

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of  NORTHWEST NATURAL GAS COMPANY,  Petitioner,  For a Revision to Northwest Natural Gas Company's Tariff WN U-6, an Order Authorizing the Revision to Become Effective with Less than Statutory Notice	DOCKET UG-230614  ORDER 01  APPROVING TARIFF REVISION WITH LESS THAN STATUTORY NOTICE
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**BACKGROUND**

- 1 On July 27, 2023, Northwest Natural Gas Company d/b/a NW Natural (NW Natural or Company) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) a revision to its Tariff WN U-6, Schedule J, Sheet J.1 to increase funding of its low-income Gas Residential Energy Assistance Tariff (GREAT) program.
- 2 NW Natural's GREAT program provides energy assistance to customers with income at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. GREAT has been helping low-income customers since May 2009. NW Natural works collaboratively with its GREAT Advisory Group (GREAT AG) to address issues related to the GREAT program and other low-income programs and topics.
- 3 NW Natural's GREAT program currently has a \$500,000 program funding cap, which includes customer grants, administrative costs, and delivery costs. On May 20, 2023, NW Natural advised its GREAT AG it was projected to exceed the funding cap.
- 4 On July 20, 2023, NW Natural advised its GREAT AG it had exceeded the \$500,000 funding cap for the year and sought support from the GREAT AG to submit this filing for increased funding.
- 5 On July 27, 2023, NW Natural met with its GREAT AG and received unanimous support from members to submit this filing to immediately increase funding, thereby allowing NW Natural to continue serving its Low-Income customers with Energy Assistance services.

6 On July 27, 2023, NW Natural filed this tariff revision with the Commission with an effective date of August 26, 2023. NW Natural also included in its filing a Less than Statutory Notice (LSN) Form requesting an effective date of August 11, 2023.

7 Commission staff (Staff) recommends that the Commission approve the filing with the requested LSN effective August 11, 2023.

8 The filing came before the Commission at its regularly scheduled open meeting on August 10, 2023. The Commission received written comments on the Petition from The Energy Project (TEP). TEP's comments support approval of the proposed revision with less than statutory notice so customers can access energy assistance through the end of the current program year.

### DISCUSSION

9 Prior to its filing, NW Natural consulted its GREAT AG to gain support from its members. NW Natural has maintained consistent communication and transparency with its GREAT AG regarding its GREAT program and the funding concerns it experienced during the October 2022 to September 2023 program year. NW Natural states in its filing it will not exceed the program funding cap in future program years without prior approval from its GREAT AG.

10 We agree with Staff and find that it is in the public interest for the Company to increase spending beyond its GREAT funding cap to continue providing energy assistance to its low-income customers. Furthermore, it is appropriate for the tariff revision to become effective with Less than Statutory Notice, effective August 11, 2023.

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

11 (1) The Commission is an agency of the State of Washington vested by statute with the authority to regulate the rates, rules, regulations, practices, accounts, securities, transfers of property, and affiliated interests of public service companies, including gas companies.

12 (2) NW Natural is a public service gas company subject to Commission jurisdiction, providing service as a natural gas company.

- 13 (3) WAC 480-07-510(2) allows companies to file revised tariff sheets for which the company seeks approval.
- 14 (4) Staff has reviewed the filing in Docket UG-230614.
- 15 (5) Staff believes the proposed tariff revision is reasonable, including the LSN effective date of August 11, 2023, and is in the public interest to be approved.
- 16 (6) This matter came before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on August 10, 2023.
- 17 (7) After reviewing NW Natural's Petition filed in Docket UG-230614 on July 27, 2023, and giving due consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission finds that the filing should be approved.

**ORDER**

**THE COMMISSION ORDERS:**

- 18 (1) Northwest Natural Gas Company d/b/a NW Natural's filing for Revision to Tariff WN U-6, Schedule J, Sheet J.1 for funding the Gas Residential Energy Assistance Tariff, effective August 11, 2023, is approved.
- 19 (2) This Order shall not affect the Commission's authority over rates, services, accounts, valuations, estimates, or determination of costs, or on any matters that may come before it. Nor shall this Order granting Petition be construed as an agreement to any estimate or determination of costs, or any valuation of property claimed or asserted.
- 20 (3) The Commission retains jurisdiction over the subject matter and Northwest Natural Gas Company d/b/a NW Natural to effectuate the provisions of this Order.

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

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective August 10, 2023.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

AMANDA MAXWELL  
Executive Director and Secretary