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October 22, 2012

Commissioner Philip Jones
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
1300 South Evergreen Park Drive SW
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Dear Commissioner Jones,

On September 28, 2012, I provided testimony regarding AVISTA proposed rate increases at the Commission's public meeting in the Spokane Valley. Following my remarks, you asked about the rate and trend of individuals living in poverty in Spokane County. I offered that while I understood the numbers to be increasing, I would check the data and supply additional written testimony.

After consulting the Community Indicators Initiative of Spokane and linking through to the data source they rely upon (US Census Bureau: American Community Survey) the statistic reveal that

In Spokane County

- In 2010, 14.3% of the total population was living below the federal poverty line
- In 2011, 14.9% of the total population was living below the federal poverty line OR 68,477 individuals.

This **increase** means approximately 2,800 additional individuals are living in poverty as compared to the prior year.

When you consider persons under the age of 18 living below the federal poverty line

- In 2010, 15.9% of the total Spokane county population under 18 were living below the federal poverty line
- In 2011, 16.9% of the total Spokane county population under 18 were living below the federal poverty line OR 17,979 children

This **increase** means approximately 1,100 additional children living in poverty as compared to the prior year.

With poverty rates in Spokane County increasing, and 68,477 individuals living in poverty the need is far greater than LIRAP funds available. I urge the Commission to carefully consider the adverse impacts of the proposed rate case on those with the lowest incomes.

Sincerely,

Julie Honekamp
CEO

cc: Commissioner Jeffrey Goltz, Commissioner Patrick Oshie, and UE-

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