise to pay \$100? Thank you.

*** 02/08/2010 04:26 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Her disconnect is for \$256.54 charges with a due date of January 4. Disconnect is not the time payment for the medical. We are unable to hold for a payment of \$100.00. Time payment due \$170.80 plus past due charges \$256.54 equals \$427.34. Thanks Vera

*** 02/08/2010 05:20 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Called customer to let her know that \$100 will not stop disconnect. Customer is not under disconnect threat for default on medical payment arrangements. The disconnect is for nonpayment of past due monthly bills. Disconnect is for 256.54 bill due January 4, 2010. I told her that she should consider getting disconnected, then the Opportunity Council will help her. Sometimes this is the best thing when a customer owes so much money. She thanked me.

*** 02/25/2010 09:40 AM Action: Nancy Paulson



Per quality review. Are bills and notices mailed from Texas or Washington? Check with Vera, then do compliance check to ensure proper billing/notice time.

*** 03/10/2010 09:43 AM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> Vera Fuchs



Bills are printed in Texas and nightly sent by plane for mailing here. PSE adheres to the out of state rule.

*** 07/14/2010 03:34 PM Action: Sharon Wallace



Reviewed Quality Review document and needed changes for Suzanne Stillwell. Requested that Diana Otto check the QR button.

Washington UTC Complaint

107625

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 686-593-902-6

Robert Garcia

Contact:

3633 7th Ave SW, #18

Olympia, WA 98502

Primary Phone: (360) 704-8551

Complaint: 107625

Serviced by: **Nancy Paulson**

Opened on: 10/14/2009

Grouped by: Disconnect

Closed on: 10/19/2009

Disposition: Company upheld with arrangements

Description:



Customer has disconnect notice for Thursday, 10/15, \$152 due. Saint Vincent de Paul pledged \$70 but PSE told him it needs the remaining \$82 by tomorrow. Customer has an appointment with Sacred Heart Church in Lacey between 1-3 p.m. on Friday, 10/16, for the remainder. He requests that disconnect be held pending the results of that appointment.

Please send billing/payment/notice history.

Passed to company as URGENT 10/14/09. Response due 10/16/09.

Results:

PSE held the disconnect pending assistance appointment.

VIOLATION RECORDED.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 10/14/2009 02:02 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Vera Fuchs/PSE



Good Afternoon Vera: Passing new complaint. See details below. Thank you. (sent complaint description).

*** 10/19/2009 03:32 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



SEE ATTACHMENT BELOW.

In a review of the ones that remain open this customer has received two pledges in total for \$150 and now only owes \$31.28. There is no disconnect concern.

Account was held pending the appointment...can we close?

Thanks Vera

*** 10/19/2009 05:05 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Let customer know that pledges totalling \$150 were called in. Balance due is \$31.28, current bill due 10/20. He can pay that about November 1. He thanked me for my help. Closing the complaint.

*** 10/19/2009 05:25 PM Violation: 480-100-173(3)(a) -



Investigate and report the results to the commission within two business days. Complaint sent to company

10/14/09. Response due 10/16/09. No response until 10/19/09.

The company was notified of the violation.

***** 10/19/2009 05:32 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Vera Fuchs**



Thank you Vera. The customer said he can pay the remaining amount due on the first of the month. I am recording one violation of WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) for late response. The company was passed to the company on 10/14/09 and response was due 10/16/09. Response received 10/19/09. This complaint is now closed. Please note that the UTC Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Washington UTC Complaint

107626

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 001-451-012-7

Christopher Forberg
Contact: Jamie
43 A Ridgewood Lane
Olympia, WA 98502

Primary Phone: (360) 350-8346

Complaint: 107626

Serviced by: Dennis Shutler

Opened on: 10/14/2009

Grouped by: Disconnect

Closed on: 10/20/2009

Disposition: Company upheld with arrangements

Description:



Ms called and stated she came home today to find her electricity has been shut off by Puget Sound Energy (PSE). Ms stated she is divorcing her husband, and she also just started working for the Department of Corrections and will now be able to get caught up on her debts. Ms also stated she has an appointment today with the St Vincent DePaul who has promised to apply \$75 to her account. Ms states she never received any notice from PSE that notified her that her electricity was subject to being shut off. Ms stated she called PSE and asked for a little time to get caught up but PSE refused to work with her.

Ms has committed to pay PSE \$100 on Friday 10/16/09 before 5 p.m., and then pay PSE another \$300 on Friday 10/30/09 before 5 p.m. Ms stated she is simply asking PSE to please reconnect her electricity and work with her as she gets back onto her feet getting on top of her debt.

-URGENT- Passing a new complaint. -URGENT-

In accordance with the commission's response rule in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-173(3)(a), PSE's response is due not later than 5 p.m. PT on 10/16/09.

Please provide this customer's account history. At a minimum, the information provided should consist of: records of all communications between the company and the customer; copies (if available) of all late or disconnection notices; as well as the account billing/payment history, all throughout the period of 7/01/09 to current.

Complaint passed to PSE, via e-mail on 10/14/09, at 2:17 p.m.

Results:

Ms' electrical service was restored on Friday, 10/16/09 at 4:30 PM. PSE agreed to Ms' payment arrangements and Ms will pay \$75.20 on 11/19/09 and \$75.20 on 12/19/09 in additional to her normal monthly charges.

---VIOLATIONS NOTED---

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 10/14/2009 02:17 PM Email: Dennis Shutler >> Vera Fuchs



-URGENT- Passing a new complaint. -URGENT-

*** 10/14/2009 03:02 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L

Disconnect amount is \$391.10. We would be glad to reconnect based on prior obligation, I have provided a usage history for the deposit calculation to determine prior obligation. 12 months = \$1,874.98 divided by 12 X 2 = \$312 deposit plus \$37 reconnection fee.

We have not received a pledge from St Vincent at this time.

Four failed agreed to time payment arrangements since January 2009:
February 2, April 1, April 27 and August 3.

I will provide the billing/account history by tomorrow. Thank you.....

SEE ATTACHED CUSTOMER ACCOUNT HISTORY PROVIDED BY PSE:

*** 10/14/2009 03:30 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



You are aware of Ms' abilities, so I ask what type of arrangements is PSE willing to entertain?
Thank you.

*** 10/14/2009 04:00 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Half deposit \$156 plus reconnect \$37 total \$193. If she can have St Vincent call us with \$75 pledge we would be able to use that toward prior amount and reduce her part to \$118.

I will provide the notices/credit/billing history first thing tomorrow.

*** 10/14/2009 04:20 PM Phone: Dennis Shutler >> customer



I called Ms and told her that PSE is requiring she pay half a deposit of \$156 plus a reconnect fee of \$37 for a total of \$193.
I told Ms that PSE reported if she can have St Vincent call PSE with the \$75 pledge PSE would be able to use that toward prior amount and reduce her part to \$118.
Ms stated she hadn't yet received the pledge but she was going on Friday and she would call me to let me know what she is able to obtain.

*** 10/16/2009 03:05 PM Phone: Dennis Shutler << customer



Ms called me stating she was unable to obtain the amount PSE is requiring to reconnect her electrical service but she will continue to try all means available to her.

*** 10/19/2009 07:59 AM Voice Mail: Dennis Shutler >> customer



I called Ms and again left her a voice message stating that PSE is requiring she pay half a deposit of \$156 plus a reconnect fee of \$37 for a total of \$193. I noted too how she would then need to pay the remaining half of the deposit within the ensuing 30 days.
I noted how she had called me on Friday and stated she was unable to obtain the amount PSE is requiring to reconnect her electrical service.
I told Ms she was aware of what she needed to do to reinstate her electrical service and that she should retain and refer to my voice message for what she needed to do.
I told Ms I was closing her complaint but she should feel free to call me in

the future should she experience further issues.

*** 10/19/2009 08:13 AM Violation: 480-100-173(3)(a) -



VIOLATION: One (1) violation of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-173(3)(a) Electric utility responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints, against Puget Sound Energy (PSE) for failing to provide staff its complete initial response to this consumer's complaint in a timely manner.

Commission staff requested but PSE has failed to provide: "this customer's account history. At a minimum, the information provided should consist of: records of all communications between the company and the customer; copies (if available) of all late or disconnection notices; as well as the account billing/payment history, all throughout the period of 7/01/09 to current."

*** 10/19/2009 08:25 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Ms Vera Fuchs, Puget Sound Energy (PSE):

Commission staff requested but PSE has failed to provide: "this customer's account history. At a minimum, the information provided should consist of: records of all communications between the company and the customer; copies (if available) of all late or disconnection notices; as well as the account billing/payment history, all throughout the period of 7/01/09 to current."

Consequently, I have recorded a violation of the commission's rule in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-173(3)(a) Electric utility responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints, against PSE, as follows:

Ø One (1) violation of WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) Electric utility responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints, against PSE for failing to provide staff its complete initial response to this consumer's complaint in a timely manner.

WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) Electric utility responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints. (3) When the commission refers an informal complaint to the utility, the utility must: (a) Investigate and report the results to the commission within two business days. The commission may grant an extension of time for responding to the complaint, if requested and warranted.

I look forward to receiving the requested documentation.
Thank you.

*** 10/19/2009 08:53 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L'



We provided the information and I have no additional requests for information?

*** 10/19/2009 09:05 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



I've attached a copy of the customer's account history Molly provides so we can follow the customer's payment history.

This is the information we need to tie together with the other usage data and billing information PSE provides.

This shows payment history and other account data.

*** 10/19/2009 02:53 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Customer has claimed and processed prior obligation.

Amount to prior in an installment is \$220.25

Deposit total is \$312 per our previous discussion and previously provided period usage.

Balance for reconnect was received by his payment of \$100 and pledges equaling \$95

SEE ATTACHED CUSTOMER ACCOUNT HISTORY PROVIDED BY PSE:

*** 10/19/2009 05:00 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Has Ms' service been reconnected, and has PSE agreed to Ms' remaining commitment to pay PSE another \$300 on Friday 10/30/09 before 5 p.m.?

Or is this the amount that went prior obligation?

Thank you.

*** 10/20/2009 06:44 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



It is the amount to prior which is \$220.25. You will see on the spreadsheet provided yesterday that there was a deposit plus interest that applied which covered \$144 of the outstanding charges. Balance remaining is \$150.40 which is set in a payment arrangement for 1/2 next cycle the balance the following cycle. It is the remaining unpaid deposit.

*** 10/20/2009 07:30 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



You have failed to completely answer my question.

Again, has this customer's service been restored?

And if so, on what date and what time?

So this customer will pay \$75.20, in addition to their normal monthly charges, over the next two billing periods in order to bring their account current?

Thank you.

*** 10/20/2009 07:34 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Yes service was restored on October 16th at 4:30 PM

Yes - \$75.20 due November 19 and \$75.20 due December 19 both in additional to normal monthly charges.

*** 10/20/2009 04:50 PM Voice Mail: Dennis Shutler >> customer



I called Ms and left her a voice message stating PSE advised me that her electrical service had been restored on Friday, 10/16/09 at 4:30 PM.

I told Ms that PSE reported it had agreed to her payment arrangements and she would pay \$75.20 on 11/19/09 and \$75.20 on 12/19/09 in additional to her normal monthly charges.

I told Ms I was closing her complaint and she should feel free to call me in the future should she experience further issues.

*** 10/20/2009 04:55 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Thank you for your time and efforts in working to resolve this customer's complaint issue.

I called Ms and left her a voice message stating PSE advised me that her

electrical service had been restored on Friday, 10/16/09 at 4:30 PM.
I told Ms that PSE reported it had agreed to her payment arrangements and she would need to pay \$75.20 on 11/19/09 and \$75.20 on 12/19/09 in addition to her normal monthly charges.

I told Ms I was closing her complaint and you too may now consider this customer's complaint closed as well.

NOTE: Please note that the commission's Consumer Protection and Communication Section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Again, I thank you.

*** 01/21/2010 01:25 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



In reviewing this complaint, I see it does not show the disconnect information? Please revise the statement to include the disconnect information and the amount the customer was disconnected for.

And I wanted to verify that it was \$220.25 that went prior obligation?

Thank you.

*** 01/21/2010 03:24 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Attached is revised statement activity with the disconnected date of 10/16/09 for \$391.10.

Prior obligation calculation =

\$459.25 amount billed up through disconnect date.

- \$143 deposit

- \$ 1.00 deposit interest

- \$ 25.00 pledge

- \$70.00 pledge

= \$220.25

SEE ATTACHED REVISED STATEMENT PROVIDED BY PSE:

*** 01/21/2010 03:25 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Whoops, forgot spreadsheet.

SEE ATTACHED SPREADSHEET PROVIDED BY PSE:

*** 01/22/2010 04:33 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



One more revision.

Prior obligation is \$315.25

\$459.25 amount billed up through disconnect date.

- \$143 deposit

- \$ 1.00 deposit interest

The pledges I noted below were reapplied to his current product.

*** 01/25/2010 08:18 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Thank you very much for the update.

Question, why were the pledges reapplied, what prompted this?

Thank you.

*** 01/25/2010 08:35 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



At first CLX applied to the prior amount. PSE reapplied so they went to current product assignment.

*** 01/25/2010 09:22 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Okay, thanks.

On what date were these reapplied?

Thank you.

*** 01/25/2010 01:48 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



10/26/09 and 11/5/09.

They posted to the account on these days and applied to the deposit correctly. I don't know why I included them at first as part of the prior amount. Staff sent me quite a few follow-ups on Friday and I obviously provided the wrong information with my first email. I am sorry.

Molly

*** 01/27/2010 07:13 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Thank you for this information.

Please provide statement activity from the time of disconnect through 11/30/09, that reflects receipt and application of the pledges.

Thank you.

*** 01/28/2010 04:15 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



SEE ATTACHED-CUSTOMER ACCOUNT HISTORY PROVIDED BY PSE:

*** 02/10/2010 09:35 AM Violation: 480-100-123(3) -



VIOLATION: One (1) violation of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-123(3) Refusal of service, against Puget Sound Energy (PSE) for initially misapplying a customer's pledge to the customer's prior obligation, rather than correctly applying the pledge to the customer's current charges.

In PSE's e-mail response to staff on 1/21/10, PSE verified it applied this customer's pledges to the prior obligation amount, stating: "Attached is revised statement activity with the disconnected date of 10/16/09 for \$391.10. Prior obligation calculation = \$459.25 amount billed up through disconnect date.

- \$143 deposit
- \$ 1.00 deposit interest
- \$25.00 pledge
- \$70.00 pledge

= \$220.25"

*** 02/10/2010 09:49 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'; 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Ms Vera Fuchs, Puget Sound Energy (PSE):

In PSE's e-mail response to staff on 1/21/10, PSE verified it applied this customer's pledges to the prior obligation amount, stating: "Attached is revised statement activity with the disconnected date of 10/16/09 for \$391.10. Prior obligation calculation = \$459.25 amount billed up through disconnect date.

- \$143 deposit
- \$ 1.00 deposit interest
- \$25.00 pledge
- \$70.00 pledge
= \$220.25"

Consequently, I have recorded a violation of the commission's rule in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-123(3) Refusal of service, against PSE, as follows:

Ø One (1) violation of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-123(3) Refusal of service, against Puget Sound Energy (PSE) for initially misapplying a customer's pledge to the customer's prior obligation, rather than correctly applying the pledge to the customer's current charges.

WAC 480-100-123(3) Refusal of service. (3) An electric utility may not refuse to provide new or additional service to a residential applicant or residential customer who has a prior obligation. A prior obligation is the dollar amount, excluding deposit amounts owed, the utility has billed to the customer and for which the utility has not received payment at the time the service has been disconnected for nonpayment. The utility must provide service once the customer or applicant has paid all appropriate deposit and reconnection fees. This subsection does not apply to customers that have been disconnected for failure to honor the terms of a winter low-income payment program.

Thank you.

*** 02/12/2010 01:14 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



My review of the account indicates that we are not out of compliance on this one and the information you got might be incorrect. I would like to provide an updated statement account/notices using the new approved format for your review. I would ask that I have until Wednesday to provide the updated correct information

I checked the account, the two pledges did not go to the prior it went to deposit and reconnect fee - customer made a \$100 payment as well as the pledges.

The amount for prior to restore was \$193 we got \$195. Also verified all payment since have applied properly.

\$322.31 to prior obligation, original to prior was \$315.25 difference is the final late fees before going to collections.

New deposit charged was \$312

\$459.25 statemented at time of prior
\$143 deposit

\$ 1.00 deposit interest equals \$315.25 to prior no monies to prior balance.

*** 02/16/2010 07:31 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> Pearson, Rayne (UTC)



PSE is disputing this violation.

Saying they reported incorrectly and no amounts paid were improperly applied.

*** 02/16/2010 08:07 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



I hope the details on the attached spreadsheet helps clarify where is payment and pledges applied. The amount remaining on the prior balance is still \$322.31. No installment per customer, these are the charges that will go to collections.

thanks for letting me provide some additional information. We did provide incorrect information on the initial spreadsheet so we are in violation for that one.

Washington UTC Complaint

107627

Company: Puget Sound Energy G703

Customer: Account# 419-064-000-5

William Westerfield

Contact:

14304 12th Avenue Court E

Tacoma, WA 98445

Primary Phone: (253) 405-5737

E-mail addr: bill@billwesterfield.com

Complaint: ~~107627~~

Serviced by: **Dennis Shutler**

Opened on: 10/14/2009

Grouped by: Disputed Bill

Closed on: 10/21/2009

Disposition: Company upheld with arrangements

Description:



Mr states PSE came to his residence five months ago and replaced his gas meter. Mr states PSE is now backbilling him for usage/charges for over two years. Mr disputes PSE's method of estimating his usage/charges based on the fact that a family with children lived in the residence during the period PSE is estimating his usage/charges from, and it is only the two of them living in the residence since they moved in. Mr noted his biggest bill over the last five months since the meter has been replaced has been \$80 and Mr believes PSE is estimating his usage/charges above and beyond his actual use. Mr states PSE initially offered him a 17% discount and today offered him an additional 18% discount, for a total discount of 35%.

Mr simply believes PSE should estimate his usage/charges on only the two living in the residence since they moved in and on his actual recent usage, and not base his usage/charges on a family with multiple children who lived there previously. Mr believes PSE is greatly inflating his usage/charges by estimating his usage/charges in this method.

Mr is simply asking PSE to calculate his usage/charges based on a more realistic formula based on only the two of them residing in the residence since he moved in.

Passing a new complaint.

In accordance with the commission's response rule in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-90-173(3)(a), PSE's response is due not later than 5 p.m. PT on 10/16/09.

Please provide this customer's account history throughout the period of the backbilling.

Complaint passed to PSE, via e-mail on 10/14/09, at 2:37 p.m.

Results:

Mr's gas meter stopped and PSE backbilled charges between 6/13/07 and 5/07/09. PSE waived 35% of the initially billed charges.

---VIOLATIONS NOTED---

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 10/14/2009 02:37 PM Email: Dennis Shutler >> Vera Fuchs



Passing a new complaint.

*** 10/14/2009 02:40 PM Email: Dennis Shutler >> customer



Thank you for contacting the Utilities and Transportation Commission (commission) regarding your complaint against PSE.

I have opened an informal complaint investigation on your behalf and I will work with the company to seek resolution to your complaint.

Complaints usually take between two and four weeks to complete, depending on their complexity.

I will notify you with my findings, however, if you have questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 1-888-333-WUTC (9882).

Thank you.

*** 10/19/2009 08:27 AM Violation: 480-100-173(3)(a) -



VIOLATION: One (1) violation of WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) Electric utility responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints, against PSE for failing to provide staff its initial response to this consumer's complaint in a timely manner. Staff has not yet received PSE's initial response.

Staff passed this consumer's complaint to PSE on 10/14/09, and PSE's initial response was due not later than 5:00 p.m. PT on 10/16/09.

*** 10/19/2009 08:36 AM Email: Shuttler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Vera Fuchs, Puget Sound Energy (PSE):

Staff passed this consumer's complaint to PSE on 10/14/09, and PSE's initial response was due not later than 5:00 p.m. PT on 10/16/09.

Staff has not yet received PSE's initial response.

Consequently, I have recorded a violation of the commission's rule in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-173(3)(a) Electric utility responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints, against PSE, as follows:

Ø One (1) violation of WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) Electric utility responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints, against PSE for failing to provide staff its initial response to this consumer's complaint in a timely manner.

WAC 480-100-173(3)(a) Electric utility responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints. (3) When the commission refers an informal complaint to the utility, the utility must: (a) Investigate and report the results to the commission within two business days. The commission may grant an extension of time for responding to the complaint, if requested and warranted.

I look forward to receiving PSE's initial response.

Thank you.

*** 10/19/2009 09:03 AM Email: Shuttler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Here is a copy of the response we sent.

1. What was the reason for the back-bill? (meter-mix, stopped meter, lost meter, module malfunction, stopped module) Stopped Meter

2. Dates for the back-bill
6/13/07 to 5/7/09

3. Was this actual or estimated usage? Were any adjustments provided?
Estimated

The correction was estimated based on PSE's gas tariff, Rule No. 8, section 7(c) that states "the use of gas in a similar period of like use under similar conditions when the meter was registering accurately.

Yes 17% Reason: Customer provided information regarding the differences in their home and the previous resident at the location. An additional 18% was offered after the customer provided more information but the customer declined at this time.

4. Was an installment plan provided?
No, it was offered but the customer has not agreed to it.

5. Copy of bill detail, worksheet, statement account history, product assignment history and statement attached.

SEE ATTACHED COPIES OF CUSTOMER'S ACCOUNT HISTORY PROVIDED BY PSE:

*** 10/19/2009 09:17 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



This is the only response I've received regarding this customer's complaint.
Thank you.

*** 10/20/2009 07:33 AM Violation: 480-90-178(1)(e) -



VIOLATION: Twenty-three (23) violations of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-90-178(1)(e) Billing requirements and payment date, against Puget Sound Energy (PSE) for failing to issue this customer monthly billing statements accurately listing the total amount of therms used by the customer for the billing period.

In its e-mail response to staff on 10/19/09, PSE states, in part: "1. What was the reason for the back-bill? (meter-mix, stopped meter, lost meter, module malfunction, stopped module) Stopped Meter 2. Dates for the back-bill 6/13/07 to 5/7/09" (twenty-three billing periods = twenty-three violations)

*** 10/20/2009 07:39 AM Violation: 480-90-178(1)(f) -



VIOLATION: Twenty-three (23) violations of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-90-178(1)(f) Billing requirements and payment date, against Puget Sound Energy (PSE) for failing to issue this customer monthly billing statements accurately listing the amount of therms used and applicable billing rates per therm for the billing period. Without the accurate amount of therms used, PSE was unable to accurately bill this customer the correct charges due.

In its e-mail response to staff on 10/19/09, PSE states, in part: "1. What was the reason for the back-bill? (meter-mix, stopped meter, lost meter, module malfunction, stopped module) Stopped Meter 2. Dates for the back-bill 6/13/07 to 5/7/09" (twenty-three billing periods = twenty-three violations)

*** 10/21/2009 10:18 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



If Mr contacts PSE to accept the 35% discount as he was initially offered, is PSE's offer still available to this customer?
Thank you.

*** 10/21/2009 12:07 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



We would be willing to do the additional 18% percent off the usage as the customer was already given 17%. If they would like us to do this, it is not necessary for the customer to call and request it. We just need some sort of confirmation that the customer understands that this would be the final adjustment available on this back billing amount. We would also still be willing to offer an interest free installment plan as well.

*** 10/21/2009 04:48 PM Phone: Dennis Shutler >> Mr



I called Mr and told him that PSE reported it is willing to provide the additional 18% percent off the usage as he was already given 17%. Mr stated he understands that this is the final adjustment available on this back billing amount. I told Mr that PSE stated it will also offer an interest free installment plan as well, allowing as many months going forward to pay off the debt equal to the number of months PSE was backbilling him for. Mr stated as soon as he receives a statement from PSE stating his final amount due, he will then pay the amount in a single payment. I told Mr I was closing his complaint.

*** 10/21/2009 05:00 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Ms Vera Fuchs, Puget Sound Energy (PSE):

Thank you for your time and efforts in working to resolve this customer's complaint issue.

I called Mr and told him that PSE reported it is willing to provide the additional 18% percent off the usage as he was already given 17%. Mr stated he understands that this is the final adjustment available on this back billing amount. I told Mr that PSE stated it will also offer an interest free installment plan as well, allowing as many months going forward to pay off the debt equal to the number of months PSE was backbilling him for. Mr stated as soon as he receives a statement from PSE stating his final amount due, he will then pay the amount in a single payment. I told Mr I was closing his complaint and you too may now consider this customer's complaint closed as well.

However, during the course of my investigation into Mr's complaint, I found PSE operating in violation of the commission's rules in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-90.

Consequently, I have recorded violations of the commission's rules in WAC 480-90 against PSE, as follows:

Ø Twenty-three (23) violations of WAC 480-90-178(1)(e) Billing requirements and payment date, against PSE for failing to issue this customer monthly billing statements accurately listing the total amount of therms used by the customer for the billing period.

In its e-mail response to staff on 10/19/09, PSE states, in part: "1. What was the reason for the back-bill? (meter-mix, stopped meter, lost meter, module malfunction, stopped module) Stopped Meter 2. Dates for the back-bill 6/13/07 to 5/7/09" (twenty-three billing periods = twenty-three violations)

WAC 480-90-178(1)(e) Billing requirements and payment date. (1) Customer bills must: (e) Show the current and previous meter readings, the current read date, and the total amount of therms used.

Ø Twenty-three (23) violations of WAC 480-90-178(1)(f) Billing requirements and payment date, against PSE for failing to issue this customer monthly billing statements accurately listing the amount of therms used and applicable billing rates per therm for the billing period. Without the accurate amount of therms used, PSE was unable to accurately bill this customer the correct charges due.

In its e-mail response to staff on 10/19/09, PSE states, in part: "1. What was the reason for the back-bill? (meter-mix, stopped meter, lost meter, module malfunction, stopped module) Stopped Meter 2. Dates for the back-bill 6/13/07 to 5/7/09" (twenty-three billing periods = twenty-three violations)

WAC 480-90-178(1)(f) Billing requirements and payment date. (1) Customer bills must: (f) Show the amount of therms used for each billing rate, the applicable billing rates per therm, the basic charge or minimum bill.

NOTE: Please note that the commission's Consumer Protection and Communication Section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

SPECIAL NOTE: Please notify me as to when Mr may expect to receive a notice listing his final charge after adjustments.

Again, I thank you.

*** 10/21/2009 05:03 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Please provide me the amount Mr owes and the amount Mr was credited from his initial charges.

Thank you.

*** 10/22/2009 03:43 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L'



Here is the reprocess paperwork for William Westerfield. This back bill takes into account the additional 18% the customer was offered.

This makes the back bill charges a total of \$1417.08 and 1218 therms, while the original was \$2180.35 and 1874 therms.

SEE ATTACHED RECALCULATIONS OF MR'S CHARGES:

*** 10/22/2009 03:48 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Thank you for this additional detail regarding this customer's final recalculated charges.

Again, I thank you.

Washington UTC Complaint

107694

Company: Puget Sound Energy G703

Customer: Account#

Karen Gard

Contact:

1422 Elm St SE

Auburn, WA 98092

Primary Phone: (253) 334-5686

Complaint: 107694

Serviced by: Nancy Paulson

Opened on: 10/22/2009

Grouped by: Deposit

Closed on: 11/06/2009

Disposition: Company upheld with arrangements

Description:



Customer is charged a \$286 deposit due to a missed payments and three notices in the past 12 months. She cannot afford the deposit and PSE will not waive it. Customer requests the deposit be waived since she has been a PSE customer for 30 years.

Will you consider waiving the deposit at this time and revisit it in three to six months, depending on her payment history in that timeframe?

Passed to company on 10/22/09. Response due 10/26/09.

Results:

PSE will not waive deposit due to payment history. Customer paid the deposit and PSE reallocated part of deposit to usage.

VIOLATIONS RECORDED.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 10/22/2009 04:57 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Vera Fuchs/PSE



Good Afternoon: Passing new complaint. See details below. Thank you. (sent complaint description).

*** 10/23/2009 06:51 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Hi Nancy,

Molly is back and taking the complaints again. I have forwarded this to her attention. We missed her and am glad she is back. I will continue to provide support for the ones I started but she in at bat from here forward. Thanks for your patience,

*** 10/29/2009 04:53 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly.Brown/PSE



Good Afternoon: I have not had a response to this complaint. I will be recording daily violations for late response. Thank you. (sent complaint record).

*** 10/29/2009 04:54 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Apparently I did not receive. I will work tomorrow.

- Molly

*** 10/30/2009 01:20 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Dunn, Angela/PSE



Nancy,

Molly has asked for me to respond on her behalf:

Account #: 914090100
Account name: GLEN A GARD
Electric and Gas Service
Service since June 22, 1998
Credit Rating: Poor
Gas Deposit Billed: \$286.00 due 9/29/09 -remaining Deposit bal owed
\$227.38

Past 12 month Credit History:
16 Urgent Notices since 12/1/09
11 Final Notices since 12/1/09
1 Service Disconnect/Gas Service (on 8/20/09)

Account credit history shows established Credit Risk-- The Deposit will not be waived and the Gas service security deposit is warranted in accordance to WAC 480-90-113.

At this time the remaining Deposit owed is \$227.38 and is subject to disconnection as it is past due. We are able to extend payment arrangement on the deposit with \$114.00 due immediately and final payment \$113.38 due by Nov 30th. Please advise if this is mutually agreeable so we may send a confirmation letter of payment arrangements.

The following details WAC 480-90-113 applicable to this issue, regarding request, refund, and payment arrangements:

WAC 480-90-113 (1) Deposit criteria for current residential customers. A gas/ (electric) utility may collect a deposit from its own customers for residential service only if: (a) At any time during the prior twelve months, the utility has sent the customer three or more delinquency notices; (b) The utility has disconnected the customer's residential service for nonpayment;

WAC 480-90-113 (10) When refund of deposits is required. A utility must apply deposits plus accrued interest to the customer's account, or refund deposits plus accrued interest when there has been satisfactory payment, as defined in (a) of this subsection, or when service is terminated. (10) (a) "Satisfactory payment" means a customer has paid for service for twelve consecutive months in a prompt and satisfactory manner as evidenced by the following: (i) The utility has not started a disconnection process against the customer; and (ii) The utility has sent no more than two delinquency notices to the customer. (b) Termination of service. When service is terminated, the utility must return to the customer the deposit amount plus accrued interest, less any amounts due the utility by the customer. WAC-480-90-113 (4) Deposit payment arrangements. The utility must allow an applicant or customer the option of paying fifty percent of the deposit prior to service, and paying the remaining balance in equal amounts over the next two months, on the dates mutually agreed upon between the applicant or customer and the utility. The utility and applicant or customer may make other mutually acceptable deposit payment arrangements).

Angela Dunn
Customer Services Supervisor
Direct 425-424-6720
Internal: 81-6720
angela.dunn@pse.com

-----Original Message-----

From: Brown, Molly
Sent: Friday, October 30, 2009 11:15 AM
To: Dunn, Angela
Subject: Fw: WA - UTC complaint 107694 for Karen Gard

Angela, Will you respond to Nancy on my behalf? I am home sick today.
Vera on pto. I owe you. Thanks

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld (www.BlackBerry.net)

*** 11/02/2009 04:50 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> angela.dunn



Good Afternoon: Thank you Angela. Although I neglected to request this, I need the billing/payment/notice history and the calculations on how the deposit was calculated.
Also, in the credit history below, did you mean 12/1/08?

*** 11/02/2009 04:52 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Dunn, Angela



Yes-I stand corrected 12/1/08 to present: Molly will provide additional info requested.

*** 11/02/2009 04:57 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Nancy:
I'll get you the information tomorrow.

*** 11/03/2009 09:49 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



SEE ATTACHMENTS BELOW.

Nancy:

Attached is statement and credit activity. I agree with Angela.
Deposit is warranted.

One correction, gas disconnect was 8/26/09. The gas disconnect order went into the queue on 8/20/09.

Customer paid disconnected amount so account was not processed prior.
Looking at payment history, it appears the customer only pays when they are threatened with disconnection and they only pay the disconnected amounts.

My gas calculation = $\$1980 / 12 \times 2 = \330 . CLX asked for \$286.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 11/04/2009 11:33 AM Voice Mail: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Left a detailed voice mail. PSE will not waive the deposit due to payment/credit history. The WAC allows them to charge a deposit if there are three or more notices in the past 12 months. Customer has had more than three

notices. PSE is willing to extend arrangements, \$114.00 due immediately and the remainder, \$113.38 due by November 30. Please let me know today if this will work. If not, does the customer have a counter-offer?

*** 11/06/2009 09:45 AM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Called customer again since I had not heard back from her. She said a technician was out to disconnect on 10/30/09 and she paid the \$227.38 deposit. Now she cannot pay her current bill. She cannot make payment arrangements at this time. She said she will make them through PSE when she figures out her finances.

*** 11/06/2009 10:43 AM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Thank you Molly. The customer said that PSE was out to disconnect on 10/30/09 and she paid the \$227.38 deposit remainder. You didn't mention a paid deposit in your 11/3 e-mail. Why was someone sent out to disconnect while a complaint was open? Angela offered deposit arrangements on 10/30. Customer said she cannot make payment arrangements on usage at this time and will call PSE directly.

*** 11/06/2009 10:56 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



I passed the complaint to Angela on 10/30 due to my being home ill. The collector was already out there before Angela got the complaint. Karen paid the collector on 10/30, Friday, and it did not post to the account until Monday AFTER I sent in my response so I did not know about the payment either. Angela did offer arrangements so we can redirect the \$227.38 payment so that \$114 goes towards the deposit and \$113.38 can go towards her usage charges. Then we will put an arrangement for the balance of the deposit of \$113.38 due 11/30/09. This will help keep her from being noted for past due charges. Please advise Karen if the 11/30/09 arrangement defaults, PSE will be out to disconnect service without further notice.

Thank you,
Molly

*** 11/06/2009 11:08 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



I redirected the payment:
\$114.00 towards deposit, balance \$113.38 owing due 11/30/09 - payment arrangement.
\$113.38 towards electric charges, balance owing \$1.10.
\$.90 towards gas charges, balance owing \$89.58

Please note due to Karen's payment history and delinquent balances, arrangements on her balance may not be accepted. I would encourage her to pay the account balance of \$204.06 on 11/30/09.

Molly

*** 11/06/2009 12:15 PM Phone: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Let customer know that PSE reallocated part of the deposit. \$113.38 applied to electric and electric balance is now \$1.10. \$0.90 applied to gas \$90.48, so balance due is \$89.58.

\$114 is still due on deposit. Reallocating does buy her some time in paying.
Remaining balances are due 11/30/09. Does she qualify for energy assistance?
No. She thanked me for my help. closing the complaint.

*** 11/06/2009 12:41 PM Violation: 480-100-173(3)(a) -



Investigate and report the results to the commission within two business days.
Four violations for late response - complaint passed to company 10/22/09, response due 10/26/09.
Response received 10/30/09. Violations are for 10/26/09 through 10/29/09.
One violation for incomplete response. Complete billing/payment/notice history was not received until 11/3/09.

The company was notified of the violations.

*** 11/06/2009 01:36 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Thank you Molly. I am recording the following violations of WAC 480-100-173(3)(a): Four violations for late response - complaint passed to company 10/22/09, response due 10/26/09. Response received 10/30/09. Violations are for 10/26/09 through 10/29/09. One violation for incomplete response. Complete billing/payment/notice history was not received until 11/3/09. This complaint is now closed. Please note that the UTC Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 02/24/2010 09:23 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Good Morning Nancy: On 11/6/09, you sent a closing email for complaint # 107694 with violations for WAC 480-120-173(3)(a). I think that is for phone companies. Would you please clarify what the correct WAC is and the number for each violation. Thank you, Molly

*** 02/24/2010 09:38 AM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Hi Molly: It was a typo in the e-mail to you. The violation is 480-100-173(3)(a). I corrected it. See below.

*** 02/24/2010 09:53 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Thanks.

Washington UTC Complaint

107886

Company: Puget Sound Energy G703

Customer: Account# 201-444-000-8

Loi Sills

Contact:

1360 Bercot Road
Freeland, WA 98249

Primary Phone: (360) 369-6889

E-mail addr: loilee@comcast.net

Complaint: ~~107886~~

Serviced by: Pam Smith

Opened on: 11/30/2009

Grouped by: Disputed Bill

Closed on: 12/02/2009

Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Customer moved to Freeland from Tacoma August 1, 2009. She called PSE and had her electricity turned on in Freeland and left her gas on in Tacoma. She called at the end of August to disconnect her gas service. PSE did not turn it off and she had to pay a bill for September. She requested again for it to be disconnected in September and was assured it would be. She now has another bill for October. When she called she was told by a rep and a supervisor they could not disconnect it because she owns the home. She explained the house is in foreclosure. PSE insists that as long as she owns the home she has to pay the basic charge of \$10.00. Since they did not disconnect the gas there is also about \$7 for service, which she is sure is the hot water heater pilot. The pilot would be off if they would disconnect the gas.

Customer wants the gas disconnected and the charges refunded. Disputed amount not yet determined.

11/30 8:48 sent to Molly via e-mail. This response is due 12/2. I will need to know the rules regarding disconnecting a service when no one is living at the residence.

Results:

Company disconnected service. And adjusted bill retroactive back to 8/7/09. Refunded customer \$39.35 for charges.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 11/30/2009 12:08 PM Email: Pam Smith >> customer



Thank you for contacting the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission with your utility company concerns. I have opened an informal complaint against Puget Sound Energy. I will contact you again when I have completed my investigation. If you have questions, please contact me toll-free at 1-888-333-9882.

Sincerely,

Pam Smith
Consumer Program Specialist 3

*** 12/01/2009 10:02 AM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Pam:

Gas was shut-off yesterday, November 30, 2009 at 1513 S MONROE ST, TACOMA, WA 98405 per Loi's request. PSE has corrected the move-out date to 8/7/09 and credited back the basic charges. Loi has a credit balance of \$39.35. An off-cycle statement will be mailed to Loi showing the corrections and also showing NO payment due since there is now a credit balance. The credit balance will be applied to her December new charges at her Freeland address.

There are remarks showing she called on 9/21/09 and that she did request gas to be shut off at the Tacoma address.

"Gas disconnect; 1513 S MONROE ST- Gas was not disconnected, note states she is going to continue to be billed. I apologized, explained possible misunderstanding. Explained idle meter process- Loi unhappy; transferred to NCC to place gas meter disconnection."

I don't know if this means Loi was transferred to Customer Construction Services to request the meter disconnect.

There are no remarks stating that PSE will not shut off gas since she owns the home so I do not have any idea where that statement comes from. An advanced agent and/or supervisor would never have told this to the customer. She may have been confused over the "idle meter" discussion that took place on 9/21/09. Idle meter means service can be taken out of a customer's name and disconnected and no basic charge. However, if gas is used within 12 months of the request, then the basic charge would be retro-active from the time the gas was used.

Attached is statement activity and gas product history for your review.

This has been resolved.

Molly

*** 12/01/2009 12:40 PM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly



Are there any further notes re: a call from customer in August?

Pam Smith

*** 12/01/2009 12:46 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Yes.

8/3/09 - "Loi called to start new service 1360 E BERCOT RD, says she would like to keep gas service at Monroe address in her name until further notice."

The statement above does not mention she wanted her gas disconnected at the Monroe address.

- Molly

*** 12/02/2009 09:38 AM Email: Pam Smith >> customer

I contacted Puget Sound Energy (PSE) as a result of your complaint. PSE has disconnected your gas service at the Monroe Street address effective 8/7/09. They have credited all charges back to 8/7/09 and placed the credit balance of \$39.35 on your current account at Bercot Rd. in Freeland. Thank you for contacting the Utilities and Transportation Commission. If you have further questions, please contact me toll-free at 1-888-333-9882. I am closing this complaint.

Pam Smith
Consumer Program Specialist 3
UTC
1-888-333-9882
psmith@utc.wa.gov

*** 12/02/2009 09:40 AM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly



This complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 12/03/2009 08:19 AM Violation: 480-90-173 (3)(a) -



Company did not provide account notes for the August telephone call to company from customer switching gas service to her new address. Initial complaint response was incomplete.

*** 12/03/2009 09:12 AM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly



Molly, I have noted one violation of WAC 480-90-173 (3)(a). The initial complaint response was incomplete, the August account note should have been included in the response.

This complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 12/03/2009 09:47 AM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Was it asked for?

*** 12/03/2009 09:50 AM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



In the initial complaint, I mentioned that the customer had called in August. The response should start at that time.

Pam Smith

*** 12/08/2009 12:07 PM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



I spoke to Diana she agrees that the August note should have been included in the complaint response.

Pam Smith

APPENDIX K

Washington UTC Complaint

106708

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account#

Amber Smith

Contact:

7922 150th St E.

Puyallup, WA 98375

Primary Phone: (253) 495-5527

Complaint: ~~106708~~

Serviced by: Nancy Paulson

Opened on: 06/09/2009

Grouped by: Customer Service

Closed on: 06/15/2009

Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Customer's service was transferred to her new residence (address above) on 4/30/09. She called today to get her new charges as she could not access on-line as her account was not updated. The rep refused to give her any information on her account unless she gave a driver's license number. PSE has the last four digits of her social security number on file as the identifier. Customer wants to know why PSE refused to review her account with her?

Passed to company 6/9/09. Response due 6/11/09.

Results:

A driver's license number is not required as a personal identifier.

VIOLATION NOTED.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 06/09/2009 04:29 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown/PSE



Good Afternoon: Passing new complaint. See details below.Thank you. (sent complaint description).

*** 06/11/2009 03:37 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



SEE ATTACHMENT BELOW.

Nancy:

In May, PSE established a new policy for required information from customers who request service within PSE territory. Picture ID is now required whenever service is established (moves) or service connection.

If picture ID is not provided, service will be refused. This is for the protection of all consumers to eliminate any identify theft.

In this case, this was a recent move-in for this existing customer and the WA I.D. information was not in our records. The agents are required to ask for it if the information is missing from the established records.

At the same time, the agent could proceed with providing account information once the customer has verified themselves with other information (ss#, birthdate, mailing address, etc.) We recognize that

there is some clarification needed to the agents about this new policy and this is being addressed.

Remarks dated 6/9/09: "Amber refused to give WA DL#..I explained it is a requirement B4 we can disclose any info on a customers acct."

*** 06/15/2009 04:34 PM Voice Mail: Nancy Paulson >> customer



Left a detailed voice mail that PSE rep made an error in refusing to give customer information on her account. Customer service reps will be notified. If she has further problems with getting account information over the phone, please call me. Closing the complaint.

*** 06/15/2009 05:05 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Thank you Molly. However, it does not state in the Refusal of Service rule, WAC 480-100-123, that picture id is a requirement. Nor is it required under Application of Service WAC 480-100-108(d). Picture id must be in the list that the customer may choose from. This complaint is now closed. Please note that the UTC Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 06/16/2009 08:47 AM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Nancy:

WAC 480-100/90-108(d) states the list MUST include a driver's license or other picture ID.

*** 06/16/2009 03:40 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Good Afternoon: Yes, I see that. How many pieces of ID does PSE require of an applicant? Thank you.

*** 08/03/2009 02:39 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Hi Molly: I was reviewing this complaint and did not receive an answer from my 6/16/09 e-mail (see below). The rule states a picture ID must be included in the list but it does not state that a customer must choose the picture id. Thank you. (sent 6/16/09 email).

*** 08/03/2009 03:07 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Nancy:

I do not have that email in the closed complaint file I have. Application for Service allows the applicant to choose from a list of sources and the list must include a drivers license. The other sources of ID would include: Washington State ID, Military ID, Passport, Other state ID.

*** 08/03/2009 03:19 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Thank you. In a 6/11/09 e-mail, you said that the customer would be refused service or transfer of service unless he/she supplied a picture id. In this same e-mail, you included an account note from 6/9/09 that stated that the agent noted a driver's license is required in order to verify an existing account. I am recording one violation of WAC 480-100-108(d) for requiring a WA driver's license number. It is only one of many choices.

*** 08/03/2009 03:20 PM Violation: 480-120-108(2)(d) -



Proof of identification. The utility must allow the applicant to choose from a list, provided by the utility, of at least five sources of identification. The list must include a current driver's license or other picture identification. The customer was told that her WA driver's license number was a requirement before any account information could be disclosed.

*** 08/03/2009 04:01 PM Violation: 480-100-173(3)(c) -



Respond to the commission's request for additional informal complaint information within three business days of the request or at a date specified by the commission. Request sent 6/16/09, response due 6/19/09. Response received 8/3/09 after another e-mail requesting the information.

*** 08/03/2009 04:08 PM Email: Nancy Paulson >> Molly Brown



Good Afternoon: I am recording 30 violations of WAC 480-100-173(3)(c) for failure to respond to the commission's request for additional informal complaint information within three business days of the request or at a date specified by the commission. Request sent 6/16/09, response due 6/19/09. Response received 8/3/09 after another e-mail requesting the information.

*** 08/03/2009 04:09 PM Email: Paulson, Nancy (UTC) << Brown, Molly



PSE will dispute since I did not receive the email for some reason or another.
- Molly

Washington UTC Complaint

106807

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 805-862-976-0

Geoffrey Lawson

Contact:

1315 E Hope St
Bremerton, WA 98310

Primary Phone: (206) 396-1190

Secondary: (206) 396-1190

E-mail addr: galaxy2292001@aol.com

Complaint: ~~106807~~

Serviced by: **Pam Smith**

Opened on: 06/23/2009

Grouped by: Disputed Bill

Closed on: 07/13/2009

Disposition: Company upheld

Description:



Customer maintains Puget Sound Energy has consistently over billed him for usage including current usage. He has attempted on several occasions to resolve the issue.

The current utility bills while he have been at Home from January 2009 to present are as much as they were in his absence during 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.

PSE has refused to issue credit for the over billing. He has also attempted to to have PSE explain how the current bills are similar in usage to bills when absent from the home.

For each of the above mentioned years he has indicated to PSE he have proof verifying that there was no one in the home consuming electricity for at least 10.5 of 12 months out of each of the years.

His current bills are excessive in nature given the configuration of his home and he has asked PSE repeatedly to provide him with an explanation of the disparity.

PSE has indicated on several occasions that it is not their responsibility to provide a detail of how they arrive at the consumption numbers beyond the breakdown located on the bill.

PSE cannot explain why the bills are inconsistent when no utilities are being utilized.

Customer spoke to a supervisor on several occasions, with no resolution.

Customer would like:

PSE to get the billing correct.

Refund over payments for all 4 years that electricity was not used by based on official Department of Transportation logs.

Provide immediate access to senior level management upon a customers request

Results:

Meter tested accurate, billing is sustained.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 06/23/2009 08:45 AM Phone: Pam Smith << customer



returned my earlier phone call when I asked for more information. He can't be reached by telephone, I must leave a message.

*** 06/23/2009 08:48 AM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



Hi Molly: Please do a meter test. I would like a usage history for the last couple of years. I would also like the acct. notes. He sounds like he has spoken to supervisor's regarding this issue.
Response is due June 25th.

Pam-

*** 06/23/2009 08:51 AM Email: Pam Smith >> customer



Thank you for contacting the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission with your electric company concerns. I have opened an informal complaint against Puget Sound Energy. I will contact you again when I have completed my investigation. If you have questions, please contact me toll-free at 1-888-333-9882.

Pam Smith
Consumer Program Specialist 3
UTC
psmith@utc.wa.gov

*** 06/23/2009 01:01 PM Email: Pam Smith << customer



Good Afternoon Ms. Smith. Are the complaints always informal?

This is a rather serious issue from my perspective... which of course doesn't mean much in the grand scheme of things. But, it goes right to the heart of current exchanges that I have had with PSE up to my lodging this complaint. Please advise?

Thank you very much for your assistance with this matter.

Very Truly Yours

Geoffrey Lawson

*** 06/23/2009 03:43 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



OPEN ACTIVITY TO VIEW STATEMENT ACCOUNTS AND HISTORY

Pam:

Second meter test has been requested.

Below is timeline of remarks regarding Mr. Lawson's calls about his high bills. PSE tested his meter in September 2008 and it tested accurate.

Please note, on high bill investigations, advanced agents will go over the customer's daily usage and also use the bill analyzer tool before automatically offering up a meter test. A meter test determines if the meter is running

properly but it doesn't get to the root cause of the problem. Our advanced agents can help determine the high usage with a set of questions they ask the customer. It appears from remark below that Mr. Lawson did not want to be transferred to an advanced agent on a number of occasions when he called.

6/4/08: "geoffrey upset about high bills when he is out of town alot. I asked if he had any family members who could check out his house No. advised at this time without him being home we are getting good reads. he is willing to pay for what he uses but nothing more. advised this is out of my area I would have to trans him to advance agent to go any further so did a trans. He is aware he is being trans to advance agent but will be on hold due to calls he did let me know he was only home 4-9-4-17 than again 4-29-5-4 other than that on the road most of time." (There was no follow up to this call so I don't know if the call was disconnected during transfer of if Mr. Lawson hung up.)

8/6/08: "Geoff is still very upset about the high bills, states he is a truck driver and is not home on a regular basis to even be using this. He wanted me to adjust the bill because he believes the bill to be incorrect. Advised based on MDL that the meter reads are good, and he also refused multiple times to allow the call to be transferred to an advanced agent to go over an HBI. He will likely call back to discuss the HBI."

8/26/08: "HBI- cust has been disputing high bill for months. has one frig, one freezer, one outside light, gas ht, gas wtr htr & gas dryer. cust simply don't know where the electric usage went. went over bill analyzer, meter read. cust truck driver gone most of the time. will get it all resolved when in back in two months."

9/22/08 - Meter tested accurate. Electric meter and read automatically.

10/6/08: "called Geoffrey and left a message. Inform customer meter test accurate and his usage is normal since beginning of September. Gave my direct line for any further questions. Customer should start catching up on his balance."

10/13/08: "spoke to Geoffrey meter test is accurate, reading is accurate, explained when he turns off all breakers only uses 3 kWhs p/day. customer will pay \$100 today."

1/26/09: "Geoffrey is requesting we extend credit for another 45 days with \$0 payment. . He evidently had a contract (truck driver) that owes him \$11,000. So he's decided not to rely on anyone else and go into business for himself but can't drive for some time (I forgot the duration) until he gets a release from the federal gov't. He wants us to wait until he has steady income in again before he sends us a payment. I explained it simply wasn't possible to hold credit with no payment for that long. He thinks I'm being unreasonable and wants a manager. I explained Aundrea was not available and can call him back with 24 hrs. That was not acceptable and he starts pleading his case over and over again. "

1/26/09: "Supv Call: Adv arrgts have been generous. At a point where pyt necessary to "buy" time. He is requesting 45 day for license/work & he gets paid to pay us. Suggested other resources that some other cust have used. Doesn't qualify for EAP/Offered Salv army & St Vinc (poss get funds from them now- then he donate back in March when he gets lump sum). He offered to pay \$50

now. Adv if pays \$50 by Wed (confirm# provided)-then I could ext to next due date Feb 19th for min \$100. If \$100 paid then, then I would ext the bal to March 16th-when he gets his lump sum. Satisfied."

2/6/09: "FILED CHAPTER 13 BANKRUPTCY CLAIM TO COURT FOR \$3,493.27"

PSE started a new account effective 1/30/09 (see attached). Mr. Lawson has only made one \$50 payment on this new account and that was back in February.

PSE's new credit policy is that we are requiring any collectibles past due 60 days to be paid within 3 days before PSE will set up further arrangements. In this case, \$580.20 is more than 60 days past due and would require immediate payment. \$360.26 balance remaining can be worked with.

Collectibles Owing:

\$413.30 past due collectibles up through April, 2009

\$190.85 May past due charges

\$169.41 current charges due 6/23/09

\$166.90 which is the balance due on the deposit.

Deposit calculation = $\$1245.80/12 \times 2 = \207 . PSE requested \$204 on 2/4/08.

*** 06/24/2009 04:29 PM Email: Pam Smith >> customer



Yes, we consider this an informal complaint. I will investigate and contact you.

Pam Smith

*** 06/30/2009 10:15 AM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Pam:

Meter was tested on 6/25/09 and tested accurate. 99% on FL and 99% on LL. No one home at test time but steady load (per meterman).

*** 06/30/2009 01:37 PM Phone: Pam Smith >> Molly



left message, asked about the 772.00 transferred from bankruptcy. Was that rejected? I also asked about arrangements, will company make arrangements beyond the 60 day rule?

*** 07/06/2009 04:43 PM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Are you waiting on me for a follow up answer? I can't remember if you are and if you are, what was the question?

Thank you,
Molly

*** 07/08/2009 08:57 AM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



This is what I asked on the 30th

left message, asked about the 772.00 transferred from bankruptcy. Was that rejected? I also asked about arrangements, will company make arrangements

beyond the 60 day rule?

*** 07/08/2009 09:35 AM Email: Smith, Pam (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Pam:

If you look at the statement activity I sent, there is no amount transferred from his bankruptcy account. His balance are charges from starting a new account after the bankruptcy.

Has Mr. Lawson applied for energy assistance?

He has only paid \$50 on the account and that was back in February.

I also sent you what PSE will accept at this point. PSE would extend arrangements after those collectibles older than 60 days are paid.

I sent the deposit calculation if Mr. Lawson gets disconnected and goes prior.

*** 07/09/2009 09:37 AM Phone: Pam Smith >> customer



left message to call

*** 07/09/2009 09:37 AM Action: Pam Smith



reviewed statement of account:

The notices and dates due are correct

*** 07/13/2009 10:27 AM Phone: Pam Smith >> customer



left message, please call re: complaint. I can explain the amount owing.

*** 07/13/2009 11:42 AM Phone: Pam Smith << customer



Customer called, I explained the meter tested accurate again. I told him the company responsibility stops at the meter. He did not agree. I asked him if he was pulling the breaker when he left. He is not, but he does turn everything off. I told him the furnace may turn on at a certain temp. the frigerator may be inefficient, there are many possibilities. He asked what he needed to pay, I told him 580.20. He said he may have to sue PSE, they should have vacation rate. He asked if I could keep the complaint open for one week. I told him I could not. There has only been one payment since Feb. of 50.00. He asked about options. I explained Prior obligation and the deposit. He thanked me for my help. I am closing.

*** 07/13/2009 11:55 AM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



I spoke to the customer. He is still upset, does not think he uses this much power. He asked for options. I told him how much he had to pay to keep power on 580.20. I also explained prior obligation. I don't know if he will be able to make a payment or not.

This complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Pam-

*** 07/15/2009 08:08 AM Violation: 480-100-173(3)(c) -



Two violations - company did not respond to commission request for additional information.
6/30/09 request made for additional information
7/6/09 information due
7/8/09 information provided by company

violations for each day information was not provided July 6 and 7.

*** 07/15/2009 08:14 AM Email: Pam Smith >> Molly Brown



Molly, I am noting two violations to this complaint.
WAC 480-100-173 (3) (c)

Two violations - company did not respond to commission request for additional information.
6/30/09 request made for additional information
7/6/09 information due
7/8/09 information provided by company

violations for each day information was not provided July 6 and 7.

Pam

Washington UTC Complaint

107291

Company: Puget Sound Energy G703

Customer: Account# 855-173-000-8

Diana Harder
Contact:
5643 56th Ave SE
Lacey, WA 98503

Primary Phone: (360) 888-4827
Secondary: (360) 725-4887
E-mail addr: maddy5432@comcast.net

Complaint: 107291 Serviced by: Suzanne Stillwell
Opened on: 08/24/2009 Grouped by: Disputed Bill
Closed on: 10/26/2009 Disposition: Company upheld with arrangements

Description:



8/31 escalated to supervisor (Mike's complaint).

Customer received a back bill for 4 months usage. Please review customer's comments. Company is billing \$382.08. Was this actual readings or estimate?
Passed to Puget at 11:09 am on August 24, at 11:10am
Please respond by August 27.

Results:

10/26 company charges were appropriate. Company offered customer 8 month arrangements.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 08/24/2009 11:30 AM Email: Mike Meeks >> Molly Brown



Received emailed complaint from customer:

Please explain your complaint in detail.

I received a phone call on Saturday, May 16 2009. I was contacted by PSE representative Kathy, "caller would not disclose her last name", who notified me that PSE had recently replaced faulty equipment at my home and a adjustment to my bill for gas service was made for the time period Jan. 2, 2009 through May 4, 2009 for the amount of \$663.56. When I asked her how this amount was reached, she answered, "an estimate was calucated from prior years". I requested to talk to a supervisor over this billing and was told by Kathy, "a supervisor would contact me Monday 5/18/09. Monday, I had not recieved a call from PSE and called them directly. Monday 5/18/09 I talked to PSE, Susan Decker to discuss this situation. She had explained the same situation that Kathy had explained to me on Sat. 5/16/09. I had requested from Susan to explain in written detail what had happened and how they were determining the charges for the time period in question.

I recieved a letter for Susan Decker approximatley 2 weeks later (no date on letter). This letter stated " A recent field inspection of the metering equipment revealed that the consuption was not registering correctly from when

it stopped on 1/9/09 to when it was repaired on 4/2/09 at my address. The cause of the malfunction was a broken module drive (aka:"dog dial") which is the part that allows the movement of the physical dials to register on the automated meter reading module. When this part fails, broken pieces of the module drive can prevent the dials from moving forward and result in no consumption registered on either the meter dials or the automated meter reading module." She also states that "The calculation used for the correction was based on the actual monthly gas usage at my address from Prior years." I had moved into my home on March 27, 2008. I do not have prior years at this address. She goes on to say in the letter that "it appears that the original estimation was based in part on usage established while the meter was in the name of the builder and does not best reflect what your usage may have been and is revising the billing usage and the correction resulted in a charge of \$503.38 to my account. This current charge is based on the winter months of Feb, March and April 2009". After several correspondence back in forth with PSE they have now changed the billing from \$503.38 to \$382.08 with a therm difference of 290.

My complaint and concern on these charges and with PSE is:

- 1) I received no correspondence from PSE that they were replacing any equipment at my address and on my property.
- 2) How do I know the equipment was faulty for 4 months.
- 3) PSE is estimating the charges and have no real idea what consumption I had used for the time period in question.
- 4) PSE is threatening me to either pay the current adjusted charges of \$382.08 or face paying late charges and threatening to put me in collections starting 7 days from the date of their last letter to me dated 8/18/09.
- 5) I still do not understand how they are determining the charges, it has gone from 663.56 to now 382.08 based on no metered usage or proof of damaged equipment for 4 months.
- 6) when I received my current billing for month of July PSE charged me extra for the months of May 5th - June 4th for what they say was a Gas increase rate change. I do not understand this.
- 7) PSE has quoted RCW 80.28.080 and 80.28.090. I do not find in the RCW's that they can go back and make a guess (estimation) of any past charges. I am seriously questioning the validity of these charges.

It is my feeling that they are making this so complicated and trying to charge me for things that I don't even understand. I think that they are expecting me to give in and just pay. I will not pay extra for anything I do not understand nor do I think that this is any of my responsibility.

Did you speak to a supervisor from your utility or transportation company?
Yes. If 'Yes', what was the result? I have talked to several Supervisors at PSE, everytime I send a letter I hear back from someone else. The last letter I received was "pay the charges or PSE would charge me late fees and put me in collections".

What do you think the company should do to resolve your complaint?
Due to the fact that PSE has no real idea what the charges would be I don't

think they can charge me for an estimation.

*** 08/25/2009 10:12 AM Email: Meeks, Mike (UTC) << Brown, Molly



PSE has spoken to Ms. Harder a number of times and also has responded to all her written requests (see letters attached). Credit suspension has been held until 9/10/09. If arrangements are not made, then the full amount will become due. Also on the Revised spreadsheet bill detail, you will need to use the arrows in the bottom left corner to scroll to the revised bill detail and worksheet.

1. What was the reason for the back-bill? (meter-mix, stopped meter, lost meter, module malfunction, stopped module)

* Stopped meter due to broken dog drive (Broken dog drive is broken pins).

PSE explained this to Ms. Harder in the 5/28/09 letter attached: ". The cause of the malfunction was a broken module drive (aka: "dog dial") which is the part that allows the movement of the physical dials to register on the automated meter reading module. When this part fails, broken pieces of the module drive can prevent the dials from moving forward and result in no consumption registered on either the meter dials or the automated meter reading module."

2. Dates for the back-bill: 1/3/09 - 5/4/09.

3. Was this actual or estimated usage? * Estimated

The correction was estimated based on WAC rule, section 7, letter C that states "the use of gas in a similar period of like use under similar conditions when the meter was registering accurately. The first retro-active bill was based on the actual monthly gas usage established while the meter was in the name of the builder.

Were any adjustments provided?

* Yes rework credit of \$281.40 * Reason: Rebilled due to original rebill was based on usage when meter was in the name of the builder. Based rework on customer's usage established after move-in, prior to equipment failure. This was explained to her in the 6/12/09 letter: "The re-estimated usage was based on the actual usage of 3.8230 therms per day established from 3/27/08 - 4/1/08. In the billing month of 12/4/08 to 1/8/09, just prior to the meter malfunction you established actual usage of 3.9510 therms per day. Usage in February and March tend to be higher than usage in April due to the difference in temperatures, but we opted to estimate both February and March at the same daily usage as the April usage. This is a fair and reasonable basis for estimation, since it is typical for February and March usage to be significantly higher than either January or April consumption and often higher than January consumption."

4. Was an installment plan provided?

* No - customer did not agree to one

5. Copy of bill detail, worksheet and statement attached along with the four mailed letters.

SEE ABOVE ATTACHMENTS

*** 08/26/2009 09:44 AM Email: Mike Meeks >> Diana Harder



Diana Harder:

I have received your complaint and have contacted Puget Sound Energy. You listed a series of questions and I will attempt to answer them:

1) I received no correspondence from PSE that they were replacing any equipment at my address and on my property.

A. The company has the right to work on their equipment without notifying you per WAC 480-90-168.

2) How do I know the equipment was faulty for 4 months.

A. The equipment was discovered to be broken when no usage was recorded on your meter beginning January 3 2009. The meter was replaced on May 4, 2009. An examination of the broken meter showed a broken module drive. The company has no reason to tell you that the meter is broken if it was not broken. It is unfortunate that you didn't notice your consumption was extremely low for those 4 months.

3) PSE is estimating the charges and have no real idea what consumption I had used for the time period in question.

A. The company is allowed by rule: WAC 480-90-178(1)(ii)(i), to estimate usage. The company is required to use the best available information to estimate. The company used historical usage from when the residence was in the name of the builder. Because the builder may have had more usage, the company recalculated the usage based on your consumption:

Puget response:

Rebilled due to original rebill was based on usage when meter was in the name of the builder.

Based rework on customer's usage established after move-in, prior to equipment failure.

This was explained to her in the 6/12/09 letter: "The re-estimated usage was based on the actual usage of 3.8230 therms per day established from 3/27/08 - 4/1/08. In the billing month of 12/4/08 to 1/8/09, just prior to the meter malfunction you established actual usage of 3.9510 therms per day.

Usage in February and March tend to be higher than usage in April due to the difference in temperatures, but we opted to estimate both February and March at the same daily usage as the April usage. This is a fair and reasonable basis for estimation, since it is typical for February and March usage to be significantly higher than either January or April consumption and often higher than January consumption."

4) PSE is threatening me to either pay the current adjusted charges of \$382.08 or face paying late charges and threatening to put me in collections starting 7 days from the date of their last letter to me dated 8/18/09.

The company is required, by law, to bill you for the usage. To not do so is considered rate discrimination, meaning you would be billed less than other rate payers. The other rate payers would have to make up the difference by paying more. The company is required, by Commission rule to allow payments of, at least, the same duration as the time it took them to discover and fix the problem. In your case, a minimum of 4 months. You

will need to let me know if you accept the payment arrangements.

5) I still do not understand how they are determining the charges, it has gone from 663.56 to now 382.08 based on no metered usage or proof of damaged equipment for 4 months.

A. See response to question number 3. The meter was broken in January and was replaced by a new meter. The company listened to your objection to the estimate and re-calculated the usage based on the new information that you provided.

6) when I received my current billing for month of July PSE charged me extra for the months of May 5th - June 4th for what they say was a Gas increase rate change. I do not understand this.

A. The rate change effective June 1, was a rate reduction averaging 1.8% overall due to lower wholesale gas prices that PSE paid to purchase natural gas last winter.

7) PSE has quoted RCW 80.28.080 and 80.28.090. I do not find in the RCW's that they can go back and make a guess (estimation) of any past charges. I am seriously questioning the validity of these charges.

A. Again, WAC 480-90-178 allows the company to estimate. RCW 80.28.80, 80.28.90, and 80.28.100 all deal with the rates to be charged. All three are about rate discrimination, and that it is against the law to charge one person more, or less than another. Basically, these laws state that if you used the service, then you are required to pay for it.

Puget can and will attempt to collect for the usage from January to May. Please let me know if you agree to payment arrangements. If you choose to not pay, then the company will disconnect the service. While I understand this is not the outcome you had hoped for, I hope this information is useful to you. I will be recording violations of the rules against Puget for not billing you properly for 4 months.

Sincerely,

Mike Meeks
Consumer Program Specialist
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission

*** 08/27/2009 Email: Mike Meeks << customer



SUBJECT: WA-Puget Complaint UTC - 107291 / Puget Sound Energy Acct#
855-173-000-8

Mr. Meeks:

I am responding to your e-mail to me dated 8/26/09. Please see below my comments to your answers.

2) A. (your answer)

The equipment was discovered to be broken when no usage was recorded on your meter beginning January 3, 2009. An examination of the broken meter showed a broken module drive.

Comment: This took 4 months to figure out? Who is the expert here?

It is unfortunate that you didn't notice your consumption was extremely low for these 4 months.

Comment: REALLY? I find this comment to be very arrogant....Again who are the experts here?

For the month of Dec. (12/4/08 to 1/8/09) my usage per day was 3.9 due to the fact I was using my Gas Fireplace and set my thermostat so it was comfortable in my house. When I had received my billing statement (\$221.29) for this time period, I immediately turned my Thermostat to the lowest that I could possibly stand. I have never used my gas Fireplace since. I was in fact trying very hard to get my payments extremely low. So to answer your arrogant comment, no I did not notice that it was extremely low. I was trying to get my consumption as low as possible. If you had done your home work and reviewed the months prior to Dec 08, in the month of November my usage was only 1.9.

3) A. (your answer)

The company is allowed by Rule: WAC 480-09-178 (1) (ii) (i) to estimate usage.

Comment: Yes, I see that it states PSE has the right to estimate. What I find ironic is, WAC 480-90-178 (1) (j) states "the utility may not estimate for more than four consecutive months" and yet they are claiming 4 months. I need an explanation as to how this ended up to be exactly 4 months as stated in the WAC? How can I be sure that it wasn't just one month?

You state: "this is a fair and reasonable basis for estimation, since it is typical for February and March usage to be significantly higher than either January or April consumption and often higher than January consumption."

Comment: I am confused by this statement; this makes no sense to me. How would the usage/consumption be higher in February and March than January? Please explain, I will need documentation on this for proof.

4) A. (your answer)

The company (PSE) is required, by commission rule to allow payments of, at least, the same duration as the time it took them to discover and fix the problem. In your case, a minimum of 4 months. You will need to let me know if you accept the payment arrangements.

Comment: I am still very confused and very suspicious of why this took 4 months to figure out. If the dial was broken, and as stated to me by PSE, that broken pieces were showing on the meter dial, why wouldn't the person (employee of PSE) coming out to read the meter for usage not see that? Also, why would I need to let you know about payment arrangements? I would be contacting PSE with that information. I am really contacting you to find out what my rights are, but apparently I have none according you. Isn't it funny how it's always the consumer that gets screwed? I wonder where you fit in with PSE, do you actually work for WUTC or PSE?

5) A. (your answer)

See response to question number 3. The meter was broken in January and was replaced by a new meter. The company listened to your objection to the

estimate and re-calculated the usage based on the new information that you provided.

Comment: Again, I find your response to my question to be very arrogant and bullying. I DO NOT UNDERSTAND HOW THEY ARE CALCULATING, based on the \$382. What is the usage per day? Also, why would I contact you to accept payment on this? Wouldn't that be with PSE?

I do not agree with the charges.

6) A. (your answer)

The rate change effective June 1, was rate reduction averaging 1.8% overall due to lower wholesale gas prices that PSE paid to purchase natural gas last winter.

Comment: WHAT? Are you for real? That statement doesn't even make sense first of all, and when I discussed with other people about this being on there bill, they didn't see any rate increase of 1.8% on their bills. Please explain in further detail.

7) A. (your answer)

Again, WAC 480-90-178 allows the company to estimate. RCW 80.28.80, 80.28.90, and 80.28.100 all deal with the rates to be charged. All three are about rate discrimination, and that it is against the law to charge one person more, or less than another. Basically, these laws state that if you used the service, then you are required to pay for it.

Comment: They do not know if I used it or not!!!!

Mr. Meeks,

I find you to be very arrogant and bullying. I do not appreciate your tone with me. I want to make very clear to you that I do not throw my money away. I live on a very strict budget to be able to afford my own home. I do not have extra money nor do I appreciate when somebody calls me on the phone on a Saturday to tell me I owe them money. I tend to be very suspicious of people when they call to say I owe \$663 rather than sending a formal letter with the company letterhead. My first thought, this is a SCAM!!!

I also want to make very clear that this is not an average family of 4 living in this household. I find it to be very unlikely that I had used 3.8 usage/consumption for the months of Feb - April when my consumption for November was only 1.9. I find PSE's calculation to be nothing more than extortion. PSE is trying to charge me the maximum of what I have used in the past. I DO NOT FIND THIS TO BE FAIR. I didn't freeze my ass off all winter so Puget power could come back and screw me.

You will need to forward my complaint to someone else. I find you untrustworthy and nothing more than a bully. Diana Harder, Consumer

*** 08/31/2009 08:18 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Mike Meeks/WUTC@WUTC



This customer wants this escalated.

*** 09/11/2009 03:47 PM Email: Suzanne Stillwell >> Molly Brown



Molly, can you bring this account/usage history current, too. Thanks,

*** 09/11/2009 04:25 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Brown, Molly



No arrangements made. I provided Mike copy of statements showing the rate changes she was referring to in one of her emails. I will send to you also. Credit suspension has been held until 9/30/09.

SEE ATTACHED STATEMENT

*** 09/11/2009 04:25 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Brown, Molly



3 bill summaries attached; June, July and August.

*** 09/18/2009 02:11 PM Email: Suzanne Stillwell >> Molly Brown



Molly, I'm not finding the usage history on this account.

*** 09/18/2009 02:23 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Product history attached

*** 09/23/2009 02:20 PM Action: Suzanne Stillwell



Reviewing the following:

June, July, August bills

Product history

Statement history

Original bill & corrected bill

Estimate worksheet

Co. letters to customer

*** 09/23/2009 02:33 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> Fuchs, Vera L



Vera, when was this customers' service established?

*** 09/23/2009 02:34 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Established March 27, 2008

*** 09/23/2009 02:36 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> Fuchs, Vera L



Was that the builder start date, or her?

*** 09/23/2009 02:37 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



It was her start date.

*** 09/23/2009 02:37 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



The builders was November 19, 2007

*** 09/23/2009 02:39 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



So, when you redid the estimate you based it on her history since 3/2008, right?

*** 09/23/2009 02:44 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



That is correct, estimate is based on customer's actual usage established after move in.

*** 09/24/2009 02:30 PM Action: Suzanne Stillwell



Continuing to review documents. It is very confusing to me, and I can imagine that is why the consumer was so unhappy.

*** 09/24/2009 02:58 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> Fuchs, Vera L



I have misplaced your phone number. Can you give me a call to discuss this live. Thanks, Suzanne

*** 09/24/2009 03:07 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



I have left a message on the office phone, that I am available until 3:30pm today and after 7:30am tomorrow. My number is 425-424-6743 thank you, Vera

*** 09/24/2009 03:10 PM Phone: Suzanne Stillwell >> Vera



Discussed the difficulty in deciphering the proper charges with the bill so confusing; so many debits and credits, and sometimes two debits and credits for each month. I understand conceptually what they have done and it is sound, however, I need to understand and to easily explain the results to the customer. Exactly how did they estimate the new charges for each of the 4 months that the meter failed. Vera said that the person who has worked on the detail is out til Monday. OK to have an extension until Tuesday. Yes. We'll plan to talk about it on Tuesday.

*** 09/24/2009 03:38 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Vera, can you also provide a copy of the last bill (September). Thx.

*** 09/24/2009 04:06 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> Customer



Dear Ms. Harder, you asked that a supervisor review your back bill complaint against Puget Sound Energy. I am currently reviewing your complaint and hope to finish it up early next week. I am sorry that your experience with our staff was unsatisfactory, and I will do my best to help answer all your questions and concerns. I look forward to talking with you next week after I complete my review. Sincerely,

*** 10/02/2009 02:35 PM Email: Suzanne Stillwell >> vera.fuchs



Vera, I have not heard back from you about these requests (forwarded 9/24 310pm and 338pm activity).

*** 10/05/2009 09:03 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



I originally sent the message to the wrong email address; and now re-sending.

*** 10/05/2009 09:08 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



I will provided that info today, sorry I failed to follow up with the agent, my error. Thanks for the reminder. Vera

*** 10/05/2009 09:23 AM Action: Suzanne Stillwell



Note violation for failing to respond on time

*** 10/05/2009 11:55 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Hope this will help if not I will continue to provide anything I can.....

When the first back bill was done, it was based off the builders usage as this was the majority of the usage history that we had available, this resulted in a debit of \$663.56.

PSE found this to be too high in May, so we adjusted the back bill based on the small amount of usage history we had prior to the meter malfunction as we did not have any new usage information from the meter yet, this time the debit came to \$503.38.

We then adjusted the back bill again in August after we had more usage from the meter to work with and this resulted in a back bill debit of \$382.08.

This would account for why there are 2-3 different debits and credits showing on the account but this was all done in accordance with PSE's gas tariff, Rule No. 8, section 7(c) that states "the use of gas in a similar period of like use under similar conditions when the meter was registering accurately."

The current account balance is \$382.08, which is all for the usage from the back bill. The payments that have been made have been applied to the current gas and electrical charges since the back bill is in dispute. I have included a copy of the September statement as requested.

SEE ATTACHED SEPTEMBER 09 STATEMENT

*** 10/12/2009 03:16 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Now I'm working on Diana Harder...hopefully get it done this afternoon!!

*** 10/12/2009 03:17 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << 'Fuchs, Vera L'



There is no hurry, I am just trying to keep my ducks in line. I do not want there to be any issues for our Molly when she returns!! Vera

*** 10/13/2009 11:00 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



As I review the details in this complaint, I find a few comments from the customer that were not addressed. Please respond to each comment below:

"For the month of Dec. (12/4/08 to 1/8/09) my usage per day was 3.9 due to the fact I was using my Gas Fireplace and set my thermostat so it was comfortable in my house. When I had received my billing statement (\$221.29) for this time period, I immediately turned my Thermostat to the lowest that I could possibly stand. I have never used my gas Fireplace since. I was in fact trying very hard to get my payments extremely low...I was trying to get my consumption as low as possible. If you had done your home work and reviewed the months prior to Dec 08, in the month of November my usage was only 1.9."

"I also want to make very clear that this is not an average family of 4 living in this household. I find it to be very unlikely that I had used 3.8 usage/consumption for the months of Feb - April when my consumption for November was only 1.9..."

"Why did it take 4 months to identify and correct the meter?"

Please review the above comments and consider making an additional adjustment. Also, what type of payment arrangements did you offer if different than 4 months? I look forward to your response.

*** 10/13/2009 12:09 PM Action: Suzanne Stillwell



Drafting closing letter.

*** 10/14/2009 04:20 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



With regards to the usage, the months of December and January were our coldest in years and the average temperature was 35-38 degrees while in November it was 47 degrees. We only estimated the month of January 2009 at an average of 3.8424 a day. February was estimated at an average of 2.7202, March at 2.1762 and April at 1.5434. In comparing it to usage this last week when the weather has for sure changed with the season, Diana is using 1-2 CCF's a day and we are no where near the temperatures of December 2008 and January 2009. So estimating at 3.84 for the one month appears to be accurate.

We strictly estimate off the best available information we have which is the actual consumption before the meter malfunctioned and in this case since it was repaired. We do not estimate off the number of persons within the home.

The meter was repaired on 4/28/09. Only after it registers zero consumption for 60 days in a row would it show on a report for us to review. We then review each meter in the office and then send out a technician on meters we feel are not operating correctly. The first bill to show zero was the March 4th bill. We had the meter repaired on 4/28/09 and billing corrected by 5/16/09. If a customer were to call us upon receiving the first incorrect bill of zero usage, we do correct these faster.

An interest free payment plan was offered to the customer but she did not agree so no installment were ever created, no specified timeframe was noted other than the 4 months. We could set up installments for up to 8 months if needed.

I believe this should address all the additional concerns. If there is anything further, please let us know.

*** 10/14/2009 04:45 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Ok, the estimate sounds reasonable. For some reason I thought you applied the higher therms to February, too. So, was the meter device running slow or sporadically for a month or so before it quit?

*** 10/23/2009 12:10 PM Email: Suzanne Stillwell >> vera.fuchs



Vera, I didn't hear back about the following question:

*** 10/14/2009 04:45 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'

Ok, the estimate sounds reasonable. For some reason I thought you applied the higher therms to February, too. So, was the meter device running slow or sporadically for a month or so before it quit?

*** 10/23/2009 12:17 PM Email: Suzanne Stillwell >> Vera.fuchs



Vera, I am sending out a letter to the customer. Who should she call (and what number) to confirm the payment arrangements? I will email you a copy once it's finalized.

*** 10/26/2009 08:31 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



It would be best for her to call the 1-866-767-5853 number, select option 2, then 1....that will get her to the first available agent.

*** 10/26/2009 08:36 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



I am not sure I understand this question but till try to answer it to the best of my abilities.

We did apply the higher therm usage to the month of February as we had originally only billed 15 therms after the correction was done we billed 119 therms. The meter device was working fine before it stopped, it just stopped at the beginning of the billing cycle in the January to February billing. So a few days of usage got recorded while the rest of the month didn't.

*** 10/26/2009 12:13 PM Letter: Anna Gill >> Consumer



Letter from Suzanne Stillwell to Consumer:

October 26, 2009

Diana Harder
5643 56th Ave SE
Lacey, WA 98503

RE: Complaint No. 107291

Dear Ms. Harder:

This letter is in response to your back-bill complaint against Puget Sound Energy (PSE). You had asked that a supervisor review the results of your complaint. I have reviewed the complaint. I apologize for your experience, and am providing answers to your questions.

One of your concerns was how PSE came up with the final bill of \$382.08 for four months use. As you know, the account has been adjusted a few times. When the first back bill (\$663.56) was calculated, it was based off the usage history that the company had available to use at that time. When they learned that this was primarily the builders' usage, they identified a small amount of your actual usage history prior to the meter malfunction. Based on that usage, PSE adjusted the charge to \$503.38. Once they had more actual usage from the meter, the company adjusted the back bill again to \$382.08.

The months of December 2008 and January 2009 were our coldest in years. The average temperature was 35-38 degrees, while in November it was 47 degrees. The

company estimated only the month of January 2009 at an average of 3.8424 hundred cubic feet (CCF) a day. February was estimated at an average of 2.7202, March at 2.1762 and April at 1.5434. In comparing this to your recent usage when the weather has changed with the season, you are using 1-2 CCFs a day. However, the temperatures are nowhere near the temperatures of last winter. The company's estimate at 3.84 CCFs for the month of January appears to be accurate.

I understand that you were advised that the company has the right to collect for the service. The law requires the company to collect for services provided. The company's tariff, approved by the Utilities and Transportation Commission, allows PSE to estimate the charges based on the use of gas in a similar period of like use under similar conditions when the meter was registering accurately. PSE calculated the charges based on the best information available, and that is why they continued to make adjustments once they spoke with you and realized that the earlier usage was from the builder, and gained more actual use from the meter.

You were also concerned about why it took four months for the company to identify the problem. The company uses electronic meter reading devices, not meter readers. The company advised me that only after the meter registers zero consumption for 60 days in a row would it show up on a report to review. After this review, they send out a technician to check the meters they believe are not operating correctly. The first bill to show zero use was the March 4 bill. The meter was repaired on April 28, and the bill corrected by May 16. If a customer were to call the company upon receiving the first incorrect bill of zero usage, it would be corrected faster.

Commission staff is very concerned about the length of time it takes to fix this type of problem, and we meet regularly with the company. The issue of back-billing for services because of a broken or malfunctioning meter is an issue that was addressed with PSE in October 2008, and the commission has established requirements for the company around correcting these problems.

I am upholding the company's estimate. You are responsible to pay \$382.08 for the back bill. If you do not pay these charges, the company will disconnect your service. The company has offered an eight month payment arrangement which is double what they are required to provide. Please contact Puget at 1-866-767-5853 (select option 2, then 1) to confirm this payment arrangement.

I hope this information is helpful to you. Your complaint will be closed, however; if you have further questions, please contact me at 1-888-333-WUTC (9882).

Sincerely,

Suzanne Stillwell
Deputy Assistant Director, Consumer Protection

*** 10/26/2009 12:18 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Vera, here is a copy of the letter being mailed to the customer today.
(See attached file: Diana Harder.pdf)

*** 10/26/2009 12:32 PM Violation: 480-90-178(e) -



Violation of the billing requirement rule for failing to show correctly the current and previous meter readings, the current read date, and the total amount of therms used. Four counts of violations for months of February, March, April and May 2009. Company advised.

*** 10/26/2009 12:36 PM Violation: 480-90-173(3)(c) -



Asked for followup information on 9/24 due 9/28. Company did not provide info until 10/5. Rule requires response to the request for additional complaint information within three business days of the request. Company notified of violation.

*** 10/26/2009 12:45 PM Email: Suzanne Stillwell >> vera.fuchs



Vera, Okay to close the complaint at this time and please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening. I have noted the following violations. Suzanne

*** 10/26/2009 12:32 PM Violation: 480-90-178(e) - 4 counts

Violation of the billing requirement rule for incorrectly showing the current and previous meter readings, the current read date, and the total amount of therms used. Four counts of violations for months of February, March, April and May 2009.

*** 10/26/2009 12:36 PM Violation: 480-90-173(3)(c) - 5 counts

Violation of complaint response rule. Asked for followup information on 9/24 due 9/28. Company did not provide info until 10/5. Rule requires response to the request for additional complaint information within three business days of the request.

Washington UTC Complaint

107381

Company: Puget Sound Energy G703

Customer: Account# 773-948-077-5

Diana Johnson

Contact:

4813 Bering St. NW

Gig Harbor, WA 98332

Primary Phone: (253) 509-0460

Secondary: (253) 509-0460

E-mail addr: djohnson98332@gmail.com

Complaint: 107381

Serviced by: **Suzanne Stillwell**

Opened on: 09/08/2009

Grouped by: Disputed Bill

Closed on: 09/21/2009

Disposition: Company upheld with arrangements

Description:



10/12/09 escalated to supervisor (RK's complaint).

Consumer is disputing retroactive bill from 12/08 to 4/09 in the amount of \$582.18. Consumer does not believe the company should have the legal right to retroactively bill them based on estimated charges.

- Sent a certified letter to PSE. PSE did not provide a written response.
- Consumer wants PSE to eliminate the disputed charges.

Passed complaint to PSE via e-mail on 9/8/09 (10:29). Initial response due by 9/10/09.

Results:

(9/21 RK) PSE retroactively billed the consumer for 4 months of service between 12/20/08 - 3/27/09 due to a stopped AMR. PSE estimated the bill based on a history from 12/13/07 - 7/11/08 and lowered that by 23% of the bill (\$174.73).

(11/2 SLS) Due to compelling usage changes, PSE reconsidered estimate and credited 40% off original bill; revised bill \$753.78 - \$301.51 = \$452.27, and provided 10 month payment arrangements.

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 09/08/2009 10:32 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown



Molly - Please respond to this complaint by 9/10/09.

- Please explain circumstances for the back bill
- Please provide the dates for the back bill
- Was the retroactive bill based on actual or estimated usage?
- Please provide account history for the period of the back bill. Also, please provide comparative history either prior to or after the back bill (if available).
- Please provide usage history for the period of the back bill to include any comparative data available that shows increases or decreases in usage.
- Were any adjustments offered the customer? Reason? Amount?
- What arrangements were given the customer?
- If meter failure, what was the cause of the failure - please be detailed.

Please provide corrective action(s) with dates.

*** 09/08/2009 10:33 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



I am responding to your complaint with Puget Sound Energy. Please tell me how you found out about the Utilities and Transportation. I have opened an informal complaint on your behalf, and will begin working with the company to resolve your complaint immediately. Please allow me one - two weeks to complete my investigation. You will not hear from me until I've completed my investigation, at which time I will contact you to discuss my findings. If you have questions, please contact me either by email, or toll-free at 1-800-562-6150.

The company may wish to talk with you during the complaint. You are not obligated to speak to the company if you don't want to. If you chose not to speak to the company, please let me know now and I will advise them of this. However, I will be investigating your issues in this complaint.

*** 09/08/2009 10:56 AM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Diana Johnson



Thank you for the response. I was actually referred to the Utilities and Transportation Commission by a Puget Sound Energy representative during a call about this issue. I called PSE this morning to request that they place a hold on our account to prevent our gas from being shut off. Other than that, I'll wait to hear back from you. If you need additional documentation or have any questions, please let me know.

*** 09/10/2009 09:59 AM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly



PSE received the letter and provided detailed response in several phone conversations dated 8/7/09 and 8/10/09. PSE Billing Agent also spent 10 minutes explaining the back bill issue and estimated charges with Mrs. Johnson on 7/14/09. Customer wanted the legal interpretation that allowed PSE to back bill based on estimated usage. This information was provided to her on 7/14/09 during phone conversation. This information can also be found on our website www.pse.com > Inside PSE > Gas Tariff and Rules > Rule No. 8, Section 7.

Customer has already received a rework of the bill based on information that she provided PSE.

1. What was the reason for the back-bill? *Stopped meter. AMR module changed out on 6/18/09.

2. Dates for the back-bill
* 12/12/08 - 6/12/09

3. Dates meter stopped
12/12/08 - 3/27/09

4. Was this actual or estimated usage?

* Estimated. The correction was estimated based on PSE's filed gas tariff, Rule No. 8, Section 7, (c) which states "the use of gas in a

similar period of like use under similar conditions when the meter was registering accurately."

Were any adjustments provided?

* Yes a credit of \$174.73.

* Re-worked per customer information used history from 12/13/07 to 7/11/08 to estimate usage and lowered that by 10%.

5. Was an installment plan provided?

No - customer has not agreed to one.

6. Copy of bill detail, worksheet and statement attached.

((SEE ATTACHMENT FIELD OF THIS ACTIVITY)))

*** 09/10/2009 11:43 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



I have completed my investigation into your complaint with Puget Sound Energy regarding the disputed retroactive bill. Here is a summary of my investigation:

1. What was the reason for the back-bill? *Stopped meter. AMR module changed out on 6/18/09.

2. Dates for the back-bill

* 12/12/08 - 6/12/09

3. Dates meter stopped

12/12/08 - 3/27/09

4. Was this actual or estimated usage?

* Estimated. The correction was estimated based on PSE's filed gas tariff, Rule No. 8, Section 7, (c) which states "the use of gas in a similar period of like use under similar conditions when the meter was registering accurately."

Were any adjustments provided?

* Yes a credit of \$174.73.

* Re-worked per customer information used history from 12/13/07 to 7/11/08 to estimate usage and lowered that by 10%.

5. Was an installment plan provided?

No - customer has not agreed to one.

By state law, customers are responsible to pay for energy services used. Here are the rules that apply.

WAC 480-90-183(5) (Complaint meter tests) states that the utility must adjust the bills to the customer based on the best information available to determine the appropriate charges. The utility must offer payment arrangements in accordance with WAC 480-100-138(2). This rule states that a utility must offer all residential customers the option of an equal-payments plan. An equal-payment plan allows the customer to pay the same amount each month based on historical usage.

- WAC 480-90-183(5) <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=480-90-183>

- WAC 480-100-138(1) Company is required to offer payment arrangements that are equal to the length of time the bill was delayed.

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=480-90-138>

- WAC 480-100-138(2) <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=480-90-138>

NOTE: WAC 480-100-183(5) also requires the utility to refund or bill the customer for the proper usage. This really implements the statute RCW 80.28.080 (published rates to be charged).

- RCW 80.28.080 <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=80.28.080>

Our rules require PSE to consider a minimum of a 6 month payment arrangement because the retroactive bill was for 6 months. Do you need PSE to consider a longer timeframe for the payment arrangement? If so, please provide your rationale for requesting a longer time to pay the retroactive bill.

I will consider my investigation closed at this time. However, please feel free to contact me if you have questions. Thank you.

*** 09/10/2009 11:49 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown



Molly - I have the following questions.

- Why is the dates of the back bill different from the dates the meter stopped?
- Why did PSE lower the estimated usage by another 10%?
- What was the total amount of the retroactive bill?

*** 09/10/2009 12:50 PM Phone: Roger Kouchi << consumer



Consumer had the following comments.

- Doesn't understand how the AMR was broken. Wouldn't there be a actual read from the meter if just the AMR was broken?
- Consumer stated that many of the months had usage. There was only 1 month with a zero read. How did PSE figure out when the meter was broken?
- Consumer stated that they used electricity (i.e., electric heaters and electric blankets). They use Peninsula Electric with low electric rates. She can show that her electric bills increased during the disputed billing period. She will provide copies of her Peninsula Light bills to show that her electric bills increased.

*** 09/10/2009 12:54 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown



Molly - Please respond to the consumer's comments. Thank you.

*** 09/10/2009 12:57 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Diana Johnson



Attached are Peninsula Light Co. bills from the first month of service (1/08) to 6/08, and from 12/08 through 6/09 to document our use of electric heat during last winter compared to gas heat the previous winter.

Usage was as follows:

1/08: 313 KWH, 1/09 1270 KWH

2/08: 313 KWH, 2/09: 1211 KWH

3/08: 1045 KWH, 3/09: 944 KWH (2 wk. vacation in 3/09, lights and appliances off)

4/08: 868 KWH, 4/09: 916 KWH (warmer temps. outdoors, occasional electric heat used)

5/08: 835 KWH, 5/09: 852 KWH (occasional electric heat used)

If it would be helpful to have the PSE statements also, please let me know and I'll obtain them.

*** 09/10/2009 01:30 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> Molly Brown



Molly - Here is a copy of the consumer's documentation.
(((SEE ATTACHMENT FIELD OF THIS ACTIVITY)))

*** 09/11/2009 09:59 AM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Hopefully this email responds to the last two emails I received with your questions and the email with the Peninsula Light Statements.

The reason the dates of the back bill are different than the dates that the meter stopped is because the exchange in CLX was delayed. The meter was repaired on 3/27/09 but the correction in CLX was not done until 6/18/09. So the only amount estimated was 12/12/08 to 3/27/09 and the rest is actual usage.

We lowered the estimated usage by 10% as the customer advised us that the property had been vacant for a few weeks due to vacation and because of reduced consumption from lowering the thermostat and adding electric space heaters to the basement.

The module pins were broken. This stops the gears inside the meter from turning resulting in a stopped meter and module. We would not have had a correct read from the meter because of this.

The customer is correct that many of the months had usage. This is because the time period from 3/27/09 forward is actual usage. The dates that we estimated usage were 12/12/08 to 3/27/09 and of this time 2 of the months had no usage and two had very low usage as the meter stopped in the middle of the billing cycle on one (12/12/08 to 1/12/09) and was repaired in the middle of the billing cycle on the other (3/14/09 to 4/13/09).

Here is the information from the spreadsheet and a brief explanation on each one to help show how the usage was distributed.

Date	Original Billing		
Corrected			
Billing			
5/14/09 to 6/12/2009	22	\$39.13	22
\$39.13 Usage & amount billed are the same as this is actual consumption.			

4/14/09 to 5/13/2009	63	\$94.02	63
\$94.02 Usage & amount billed are the same as this is actual consumption.			

3/14/09 to 4/13/2009	57	\$85.80	103
\$145.34 Usage & amount billed are different because module was replaced on 3/27/09, so 14 days are estimated and 17 are actual, please note that the usage before the correction is 57 therms and this was the 17 days worth of actual			

usage, which averages out to 3.35 therms a day. When we did the correction we only billed 103 therms which is only 46 therms higher for 14 days we had to estimate, which averages out to 3.28 therms a day.

2/12/09 to 3/13/2009 0 \$10.55 123
\$171.92 || Usage & amount billed are completely estimated as no consumption was billed.

1/13/09 to 2/11/2009 0 \$10.55 164
\$226.55 || Usage & amount billed are completely estimated as no consumption was billed.

12/12/08 to 1/12/2009 47 \$72.93
155 \$215.07 || Usage & amount billed are different because module was stopped on 12/19/08, so 24 days are estimated and 8 days are actual, please note that the usage before the correction is 47 therms and this was the 8 days worth of actual usage, which averages out to 5.875 therms a day. When we did the correction we only billed 155 therms total which is only 108 therms higher for 24 days we had to estimate, which averages out to 4.5 therms a day.

In regards to the Peninsula Light bills:
As far as the attachments go they will not make a difference. Corporate Billing feels their rework is correct.

The meter was repaired on 3/27/09, so the May and June billings are actual. The statements might have affected the April billing but the customer was already given a 10% reduction on ALL months of any estimated usage. This was based on the information she provided to our agents regarding their reduced usage this year. Diana advised one of our leads that they had added electric space heaters to the basement of their home. This would account for the increase in their electric usage but still would not have been putting out enough heat to keep the house even moderately comfortable unless the customer was in the immediate area of the space heater. She also advised that they had their thermostat set at 67 degrees when people were home, 60 degrees when no one home and at night when they had gone to bed.

*** 09/11/2009 11:17 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown



Molly - Ok. Thanks. I have the following questions:

- Please confirm that the retroactive bill is \$528.18 minus \$174.73 = \$353.45 (12/12/08 - 3/27/09)
- It appears that there were only 2 months of zero usage. I don't understand why PSE adjusted the non zero read months.

*** 09/11/2009 01:15 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly



1. The retro active bill is \$579.05 (see last email sent). Not sure where you're getting your figures.
2. The meter was repaired on 3/27/09 but the correction in our billing system

(CLX) was not done until 6/18/09. This was explained in my 9/10/09 email to you.

"The customer is correct that many of the months had usage. This is because the time period from 3/27/09 forward is actual usage. The dates that we estimated usage were 12/12/08 to 3/27/09 and of this time 2 of the months had no usage and two had very low usage as the meter stopped in the middle of the billing cycle on one (12/12/08 to 1/12/09) and was repaired in the middle of the billing cycle on the other (3/14/09 to 4/13/09) ."

*** 09/15/2009 01:12 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown



Molly - Please show me PSE's calculation of the total retroactive charges of 579.05. I'm not sure where you are getting your figures. Thanks.

*** 09/15/2009 01:19 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Please see the bill detail and worksheet I sent with our response on 9/10/09.

*** 09/18/2009 03:42 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> Molly Brown



Molly - Need some help. I know you keep saying PSE's calculation of the total retroactive charges of 579.05 was explained in your 9/10/09 e-mail to me. I don't have a 9/10/09 e-mail from you. I have a 9/11/09 e-mail (see below). I still can't see where the \$579.05 is coming from. Please show me which figures you are using from the data provided below. Thank you.

PSE's explanation of the retroactive bill

Here is the information from the spreadsheet and a brief explanation on each one to help show how the usage was distributed.

Date	Original	Billing	
Corrected Billing			
5/14/09 to 6/12/2009	22	\$39.13	22
\$39.13 Usage & amount billed are the same as this is actual consumption.			
4/14/09 to 5/13/2009	63	\$94.02	63
\$94.02 Usage & amount billed are the same as this is actual consumption.			
3/14/09 to 4/13/2009	57	\$85.80	103
\$145.34 Usage & amount billed are different because module was replaced on 3/27/09, so 14 days are estimated and 17 are actual, please note that the usage before the correction is 57 therms and this was the 17 days worth of actual usage, which averages out to 3.35 therms a day. When we did the correction we only billed 103 therms which is only 46 therms higher for 14 days we had to estimate, which averages out to 3.28 therms a day.			
2/12/09 to 3/13/2009	0	\$10.55	123
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12/12/08 to 1/12/2009 47 \$72.93
155 \$215.07 ¶ Usage & amount billed are different because module was stopped on 12/19/08, so 24 days are estimated and 8 days are actual, please note that the usage before the correction is 47 therms and this was the 8 days worth of actual usage, which averages out to 5.875 therms a day. When we did the correction we only billed 155 therms total which is only 108 therms higher for 24 days we had to estimate, which averages out to 4.5 therms a day.

*** 09/18/2009 04:12 PM Email: Roger Kouchi << Molly Brown



Your message

To: molly.brown@pse.com
Subject:

was read on 9/18/2009 4:00 PM.

*** 09/21/2009 07:29 AM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Please take the totals on the right hand side and then subtract the totals from the left hand side to get the \$579.05.

Here is an example:

Left hand side (original billed amount) (back billed amount):	Right hand side
\$39.13 +	\$39.13 +
\$94.02 +	\$94.02 +
\$85.80 +	\$145.34
+	
\$10.55 +	\$171.92
+	
\$10.55 +	\$226.55
+	
\$72.93	\$215.07
-----	-----
\$312.98	\$892.03

\$892.03-\$312.98= \$579.05

I hope this helps explain it. Please let me know what if I can provide any additional information.

*** 09/21/2009 12:24 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera - I don't see the courtesy 10% credit adjustment (\$174.73) anywhere. Is the total retroactive bill \$579.05 minus \$174.73 (10% credit) = \$404.32?

Please confirm. Thank you.

\$892.03-\$312.98= \$579.05

*** 09/21/2009 12:44 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



I think there is some confusion, what was indicated was that "We lowered the estimated usage by 10% as the customer advised us that the property had been vacant for a few weeks due to vacation and because of reduced consumption from lowering the thermostat and adding electric space heaters to the basement.

This would not be a credit adjustment as the billing is based on the lower by 10% usage.

Hope that helps.

*** 09/21/2009 01:52 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



I have completed my investigation into your complaint with PSE regarding the retroactive bill from 12/12/08 to 3/27/09. Here are the responses to your 9/10/09 e-mail.

- The meter stopped because the module pins were broken. This stops the gears inside the meter from turning which results in a stopped meter and meter module.
- PSE only estimated the period from 12/12/08 to 3/27/09 when the meter reads were zero. The rest of the months were actual reads.
- PSE lowered the estimated usage by 10% because you advised the company that the property had been vacant for a few weeks due to vacation and because of reduced consumption from lowering the thermostat and adding electric space heaters to the basement. PSE indicated that there would still be gas consumption unless you completely turned off the furnace and hot water heater. The hot water heaters typically use about 30% of the heating energy. Even if you turn the furnace down to the lowest level, there is a safety setting of about 50 degrees to prevent the house and water pipes from freezing. The night time temperatures are cold and would cause the furnace and hot water heater to kick on.

I regret that this may not be the response you expected. I have completed my investigation and have determined that PSE reasonably estimated your usage. I am closing my investigation at this time. However, please feel free to contact me if you have questions. Thank you.

*** 09/21/2009 01:53 PM Violation: 480-90-178(1)(e) -



Violations for back bill due to a non-registering gas meter for the period of 12/12/08 to 3/27/09 (total of 4 months). Commission staff is recording 4 violations of WAC 480-90-178(1)(e) Billing requirements and payment date against PSE for failing to issue this consumer monthly billing statements showing current and previous meter readings, the current read date, and the total amount of therms used for the billing period.

*** 09/21/2009 01:54 PM Violation: 480-90-178(1)(f) -



Violations for back bill due to a non-registering gas meter for the period of 12/12/08 to 3/27/09 (total of 4

months). Commission staff is recording 4 violations of WAC 480-90-178(1)(f) Billing requirements and payment date, against PSE for failing to issue this consumer monthly billing statements showing amount of therms used and applicable billing rates per therm for the billing period.

*** 09/21/2009 01:55 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> molly brown



Molly - Please see my notes regarding violations of Washington Administrative Code 480-90 below.

Violations for back bill due to a non-registering gas meter for the period of 12/12/08 to 3/27/09 (total of 4 months). Commission staff is recording 4 violations of WAC 480-90-178(1)(e) Billing requirements and payment date against PSE for failing to issue this consumer monthly billing statements showing current and previous meter readings, the current read date, and the total amount of therms used for the billing period.

Violations for back bill due to a non-registering gas meter for the period of 12/12/08 to 3/27/09 (total of 4 months). Commission staff is recording 4 violations of WAC 480-90-178(1)(f) Billing requirements and payment date, against PSE for failing to issue this consumer monthly billing statements showing amount of therms used and applicable billing rates per therm for the billing period.

Thank you. This complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 09/21/2009 10:56 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << consumer



I understand that your determination was based on the information provided to you by PSE, but it is incorrect. Attached is the bill PSE sent us for your information.

(1) We agree the meter stopped. There were 0 therms billed on 2/11/09 and 3/13/09. We agree that we owe PSE for those months.

(2) PSE estimated the ENTIRE 6 month period from 12/12/08 to 6/12/09, including four months in which the meter WAS NOT STOPPED. We were billed for therms used those months (the small amount used by the furnace and water heater) and paid our bills.

The maximum we would owe PSE, taking the largest 2009 bill in April, would be $2 \times 94.02 = \$188.04$, of which we already paid $2 \times \$10.55$. We owe PSE no more than \$166.94 and are willing to pay this amount.

In short, PSE is not just billing us for the stopped meter, but is using the stopped meter as an excuse to bill us the difference between this year's consumption and last year's.

*** 09/22/2009 07:12 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



Thank you for your feedback. I will take another look at your account and get back to you.

*** 09/22/2009 07:15 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera Fuchs - Consumer is saying that there were only 2 months of zero consumption (i.e., 2/11/09 and 3/13/09 bills). Please see the consumer's data below and respond. Thank you.

*** 09/22/2009 07:27 AM Email: Roger Kouchi << vera fuchs



Your message

To: vera.fuchs@pse.com
Subject:

was read on 9/22/2009 7:17 AM.

*** 09/24/2009 09:02 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera - Just a reminder. Response is due tomorrow regarding my 9/22/09 request below. Thank you.

*** 09/22/2009 07:15 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs

Vera Fuchs - Consumer is saying that there were only 2 months of zero consumption (i.e., 2/11/09 and 3/13/09 bills). Please see the consumer's data below and respond. Thank you.

*** 09/24/2009 09:39 AM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



I am sorry no idea where this email got to but here it is:

*** 09/24/2009 10:00 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera Fuchs - Please provide the documentation that shows the meter failed on 12/19/08. Thank you.

*** 09/24/2009 12:11 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Attached is the MDL showing the day we no longer received readings and when they began again.

((((SEE ATTACHMENT FIELD OF THIS ACTIVITY)))

*** 09/24/2009 01:15 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera Fuchs - It appears from the MDL reads that the meter read zero from 12/19/09 - 4/1/09. However, PSE estimated the period from 12/12/08 - 3/27/09. Why didn't PSE estimate just the zero read timeframe from 12/19/09 - 4/1/09? Would appreciate an explanation. Thank you.

*** 09/24/2009 01:26 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



We have to bill based on a complete billing cycles. We can not create a billing for a partial cycle on an open account. The meter stopped December 19, 2008 in the beginning of the first billing cycle so we had to bill from 12/12/08 to 1/12/09, that is why we had to adjust that period and then was fixed in the middle of the billing cycle on the 3/14/09 to 4/13/09 time period.

*** 09/24/2009 01:45 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



((SEE ATTACHMENT FIELD OF THIS ACTIVITY))

The meter records (attached) show that the meter actually stopped on December 19, 2008. PSE estimated the reads from 12/12/08 to 3/27/09. PSE's bills are based on a complete billing cycles. PSE is unable to create a billing for a partial cycle on an open account. The meter stopped December 19, 2008 in the beginning of the first billing cycle so PSE billed from 12/12/08 to 1/12/09, that is why we had to adjust that period and then was fixed in the middle of the billing cycle on the 3/14/09 to 4/13/09 time period. I am confident that the estimate that PSE provided is reasonably accurate. I regret that you are dissatisfied with the results of the investigation. Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions. Thank you.

*** 09/25/2009 08:30 AM Phone: Roger Kouchi << consumer



Consumer still doesn't understand.

- Wants to know why PSE is billing her additional amounts for the Apr (140 therms; \$193.69); May (97 therms; \$137.88); and June (35 therms; \$56.84).
- Doesn't see where the 10 percent is calculated. Would like to see a detailed break-out of the 10% discount PSE provided.
- Would like PSE to consider a 12 month review of their usage and if the usage is lower, to use the lower usage and recalculate/rework the retroactive bill.

*** 09/25/2009 08:34 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera Fuchs - Consumer still doesn't understand.

- Wants to know why PSE is billing her additional amounts for the Apr (140 therms; \$193.69); May (97 therms; \$137.88); and June (35 therms; \$56.84).
- Doesn't see where the 10 percent is calculated. Would like to see a detailed break-out of the 10% discount PSE provided.
- Would like PSE to consider a 12 month review of their usage and if the usage is lower, to use the lower usage and recalculate/rework the retroactive bill.
- If she is not satisfied, she intends on filing a formal complaint against PSE.

*** 09/30/2009 07:43 AM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



((SEE ATTACHMENT FIELD OF THIS ACTIVITY))

<<Mitch Johnson original estimate.xls>> <<Mitch Johnson recalculated detail.xls>>

We have provided answers below to the additional questions.

IT appears that when the processing on this one reviewed by a lead, he found that the module was actually repaired 3/27/09. So the June charges are actual at \$39.13 at 22 therms. May charges are actual at \$94.02 at 63 therms. The numbers quoted below were from the original estimate. The April charges have been recalculated at \$145.34 at 103 therms. It was originally at \$85.80 and at 57 therms. Note this was only for usage from 3/27/09 when the module was

exchanged and 4/13/09. The additional usage/charge is for the timeframe from 3/14/09 to 3/27/09.

We do have a detailed breakdown we can send again showing the recalculation (10%). I have attached the original detail and the recalculated detail showing the lesser charges/usage.

We would not be able to revisit after 12 new months of usage and recalculate according to that usage. We must bill all customers the same when it comes to retro billing. And we use historic usage to estimate and take into consideration any changes that have occurred to make the estimates more accurate (we have already done that and reprocessed the figures). Those figures are the final figures PSE can offer.

If you have any further questions, please let me know.

*** 09/30/2009 11:29 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera - My previous response to the consumer seems to have been in error.

- PSE discovered a stopped meter.
- PSE replaced the AMR meter module on 6/18/09.
- The company retroactively billed the consumer for 6 months of service (12/12/08 - 6/12/09).
- PSE estimated the bill based on a history from 12/13/07 - 7/11/08 and lowered that by 10 percent (\$174.73)

I still have some questions.

1. Why does PSE believe that the meter stopped and had zero reads for 4 months? In particular, why does PSE believe that the meter had a zero reading for partial months in December 2008 and April 2009?
2. Why does PSE believe that the meter was inaccurately reading for the months of June and July 2009?
3. I still do not understand enough to explain to the consumer how the 10 percent credit was calculated. Please explain in more detail. Thank you.

Here is my previous response to the consumer:

I have completed my investigation into your complaint with PSE regarding the retroactive bill from 12/12/08 to 3/27/09. Here are the responses to your 9/10/09 e-mail.

- The meter stopped because the module pins were broken. This stops the gears inside the meter from turning which results in a stopped meter and meter module.
- PSE only estimated the period from 12/12/08 to 3/27/09 when the meter reads were zero. The rest of the months were actual reads.
- PSE lowered the estimated usage by 10% because you advised the company that the property had been vacant for a few weeks due to vacation and because of reduced consumption from lowering the thermostat and adding electric space heaters to the basement. PSE indicated that there would still be gas consumption unless you completely turned off the furnace and hot water heater. The hot water heaters typically use about 30% of the heating energy. Even if you turn the furnace down to the lowest level, there is a safety setting of about 50 degrees to prevent the house and water pipes from freezing. The night time temperatures are cold and would cause the furnace and hot water heater to kick on.

*** 09/30/2009 11:31 AM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Would you be willing to allow our billing specialist to call you to walk through your questions?

*** 09/30/2009 11:50 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera - I just noticed something else. The MDL Reads show that the meter stopped on 12/19/09 and was repaired on 3/27/09. So my question again is why is PSE estimating for April, May, and June 2009?

*** 09/30/2009 12:44 PM Phone: Roger Kouchi << tiona (pse)



((NOTE: Need to open activity to see table)))

Tiona provided me with the following clarification regarding the retroactively billing.

- PSE initially calculated the bill in error (over 6 months). However, it later corrected the error and only retroactively billed for 4 months of usage from December 20, 2008 - March 27, 2009. There were two months that had partial reads: Dec 20, 2008 - January 12, 2009 and March 13 - March 27, 2009.

- The last date of a read from the meter was 12/19/09. On 12/20/09 the daily reads were zero.

- The meter module (AMR) was replaced on March 27, 2009.

- PSE used the previous usage history from September 18, 2007 - December 19, 2008 to calculate the estimated usage.

Billing Period	Historical CCFs	adjustment	New CCFs	Monthly CCFs	BTU factor	Therms
Dec/Jan	5.064516	10%	4.55806141.3	1.1025	155	
Jan/Feb	5.55	10%	4.995 149.85	1.0945	164	
Feb/Mar	4.193548	10%	3.77419113.2261.09	123		
Mar/Apr	3.3125	10%	2.9812541.73751.0866	103		

*** 09/30/2009 01:17 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



((NOTE: Need to open the activity to see the table)))

Thank you for your patience. I regret the confusion regarding the information I provided. I made an error in telling you that PSE retroactively billed you for 6 months. The company only retroactively billed you for the period that the meter had a zero reading (i.e., from December 20, 2008 - March 27, 2009).

- PSE initially calculated the bill in error (over 6 months). However, it later corrected the error and only retroactively billed for 4 months of usage from December 20, 2008 - March 27, 2009. There were two months that had partial reads: Dec 20, 2008 - January 12, 2009 and March 13 - March 27, 2009.

- The last date of a read from the meter was 12/19/09. On 12/20/09 the daily reads were zero.

- The meter module (AMR) was replaced on March 27, 2009.

- PSE used the previous usage history from September 18, 2007 - December 19, 2008 to calculate the estimated usage. The 10 percent credit was calculated based on the lowest historical usage.

Billing Period	Historical CCFs	adjustment	New CCFs	Monthly CCFs	BTU factor	Therms
Dec/Jan	5.064516	10%	4.55806141.3	1.1025	155	

Jan/Feb	5.55	10%	4.995	149.85	1.0945	164
Feb/Mar	4.193548		10%	3.77419113	2261.09	123
Mar/Apr	3.3125	10%	2.9812541	73751.0866		103

Again, I have reviewed PSE's calculation of estimated usage and believe that the company's calculation is reasonable. The company did not retroactively bill you for May and June 2009 bills are actual usage charges. If you have questions, I recommend that you call me to discuss. It is much easier to respond to your questions directly if we can talk over the phone. Thank you.

*** 10/01/2009 11:04 AM Phone: Roger Kouchi << consumer



Still convinced that PSE is NOT estimating her bill reasonably. Believes that the maximum usage that she ever used was about 90 therms. Wants PSE to base the estimate on the 90 therms.

- Wants to see a corrected bill. The last bill she received from PSE was for Dec 2008 - 2009 for \$753.78 when she received the PSE letter.

- Wants to see daily reads for the entire time of her account. Currently the MDL (Meter Data Link) Reads only go back to 12/06/08. She moved into the house in December 2007.

- Willing to pay reasonable amount. The maximum consumer believes they should owe PSE, taking the largest 2009 bill in April 2009, would be 2 x \$94.02 = \$188.04, of which the consumer already paid 2 x \$10.55. Consumer believes they owe PSE no more than \$166.94 and they are willing to pay this amount.

*** 10/01/2009 11:13 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera Fuchs - The consumer is still convinced that PSE is NOT estimating her bill reasonably. Believes that the maximum usage that she ever used was about 90 therms. Wants PSE to base the estimate on the 90 therms.

- Wants to see a corrected bill. The last bill she received from PSE was for Dec 2008 - 2009 for \$753.78 when she received the PSE letter.

- Wants to see daily reads for the entire time of her account. Currently the MDL (Meter Data Link) Reads only go back to 12/06/08. She moved into the house in December 2007.

- Willing to pay reasonable amount. The maximum consumer believes they should owe PSE, taking the largest 2009 bill in April 2009, would be 2 x \$94.02 = \$188.04, of which the consumer already paid 2 x \$10.55. Consumer believes they owe PSE no more than \$166.94 and they are willing to pay this amount.

*** 10/01/2009 11:16 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



((((SEE ATTACHMENT FIELD OF THIS ACTIVITY)))

Attached is the revised bill detail that I was speaking of. Please let me know if you have problems opening the Excel spreadsheet. Also, please review (below) my understanding of your remaining issues and make corrections. Thank you.

*** 10/01/2009 11:47 AM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << consumer



Our PSE bill in December 2008 was \$160.65. We are willing to pay PSE \$160.55 for both months with 0 therms billed (2/11/09 and 3/13/09).

The total amount would be 2 x (\$160.55) - 2 x (\$10.55 already paid) = \$300.

This is a significant compromise on our part, as we purchased electric heaters in December of 2008 and believe our gas consumption was minimal during the

months of January and February 2009.

In exchange for this payment, PSE would need to provide a letter of settlement with verbiage agreeing not to pursue collection of the remaining balance and not to report negative activity to any credit reporting agency due to this bill.

If PSE is unwilling to accept our offer, we will not pay any amount to PSE without a court order and will file a formal complaint.

*** 10/01/2009 11:53 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera Fuchs - Please respond to the consumer's request (below). Thank you.

*** 10/01/2009 11:54 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



Thanks for the feedback. I will be getting back to you.

*** 10/01/2009 11:55 AM Email: Roger Kouchi << vera fuchs



Your message

To: vera.fuchs@pse.com

Subject:

was read on 10/1/2009 11:53 AM.

*** 10/01/2009 11:56 AM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Thank you Roger,

I have requested our Complaints Manager review the account tomorrow. We will provide a response by close of business Tuesday October 6th if not before.

Thank you,

*** 10/06/2009 07:18 AM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera - Just a reminder. Your response is due today. Thank you.

*** 10/06/2009 03:56 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Roger, we are reviewing the documents about electrical usage provided by the customer and would like one more day to review all provided info?

Is that possible? It will allow us to determine if we accept her offer or counter

*** 10/06/2009 03:59 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Vera - Ok. If you don't have it finalized by 10/7/09, just give me a brief status update and let me know where you are tomorrow. Thanks.

*** 10/07/2009 02:14 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



We will have a final word on this tomorrow morning our complaints Manager is out today unexpectedly. But we have not been able to find any additional information or household changes to allow another recalculation. We are not permitted to negotiate on balances owed per the commission. He is going to do a final review in the morning.

Thank you

*** 10/09/2009 12:47 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



We compared the changes from 2008 to 2009 in electric consumption using data provided by the customer. Consumption is calculated in KWH per day.

Average daily consumption increased from 29.6 KWH to 34.2 KWH per day which is a 15% increase.

We then compared the original gas backbill with the bill that was revised after the customer explained their increased electrical consumption.

Original bill was for 574 therms and \$753.78

Revised bill is for 441 therms and \$579.05

The change from the original to revised is 23%

The adjustment already made by PSE (23%) exceeds the increased electric energy the customer states they used instead of gas.

We have reviewed all the documentation provided and are unable to find any additional data, or logic that justifies any further adjustments from the current billing amount due of \$579.05.

The back billing process conforms with WAC rules and PSE's gas tariff, Rule No. 8, section 7(c) that states "the use of gas in a similar period of like use under similar conditions when the meter was registering accurately."

PSE would be glad to provide a no interest installment plan on the remaining unpaid balance of \$576.36 for 10 months at a monthly payment of \$57.64 starting with the next statement date of October 14.

*** 10/09/2009 12:55 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> consumer



PSE completed its review of your account. The company review showed that the average daily consumption from 2008 to 2009 increased from 29.6 kwh to 34.2 kwh per day. This is a 15% increase.

- Original bill was for 574 therms and \$753.78
- Revised bill is for 441 therms and \$579.05

PSE is willing to provide 10 month payment arrangements of \$57.64 per month. Please let me know if you need longer payment arrangements. We can ask PSE to consider longer arrangements if need be.

PSE has already adjusted the billed amount by 23%. PSE is unwilling to make

further adjustments based upon the increase in the average daily consumption. I regret that this may not be the results you wanted. However, it appears that PSE's estimate is logical and reasonable. I will consider my investigation closed at this time. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions. Thank you.

*** 10/09/2009 12:56 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> vera fuchs



Thank you. This complaint is now closed. Please note that the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

*** 10/09/2009 01:24 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << consumer



Please let me know how I go about filing a formal complaint.

Thank you,

*** 10/09/2009 02:12 PM Email: Roger Kouchi >> jim leighton



Jim - Please mail the formal complaint packet to following consumer, Thank you.

*** 10/09/2009 02:19 PM Email: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) << Leighton, Jim (UTC)



Done.

*** 10/09/2009 02:20 PM Email: Roger Kouchi << jim leighton



Your message

To: Leighton, Jim (UTC)
Subject: Formal Complaint Packet FW: WA - UTC complaint 107381 for Diana Johnson
Sent: 10/9/2009 2:13 PM

was read on 10/9/2009 2:16 PM.

*** 10/12/2009 02:16 PM Phone: Suzanne Stillwell << Customer



Talked w/customer. She is adamant that their gas usage during the period of the stopped meter was significantly less than what was estimated; even including the adjustment. She does not believe that the prior years use was a good estimate to use. They changed their behavior this winter by rarely using the gas heat, and used space heaters, electric blankets, kept the heat at 60 degrees, etc. She believes the bill should be around \$300.00. Her situation is very compelling and I will ask that Puget consider adjusting the bill to around this amount.

*** 10/12/2009 02:34 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> Fuchs, Vera L



This complaint has been escalated to me. I talked with the customer today and she is adamant that their gas usage during the period of the stopped meter was significantly less than what was estimated; even including the adjustment. She does not believe that the prior years use was a good estimate to use. They

changed their behavior this winter by rarely using the gas heat, and used space heaters, electric blankets, kept the heat at 60 degrees, etc. She believes the bill should be around \$300.00. Her situation is very compelling and I would ask that Puget consider adjusting the bill to around this amount.

*** 10/12/2009 02:35 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



This will be reviewed by Dee Walker our Complaints Manager, he will provide a response within 48 hours. Thank you, Vera

*** 10/13/2009 09:31 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



I have data pulled for this response but will be out of office on Wednesday. Will send response on Thursday

*** 10/14/2009 08:52 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Walker, Dee -Kirby'; Fuchs, Vera L



Thursday is fine, Dee.

*** 10/23/2009 10:30 AM Email: Suzanne Stillwell >> dee.walker



Dee, I have not heard back from you regarding this escalated complaint. You were going to get back on 10/14. Thanks, Suzanne

*** 10/23/2009 10:32 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Thought I had sent you something. Let me see what I can find.

*** 10/26/2009 12:59 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Our current situation is summarized as follows

	Therms	\$	
Original Back Bill	574	\$753.78	
Revised Back Bill	441	\$579.05	
Change	-133	-\$174.73	-23.2%

Customer Provided Electrical Data

	KW / Day	
2008 Use	29.6	
2009 Use	34.2	
Change 4.6		15.5%

This data shows that the adjustment made from the Original Back Bill to the Revised Back bill exceeded the percent change shown in the data provided by the customer showing increased electrical use resulting from their apparent shift from gas to electric.

At your request, I have collected more data regarding the Johnson's situation and it is detailed below. OPEN UP ACTIVITY TO VIEW

*** 10/26/2009 01:30 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Walker, Dee -Kirby'



Thanks for the info, and additional credit. After I complete my review and talk to the customer, I'll get back to you. Suzanne

*** 11/02/2009 12:04 PM Email: Suzanne Stillwell >> dee.walker

Dee, I presume that Puget will still offer 10 month payment arrangements? Suzanne

*** 11/02/2009 12:18 PM Violation: 480-90-173(c) -

Company failed to respond timely to request for additional information. Requested information on 10/12 due 10/15; responded 10/26.

*** 11/02/2009 12:23 PM Action: Suzanne Stillwell

Drafted letter to close.

*** 11/02/2009 01:27 PM Letter: Anna Gill >> Consumer

Letter from Suzanne Stillwell:

November 2, 2009

Diana Johnson
4813 Bering St. NW
Gig Harbor, WA 98332

RE: Your Puget Sound Energy complaint #107381

Dear Ms. Johnson:

This letter is in response to your back-bill complaint against Puget Sound Energy (PSE). You asked for a supervisor to review the results of your complaint because you believe your gas usage was significantly less than the company estimated.

I reviewed your complaint paying particular attention to how the company estimated the charges. After talking with you, I was compelled to ask PSE to relook at their estimate. Your average reduction in gas usage from 2008 to 2009 is 21%, and compares favorably with the 23% reduction PSE provided you in their revised back bill. However, when they looked more closely at the periods we tend to use more gas, your actual reduction in gas usage from 2008 to 2009 is in the 35% to 40% range. PSE is willing to adjust your bill 40% off the original \$753.78 back bill. This results in a new revised bill of \$452.27 (\$753.78 - \$301.51).

I believe this is a very fair and reasonable adjustment to the original estimate. Therefore, you are responsible to pay \$452.27 for the back bill. If you do not pay these charges, the company will disconnect your service. The company has offered a ten-month payment arrangement. Please contact Puget at 1-866-767-5853 (select option 2, then 1) to confirm this payment arrangement.

I hope this information is helpful to you. Your complaint will be closed, however, if you have further questions, please contact me at 1-888-333-WUTC (9882).

Sincerely,

Suzanne Stillwell
Deputy Assistant Director, Consumer Protection

*** 11/02/2009 01:50 PM Email: Suzanne Stillwell >> dee.walker



Dee, attached is a letter being mailed today to the customer. She won't be completely satisfied, however, I believe it is a fair and reasonable estimate. Earlier Puget offered 10 month payment arrangements, so I included that, too, in the letter.

There will be another violation assessed, of WAC 480-90-173(c). Company failed to respond timely to request for additional information. Requested information on 10/12 due 10/15; responded 10/26.

At this time you may close the complaint, however, please note that the customer will need to call in for payment arrangements and the letter is just going out today. Thanks, Suzanne

*** 11/02/2009 01:58 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Hello Suzanne. We can do the 10 months certainly. The letter was not attached to the email. Can you send again please? I will note the account so when the customer calls, we will be able to get the arrangements set up without further delay. Thanks for the help in this. dw

*** 11/02/2009 02:10 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Walker, Dee -Kirby'



Sent above letter to customer to Dee.

*** 11/05/2009 04:20 PM Phone: Suzanne Stillwell << Customer



Customer received my letter and is still concerned that the period that they estimated was much too long. For example, they charged \$753 for 6 mos, and the service was only out for 4 mos. She will email the initial bill she received, since it appears as if I don't have that one.

*** 11/05/2009 04:35 PM Action: Suzanne Stillwell



Review with customer there is a "back bill" some of which is estimated and some of it is actual use.
She claims she paid for the actual portions of the bill.

*** 11/05/2009 04:40 PM Email: Suzanne Stillwell >> dee.walker



Dee, I just talked with the customer. And, she still believes the bill is incorrect. That you are basing the credit adjustment off some months of actual use (which she has paid for). For example, the initial bill of \$753.xx, which you took 40% off of was 12/12/08 - 6/12/09. She said she has already paid for the actual use portion; that it came out of her checking account. She believes that the 40% should be off the estimated bill. Can you take a look at that please. Thx, Suzanne

*** 11/05/2009 05:31 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



I will look it over dw

*** 11/05/2009 05:51 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Before I get too far into any additional research on this situation, please

confirm with the customer that we are not billing her for an additional \$452. The net affect of what we have done for this is to provide an additional credit of \$126.xx to make the net back bill be \$452. Bottom line: We originally billed her \$753.xx. We have now provided a total credit of \$301. So the adjusted back bill is now reduced from \$753 to \$452. Whatever she has paid in the intervening months is being applied to her net adjustment of \$452 plus monthly current charges.

I can put this all together in a spreadsheet that shows each individual transaction if necessary. As I was preparing to do that, I realized the customer may have misunderstood that we initially billed the \$753 and that we have since then credited the acct - I know that the changed bills can be confusing so please be sure customer understands the credit impact. Thanks dw

*** 11/06/2009 08:11 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Diana Johnson



See attachment for copy of original bill detail.

*** 11/06/2009 08:49 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Walker, Dee -Kirby'



Dee, I think a spreadsheet is necessary. Quite frankly, I don't understand it at this point. I have received her first corrected bill (\$1,066.76 less \$312.98 = \$753.78) which does show that the therms are different from actual for months that I thought you had actual reads (from the point you replaced the meter). Did you first estimate the entire bill, and then go back and adjust it because you had actual reads?

*** 11/06/2009 09:03 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Diana Johnson'



Thanks, Diana. I'll get back to you after I have further reviewed. Suzanne

*** 11/09/2009 09:02 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> Dee Walker



Dee, when do you expect that the spreadsheet will be done? Do you understand where the customer is confused? She wonders why you would discount the entire bill, when some of it is actual useage. My recollection is that part of a bill or two was actual, and part of it was an estimate. I think that is what needs to be explained, too. Thanks, Suzanne

*** 11/09/2009 10:58 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Working on it now. Expect to be finished today - tomorrow am at latest

*** 11/09/2009 01:12 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



I have attached two documents:
A consolidated Bill Detail report
A billing / payment summary

The Bill Detail combines two of the documents sent to the customer as explanation of the Corrected Bill (1st backbill) and the Adjusted Bill (2nd backbill that provided 10% credit). This shows several things that may help the customer understand.

We did determine that some of the initial usages that we estimated on the "Corrected Bill" were actuals and did not need to be estimated. These were the

usages for the 6/12 and 5/12 of 22 therms and 63 therms respectively.

The "Adjusted Bill" corrected this and reduced those usages to the actuals of 22 and 63 therms. The "Adjusted Bill" also reduced the other 4 period estimated usages by a total of \$113.16.

The net of the correction on the 6/12 and 5/13 periods and the credit for the other 4 periods brought the net of the Adjusted Bill to \$579.05.

We then reduced the "Corrected Bill" by 40% per review of customer's recent use vs a year ago. This resulted in an additional credit of \$126.78 which effectively reduced the Adjusted Bill from \$579.05 to \$452.27.

I understand the question of why we would include the "corrected therms" for 6/12 and 5/13 in our calculation of the 40% reduction from the corrected bill to reach our final adjustment (the \$126.78 credit on 11/3). When I reviewed usage to determine the 40% reduction, I included actual usage from the 6/12 and 5/13 periods in arriving at the 40%. Those periods reflected 42% and 35% reductions in use respectively. If I had not included those periods, I would have adjusted the account by 35% rather than 40% and this results in virtually the same final adjustment as the \$126.78 credit provided on 11/3.

The billing / payment summary shows the history of billing and customer payments since the inception of their account.

Activities for corresponding billing periods are color coded so there is a correlation for each action taken for each of the affected bill periods.

Each of the backbill events is highlighted in the sections on the right side of the summary - showing the affect of each of the bills

A running history of "Bal Owed" shows that the payments the customer makes are credited from the balance owed and the final adjustment (a credit of \$126.78 to provide the final adjustment necessary to reduce the first back bill by 40%)

I believe these two documents and the notes above should answer the questions related to how we adjusted to the original "Corrected Bill" to address actual usage instead of estimated in 6/12 and 5/13 periods, and also how we took this into account when we established the final adjustment to reduce the "corrected bill" by 40%.

The billing / payment summary displays the net affect of usage, payments, and the backbill to arrive at the current balance on the customer account.

SEE ATTACHMENTS

*** 11/09/2009 01:29 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Walker, Dee -Kirby'



Thank you, Dee. I look forward to reviewing it and explaining it to the customer!!

*** 03/24/2010 04:43 PM Email: Suzanne Stillwell >> dee.walker



Dee, I see this escalated complaint slipped through the cracks by me. Can you advise me what you see on the customer's account at this time? Thanks, Suzanne

*** 03/24/2010 05:17 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



I'll check and let you know. Can't tell much on my b-berry so will check in am

*** 03/25/2010 09:29 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Payment arrangements set up November 12 for \$449.58 over 10 months @ \$44.96 per month. Payments are current - 4 payments made to-date. No account comments have been recorded since arrangements established. Looks ok to me. Dee

*** 03/25/2010 09:32 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Walker, Dee -Kirby'



In November, you put together a spreadsheet to help both the customer and I understand the charges, and her account balance. At that time, did you ever have a conversation with her? Who actually made the arrangements with her?
Suzanne

*** 03/25/2010 09:42 AM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



I never spoke with her. Arrangements were made by one of our CSRII's in our billing department.

*** 03/25/2010 03:56 PM Action: Suzanne Stillwell



Reviewed entire complaint with latest account information and explanation from company. Adjustments were more than appropriate.

*** 03/25/2010 04:56 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) << Walker, Dee -Kirby



Here you are - Please note the significantly higher temps this year vs last - a difference of 4 - 5 degrees per day can make a big difference in energy consumption. I have included the data available going back a little more than a full year - that is why the "2 Yr Ago" columns have only partial data in them.

SEE ATTACHED - useage summary

*** 03/25/2010 05:08 PM Email: Stillwell, Suzanne (UTC) >> 'Walker, Dee -Kirby'



Thanks, Dee! You may go ahead and re-close this complaint. As you know the Consumer Protection section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening. Thanks,
Suzanne

Washington UTC Complaint

107656

Company: Puget Sound Energy E702

Customer: Account# 926-754-098-8

Eric Martin

Contact:

9658 NE Pine Street

Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Primary Phone: (206) 661-5599

E-mail addr: eric@hex90.org

Complaint: 107656

Serviced by: Dennis Shutler

Opened on: 10/19/2009

Grouped by: Quality Of Service

Closed on: 11/02/2009

Disposition: Consumer upheld

Description:



Mr states his power is out at this time and it goes out regularly. That this summer it went out once or twice in nice weather. Mr states during power outages updates are given by county only and give a caller no information. Mr believes PSE should revise its system to allow a customer to quickly find the information pertinent to their specific location and the recorded message should more closely reflect the accuracy of the estimated repair time to the service outage.

Mr believes when he asked, "Do I need to go buy a generator to get reliable electricity?" PSE's representative's response "Yes, being on an island that would be a good idea." is an unacceptable answer for anyone on Bainbridge who have a poor quality of life as a result. And Mr believes the two service guarantees: 1) if we don't show for an appt on time, \$50 credit, and 2) 120-hours of outage get \$50 credit, are not adequate.

Mr states PSE's repairs at NE Pine St and New Sweden where a pole broke, the repairs left a low power line over the street with yellow ribbons to warn it was low, and it remained like that for many months - UPS couldn't go under, and moving trucks could not get up the street. The lines were slightly raised later and Mr questions the quality of the repair.

Mr also states the name and address PSE has on record for this account is not the same. Mr's wife Roxanne tried to get this information updated four or five times but she finally gave up.

Mr believes PSE should: 1) Supply more consistent, reliable power. 2) Provide more accurate updates. 3) Change its phone system for reporting power outages knowing many now are on mobile phones with limited battery life or cordless house phones with limited battery life. 4) Improve their infrastructure. and 5) Don't tell a customer they need to buy a generator to offset their lack of providing reliable power or because they live on Bainbridge.

Mr believes the WUTC needs to be more aggressive with PSE.

-URGENT- Passing a new complaint. -URGENT-

In accordance with the commission's response rule in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-173(3)(a), PSE's response is due not later than 5 p.m. PT on 10/21/09.

Please provide this customer's account history. At a minimum, the information provided should consist of: records of all communications between the company and the customer; copies (if available) of all late or disconnection notices; as well as the account billing/payment history, all throughout the period of 8/01/09 to current.

Complaint passed to PSE, via e-mail on 10/19/09, at 4:40 p.m.

Results:

PSE reported Mr's service was restored at 11:37am on 10/18/09. However, Mr's e-mail to the commission was sent at 12:06 p.m. on 10/18/09 so Mr's allegation that his power was still out is unfounded.

PSE initiated a service order to inspect and correct the low power lines if needed, the low hanging wires t.v. and cable lines, not power lines.

PSE requested an engineer review the infrastructure in Mr's area, PSE will have the engineer call Mr once the investigation is completed to provide any projected projects for Mr's area and the age of existing equipment.

PSE noted the Restoration Service Guarantee is an electric tariff in Schedule 131 requested by PSE and approved by the UTC.

PSE noted its agent should have explained that since power can not be guaranteed at all times Mr might investigate the possibility of purchasing his own back up system, this statement would be the same regardless of where the customer's home is located.

PSE stated it is working on updates to its phone and reporting system which will allow customers to report their outage through PSE's website and also get any available updates.

Eight recent outages and one momentary outage were all caused by trees or their limbs falling on the feeder distribution circuit. At least five of the outages occurred during widespread wind or snow storms. This circuit was last trimmed in 2005 and is scheduled to be trimmed again in 2010. In 2010, PSE is planning to install a second recloser on the circuit near the intersection of Country Club road and Blakely Avenue, which will help reduce outages caused by trees and limbs on the feeder to the South of Blakely Avenue.

PSE updated Mr's name and address information as had been requested.

---VIOLATIONS NOTED---

Activity:

Activity Links

*** 10/19/2009 04:38 PM Email: Dennis Shutler << customer



Complaint Information

Please explain your complaint in detail.

Hello,

I'll preface this by saying that this goes beyond customer service - this is a critical problem with PSE being the only electrical provider we can use.

The power here goes out regularly. When I say regularly, it is surprising and topic of conversation for many when it reaches a 3-month mark w/out an outage. This summer it went out once or twice in nice weather. Last winter and the two before it were literally ridiculous how many outages we went through.

This is far beyond inconvenience at this point, this is affecting quality of life. Especially, when we have to plan around a potential outage if something is coming up that is critical. This is no exaggeration. We had one when we had 10 friends over to cook for/entertain. After an hour and lack of a reliable update, they all had to get back on the ferry and go home. The power came back on around 4AM (8-hours after it went out). We've also had to throw away all food in our fridge three times now.

When the power goes out and one calls to report it or get an update, there are two issues:

1) The updates are by county only and give a caller no information. Once has to sit through this unhelpful information on a cell phone with limited battery life to listen to this unhelpful nonsense (e.g. we are experiencing outages in this county, that county, etc. - I have NEVER called and heard fewer than 5

counties listed (gotten to the point were I count).

2) The estimates are always very far off. Usually the recovery estimate is about 4-hours to "we have no estimate." Further, every time one calls to get an update, they have NO update and give you the same estimate or if after the time originally given, they move it out a couple hours. I can specifically remember that I just hung having received an estimate of 2-4 hours longer after being out most of the day, and the power went on minutes later. Perhaps they need to look at their communication infrastructure and STOP MISLEADING CUSTOMERS who pay them for their services.

This morning, around 10:30AM, calm, no rain or wind, paved grounds dry my wife said the power went out. I was driving around, I'd seen nothing unusual or experienced any bad weather. The roads all dry. We also noticed earlier in the week the power went out - we came home to flashing lights.

I called to report the issue. I asked the person answering (prefacing that perhaps she isn't the one to ask), why is this such a regular occurrence? She said something about weather and I told her there's really been no weather of significance since yesterday (we had some light wind and a few decent gusts, but nothing major- strong wind will leave branches laying on roads or somewhere on my 1-acre - I just see a couple small twigs- not branches - young twigs). Just some light rain late last night. The rep then quickly had 5 or 6 other excuses.

After over 3-years of this ridiculous, inconsistent and undependable lifestyle (staying in hotels 4-times over this - not including the wind storm of 2007, which I did understand), without saying any of this as it was back of mind, I asked, "Do I need to go buy a generator to get reliable electricity?"

Her response was, "Yes, being on an island that would be a good idea." Huh? Bainbridge - a major island that is connected (via bridge) to another land mass? One w/nearly 30K residents? Yet when there is an outage and we go to a grocery store, they can't do business? Or a gas station? Or, more importantly, a drug store, which happened earlier this year after I was in the hospital for a month and couldn't pick up a critical prescription - I couldn't (I went to Safeway, Rite Aid and Winslow Drugs - none had power for hours and couldn't help). Then, there is no heat for the house with a pregnant wife at home? Unacceptable, especially when new homes can only come with small, useless gas fireplaces that don't do anything other than look neat.

This is an unacceptable answer for anyone on Bainbridge who have a poor quality of life as a result. Bainbridge is not exactly what I consider rural (1-acre lots? head to the midwest or other areas in the NW and that'll be rural). I have city water - never an issue. Electricity, always an issue in the back of everyone's minds.

I have had estimates on installing a generator and I am not about to spend \$6,000+ AND pay PSE their excessive rates (my bills are north of \$100 and get over \$200 during dead-winter. Both of us leave the home at 5:30AM and return after 7PM Mon-Friday with the heater set at 64 then 68 if needed when we get home) for unreliable electricity. Or, I could buy one of those \$1,500 portable Hondas, but I've researched these - you have more chance ruining things such as your fridge than it doing anything useful - the power supplied is terrible and they really aren't meant for more current, sensitive equipment. I did talk to PSE about the different choices and the person I spoke to ONLY recommended a

permanent, non-portable unit and said he'd never use the lower end models due to these issues.

And, the only two service guarantees are: 1) if we don't show for an appt on time, \$50 credit, and 2) 120-hours of outage get \$50 credit. Sorry, but I have to say WHAT?!?! 120-hours will ensure you need hotel, all your food in the fridge is spoiled, etc.

They cannot expect customers to require this. Especially on Bainbridge using Island an excuse. It's major area with hundreds of workers I know personally that commute to seattle. The slightest of rain or a sneeze causes a problem?

Yes, my power is still out and I'm on a laptop with battery about to die. I have work to do, but at least I have an AT&T dongle for Internet and found this site.

WUTC needs to be more aggressive with PSE. The root of this issue is their failure to invest in infrastructure whether clearing trees or doing what I've seen around the country: burying the lines - at least the most problematic. A perfect example of their hack work is at NE Pine St and New Sweden. A pole broke (yes, broke - I never see them replacing any poles in over 3-years). They handled it by doing a poor job with a low power line over the street with yellow ribbons to warn those it was low. It sat like that for many months - UPS couldn't go under, let alone moving trucks or other so could not get up the street. I called and complained - it was brushed off with "I'm sure they know to go back." I talked to neighbors and they said the same. Eventually, the lines were slightly raised, but I always drive under them wondering whether one is going to fall on my car since they 'seem' far too heavy for the poles and the long stretch there is between the support poles.

Last, the name and address they have on record for this account is not the same. After Roxanne tried to get this updated 4 or 5 times, she gave up as it was taking too much time out of her busy day sitting on hold and dealing with it. We pay through mycheckfree.com so it's not a mailing issue for us.

Thanks.
Eric

Did you speak to a supervisor from your utility or transportation company?

If "Yes", what was the result?

Didn't bother asking as this goes beyond customer service - this is a critical problem with PSE being the only electrical provider we can use.

What do you think the company should do to resolve your complaint?

- 1) Supply more consistent, reliable power.
- 2) Provide more accurate updates - including having better communication with those on the ground. It has become very obvious they don't communicate much, if at all.
- 3) Change phone system for reporting power outages knowing many now are on mobile phones with limited battery life or cordless house phones with limited battery life. In other words, allow a customer to skip a lot of the wording.

4) Improve their infrastructure. They've been raising rates a lot over the last few years - how about some return?

5) Don't tell a customer they need to buy a generator to offset their lack of providing reliable power or because they live on Bainbridge.

Finally: WUTC needs to be more aggressive with PSE. The root of this issue is their failure to invest in infrastructure whether clearing trees or doing what I've seen around the country: burying the lines - at least the most problematic. A perfect example of their hack work is at NE Pine St and New Sweden. A pole broke (yes, broke - I never see them replacing any poles in over 3-years). They handled it by doing a poor job with a low power line over the street with yellow ribbons to warn those it was low. It sat like that for many months - UPS couldn't go under, let alone moving trucks or other so could not get up the street. I called and complained - it was brushed off with "I'm sure they know to go back." I talked to neighbors and they said the same. Eventually, the lines were slightly raised, but I always drive under them wondering whether one is going to fall on my car since they 'seem' far too heavy for the poles and the long stretch there is between the support poles.

*** 10/19/2009 04:40 PM Email: Dennis Shutler >> Vera Fuchs



-URGENT- Passing a new complaint. -URGENT-

NOTE: Please review Mr's lengthy comments in full detail provided below:

*** 10/19/2009 04:43 PM Email: Dennis Shutler >> customer



Thank you for contacting the Utilities and Transportation Commission (commission) regarding your complaint against PSE.

I have opened an informal complaint investigation on your behalf and I will work with the company to seek resolution to your complaint.

Complaints usually take between two and four weeks to complete, depending on their complexity.

Please provide me the name/address information you wish to have corrected on your account.

I will notify you with my findings, however, if you have questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 1-888-333-WUTC (9882).

Thank you.

*** 10/19/2009 04:54 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



In order to respond to all the customer concerns it is going to take in put from several individuals. I am asking for an extension to Friday October 23 at 5pm to allow us the opportunity to gather all the information.

*** 10/19/2009 05:03 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Your request for an extension to the due date by which PSE's response is due is reasonable and therefore allowed.

I look forward to receiving PSE's response not later than 5 p.m. on Friday 10/23/09.

Thank you.

*** 10/20/2009 07:57 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



On the urgent matter of this customer's electrical service, has this customer's

electrical service been restored?
If so, on what date and what time?
Thank you.

*** 10/20/2009 08:10 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Service outage occurred on October 18, 2009.
First calls were received at 10:04 AM and service was restored at 11:37 AM same day.
Mr. Martin's service was restored by 11:37 AM on October 18.
Thank you, Vera

*** 10/22/2009 07:37 AM Email: Dennis Shutler >> customer



As I'd requested back on 10/19/09, please provide me the name/address information you wish to have corrected on your account.
Thank you.

*** 10/23/2009 02:20 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Just for Clarity:

This complaint is not credit related but I noticed your requesting credit information, is that correct. The complaint has to do with electric reliability? Please clarify. Thanks Vera

*** 10/23/2009 03:55 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



To address the customers concerns with the low hanging wire over the location of NE Pine St and New Sweden - a service order was created to inspect and correct if needed. We found the low hanging wires to be t.v. and cable lines. They would want to contact them for resolution they are not power lines.

I have requested an engineer review the infrastructure in his and surrounding area. We can have the engineer call him once the instigation is completed. He will be able to provide any projected projects for his area and the age of existing equipment etc.

The Restoration Service Guarantee is an electric tariff Schedule 131 approved by the WUTC (see attached copy). He would want to address the tariff rates with the WUTC.

What name and mailing address would they like us to use. I am sorry the notes do not indicate. I would be glad to update that part personally with some clarification. Account name currently is: ROXANNA RIVERA

Account address for mailing is:
2400 4TH AVE # 455
SEATTLE, WA 98121

We are sorry that Mr. Martin was not treated with the respect he deserved when inquiring about the need for a generator. Our agent should have explained that since power can not be guaranteed at all times the customer might investigate the possibility of purchasing their own back up system. The statement would be the same regardless of where the customers home is located.

I reviewed the records for 2009 there have been three reported outages.

January 4 start: 8:48PM restored January 5 at 2:37AM March 15 start: 3:54PM
restored March 15 at 4:52PM October 18 start 10:04AM restored October 18 at
11:38AM

We are working on updates to our phone and reporting system which will allow
customers to report their outage through our website and also get any available
updates as well.

Attached is the credit activity and electric schedule 131.

Thank you Vera

SEE ATTACHED CUSTOMER ACCOUNT HISTORY PROVIDED BY PSE:

*** 10/25/2009 11:10 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << customer



I apologize, I didn't catch that request:

Roxanne Martin
9658 NE Pine St
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
206-661-7668

The power went out again this morning. That's 3-times in a couple weeks now.

I appreciate your attention on this, but it's primarily for the WUTC to
establish records for any type of pattern with these complaints. I know I'm not
the only one that is affected - my neighbors are as is an employee of mine on
New Sweden a couple blocks from NE Pine St.

Thank you bunches.

*** 10/27/2009 07:47 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



You are correct, I do not need the information listed below in red.
Thank you.

*** 10/27/2009 08:08 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



Thanks, I was worried so I sent it anyway.
Have a great day!

*** 10/27/2009 10:30 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Here is the name/address information Mr and Ms have been trying to get PSE to
correct on their account which evidently has not been corrected as of yet:

Roxanne Martin
9658 NE Pine St
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
206-661-7668

Please let me know when their account has been corrected to accurately reflect
this correct information.

Thank you.

*** 10/27/2009 10:35 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> customer



Please advise your neighbors and friends you've mentioned below that they too can call or e-mail their complaints to the commission.

They can call toll-free at 1-888-333-9882 or e-mail the commission at

<http://www.wutc.wa.gov/fileacomplaint>.

Their complaints will be assigned out just as yours was.

I hope this information is helpful.

*** 10/27/2009 02:03 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



This complainant reported his power went out again on 10/25.

What is the reason for the three outages you mention in your message below and for this recent outage on Monday morning?

Thank you.

*** 10/27/2009 02:47 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Fuchs, Vera L



The name and address update has been completed. We will have the outage information soon. Dee is working on that since I am away today.

*** 11/02/2009 07:06 AM Violation: 480-100-173(3)(c) -



VIOLATION: One (1) violation of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-100-173(3)(c) Electric utility responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints, against Puget Sound Energy (PSE) for failing to provide staff additional information regarding this consumer's complaint in a timely manner.

Staff requested additional information regarding this consumer's complaint from PSE on 10/27/09, and PSE's response was due not later than 5:00 p.m. PT on 10/30/09. Staff has not yet received PSE's follow-up response with the additional information requested.

*** 11/02/2009 07:19 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Fuchs, Vera L'



Ms Vera Fuchs, Puget Sound Energy (PSE):

Staff requested additional information regarding this consumer's complaint from PSE on 10/27/09, and PSE's response was due not later than 5:00 p.m. PT on 10/30/09.

Staff has not yet received PSE's follow-up response with the additional information requested.

Consequently, I have recorded violations of the commission's rules in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-90 against PSE, as follows:

Ø One (1) violation of WAC 480-90-173(3)(c) Gas utility's responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints, against PSE for failing to provide staff additional information regarding this consumer's complaint in a timely manner.

WAC 480-90-173(3)(c) Gas utility's responsibility for complaints and disputes, commission-referred complaints. (3) When the commission refers an informal complaint to the utility, the utility must: (c) Respond to the commission's request for additional informal complaint information within three business

days of the request or at a date specified by the commission. The commission may grant an extension of time for responding to the complaint, if requested and warranted.

NOTE: PSE may have requested an extension to the due date when its response was due. Any time a company requests such an extension, the company must state the reason for the requested extension and it must also include the date by which the company anticipates providing its response. Staff will review both the reason and the anticipated due date to determine if either warrant the requested extension. Staff will then notify the company if such a requested extension will be allowed.

I look forward to receiving PSE's response to my request for additional information.

Thank you.

*** 11/02/2009 08:28 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Dennis:

I am getting you the information today. Sorry we dropped the ball somewhere. For your records, PSE does not serve gas on Bainbridge Island and this is, I believe, an electrical outage complaint. Thank you, Molly

*** 11/02/2009 08:30 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



You are correct, I used the wrong rule reference, I'll correct this here on my end.

Thank you for catching that.

*** 11/02/2009 04:13 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Attached is PSE response to Mr. Martin's outages. I have included outage history from 10/31/07 - 10/31/09.

Molly

SEE ATTACHED CUSTOMER ACCOUNT HISTORY PROVIDED BY PSE:

*** 11/02/2009 04:43 PM Voice Mail: Dennis Shutler >> customer



I called Mr and left him a voice message stating PSE reported his service was restored at 11:37am on 10/18/09, however, his e-mail to the commission was sent at 12:06 p.m. on 10/18/09 so I was unsure how he was claiming his power was still out.

I told Mr that PSE initiated a service order to inspect and correct the low power lines if needed, but the low hanging wires were found to be t.v. and cable lines, not power lines.

I told Mr that PSE requested an engineer review the infrastructure in his area and PSE will have the engineer call him once the investigation is completed to provide any projected projects for his area and the age of the existing equipment.

I noted how the Restoration Service Guarantee is an electric tariff in Schedule 131, which was requested by PSE and approved by the UTC.

I told Mr that PSE noted its agent should have explained that since power can not be guaranteed at all times he might investigate the possibility of purchasing his own back up system, and this statement would be the same

regardless of where the customer's home is located.

I told Mr that PSE stated it is working on updates to its phone and reporting system which will allow customers to report their outage through PSE's website and also get any available updates.

I noted too how PSE reported eight recent outages and one momentary outage were all caused by trees or their limbs falling on the feeder distribution circuit, that at least five of the outages occurred during widespread wind or snow storms. This circuit was last trimmed in 2005 and is scheduled to be trimmed again in 2010. In 2010, PSE is planning to install a second recloser on the circuit near the intersection of Country Club road and Blakely Avenue, which will help reduce outages caused by trees and limbs on the feeder to the South of Blakely Avenue.

I told Mr that PSE updated his name and address information as had been requested.

I told Mr I was closing his complaint.

*** 11/02/2009 04:51 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Thank you for your time and efforts in working to resolve this customer's many complaint issues.

I called Mr and left him a voice message stating PSE reported his service was restored at 11:37am on 10/18/09, however, his e-mail to the commission was sent at 12:06 p.m. on 10/18/09 so I was unsure how he was claiming his power was still out.

I told Mr that PSE initiated a service order to inspect and correct the low power lines if needed, but the low hanging wires were found to be TV and cable lines, not power lines.

I told Mr that PSE requested an engineer review the infrastructure in his area and PSE will have the engineer call him once the investigation is completed to provide any projected projects for his area and the age of the existing equipment.

I noted how the Restoration Service Guarantee is an electric tariff in Schedule 131, which was requested by PSE and approved by the UTC.

I told Mr that PSE noted its agent should have explained that since power cannot be guaranteed at all times he might investigate the possibility of purchasing his own backup system, and this statement would be the same regardless of where the customer's home is located.

I told Mr that PSE stated it is working on updates to its phone and reporting system which will allow customers to report their outage through PSE's website and also get any available updates.

I noted too how PSE reported eight recent outages and one momentary outage were all caused by trees or their limbs falling on the feeder distribution circuit, that at least five of the outages occurred during widespread wind or snow storms. This circuit was last trimmed in 2005 and is scheduled to be trimmed again in 2010. In 2010, PSE is planning to install a second recloser on the circuit near the intersection of Country Club road and Blakely Avenue, which will help reduce outages caused by trees and limbs on the feeder to the South of Blakely Avenue.

I told Mr that PSE updated his name and address information as had been requested.

I told Mr I was closing his complaint and you too may now consider this customer's complaint closed as well.

NOTE: Please note that the commission's Consumer Protection and Communication Section has an internal quality review program and all closed complaints are subject to possible review and/or re-opening.

Again, I thank you.

*** 11/06/2009 09:31 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << customer



I left you a couple VMs, but just found the emails.

Again, thank you for looking into this.

Just a quick recap of my VMs:

1) I submitted the WUTC complaint form using my battery-powered laptop with a wireless broadband connection (AT&T). I'm not sure about the time, but the power was out when I submitted through the WUTC web site - perhaps time stamping on the site is off. I don't know.

2) The power has gone out 4 to 6 times over the last 1 to 1.5 months. My wife and I lost count and don't bother tracking; it's too frequent to bother. I just checked with my employee I mentioned on your VM who lives around the corner on New Sweden. His response when I asked how many times over the last couple months was "A lot. We've gotten used to it so don't count, but I do count how many candles I own and know I've been living off my morning alarm being on my cell phone because we never know when it's going to go off while sleeping."

3) Power goes out with or without weather issues. Last night (Nov 5), it was windy and raining so the outage was predictable. Last night was so predictable, we had already made plans to go out to dinner. However, usually it's so unpredictable, it catches us by surprise.

4) Cables: a pole broke and I recall PSE and Comcast out there (I don't recall a telephone company, but we don't have house lines so were only watching for cable/electric). I know one of the lines is electric since we couldn't drive a certain direction. Apparently someone picked out the wrong line to avoid! I don't know of course, but scary to think about that.

5) I understand residential power is not guaranteed. But, I've owned enough homes in various states - one in an extremely rural area - and talked to enough people over the last few years that I know this pattern of frequent outages is unusual. Many I talk to think I'm embellishing because it's so unusual.

I submitted the complaint primarily for pattern/issue tracking since this affects more than just me. Obviously, we are concerned about ourselves, but after a few years of this, we are saying "enough is enough." I'm guessing WUTC doesn't have a tracking system that localizes and establishes patterns.

Wouldn't most people in our shoes, or I should say our home, be pretty sick of so many power outages and find it unacceptable? I don't think PSE leaning on the 'no guarantees' crutch is acceptable. If everyone in the state lived with this frequency and nothing was done, voters would be making different decisions starting at the Governor level. Point? It seems that I've been told it's OK for this to be happening in a small community, but I *know* it certainly wouldn't be acceptable if a lot more people were affected. Perhaps the price we pay for Bainbridge's laws that keep density low?

I hate to see that WUTC let's PSE off the hook on this when the frequency is too often and it affects many people. Though, I don't know what the

laws/mandates/SOPs are for the WUTC.

(Don't let any of this reflect on you - I'm speaking WUTC and regulations - you've been very responsive and helpful.)

Thanks again for your help.

*** 11/09/2009 02:23 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> customer



Good afternoon Mr Martin:

The issue I want to re-address at this point is simply this, PSE reported, in part: "Eight recent outages and one momentary outage were all caused by trees or their limbs falling on the feeder distribution circuit. At least five of the outages occurred during widespread wind or snow storms. This circuit was last trimmed in 2005 and is scheduled to be trimmed again in 2010. In 2010, PSE is planning to install a second recloser on the circuit near the intersection of Country Club road and Blakely Avenue, which will help reduce outages caused by trees and limbs on the feeder to the South of Blakely Avenue.

Winds are not the sole cause for limbs to break, fall, and strike power lines causing outages.

You may assume there is a pattern to the numerous outages, but such a pattern is impossible to establish.

Regarding the lights being on in the town you drove into, the town was likely on a different and unaffected circuit, and PSE has stated they have scheduled adding a second recloser to the circuit which they believe will lessen the frequency of outages in your area.

As is noted above, PSE is planning to again trim the trees in your area in 2010, but please realize this will not totally cure the issue either, as PSE can only trim the trees on right-of-ways, and many consumers refuse to allow PSE on their private property to allow PSE to more efficiently trim ALL the trees with limbs over the power lines likely to cause power outages.

This is why you can drive behind PSE's trimming crews and see area they have cut back and other areas with limbs remaining out over the power lines.

I am not taking PSE's side, nor am I defending them, I simply cannot fault them for these service outages you are experiencing.

NOTE: Any customer experiencing service outages is welcome to call the commission toll-free at 1-888-333-9882 to file a complaint or file an electronic complaint at <http://www.wutc.wa.gov/fileacomplaint> "after" they have called PSE to complain about the continuing service outages and "if" they are unsatisfied by PSE's response.

Thank you.

*** 11/28/2009 11:32 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << customer



Well, on my third power outage since I wrote the below email (two in less than a week just this week)... with pregnant wife and 18yo daughter just out of showers yelling. A plane to catch with soaking wet hair in this cold.

I appreciate the response, but don't fully understand the number you gave or what widespread storms you may be talking about. I understood the recent storm with some gusts I mention below. But, as I mentioned, most outages are in calm weather, maybe some rain.

I understand many of the factors. I also know that our area is affected more than other areas on the Island - the town was just an example. Go blocks or a mile away and there is power many times. If PSE is saying widespread wind or snow (that's interesting itself), why is not the entire or more of the island affected? Just confusing to me I guess.

I haven't heard a word from PSE as you previously mentioned.

I'd be happy seeing any PSE trucks on the island. Never do, but I see Comcast and Qwest all the time. Somehow they never experience an outage, yet aren't they nearly as pervasive?

Anyway, took this opportunity to reply (via phone) as I 'enjoy' the third power outage since I sent the last email to you. Funny, just last night I was wondering when I'd hear from PSE as they committed to you.

I guess it is going to take more than just me complaining - I've been surprised how many don't know about UTC here as I've done more polling/research chatting with folks.

BTW - I don't expect it to be totally cured. I'm realistic. Though, I do expect it not to be this unreasonable and a livable area.

Thank you again.

*** 11/30/2009 01:39 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Mr reports he has not yet been contacted by PSE as was promised. Might PSE initiate a contact with Mr to discuss his service quality as was promised?
Thank you.

*** 11/30/2009 01:56 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



Below are remarks from the Electric First Response engineer:

Left multiple mesg's with customer. Had difficulty with original contact numbers listed on order. Called Molly Brown to clarify contact info. Left 2nd msg w/ customer at 206-661-7668. Will try 3rd attempt either 11/3 or 11/4."

I will forward this email to him one more time.

*** 11/30/2009 02:07 PM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



You might try 206-661-5599, this is the contact number I was given by the customer.
Thank you.

*** 12/01/2009 09:32 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) << Brown, Molly



EFR engineer left another message at this number.

*** 12/03/2009 07:03 AM Email: Shutler, Dennis (UTC) >> 'Brown, Molly'



Thank you.