

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION, Complainant, v. CASCADE NATURAL GAS CORPORATION, Respondent.	DOCKET UG-170929 ORDER 05 GRANTING STAFF'S MOTION REQUESTING OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND TO BENCH REQUEST NO. 1
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BACKGROUND

- 1 On August 31, 2017, Cascade Natural Gas Corporation (Cascade or Company) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) revisions to its currently effective Tariff WN U-3 for natural gas service the Company provides in Washington. The effect of these filings would be to increase rates and charges for natural gas service. The Commission suspended the as-filed tariffs and set the matters for hearing in Order 01 on September 14, 2017. In Order 03, the Commission established a procedural schedule including dates for parties to file Response testimony, Cross-Answering testimony, and Rebuttal testimony.
- 2 On January 3, 2018, the Commission issued Bench Request No. 1, requesting that Cascade provide information related to The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act's (TCJA) impacts on the Company's revenue requirement and the Company's proposed ratemaking treatments(s) for those impacts.
- 3 On January 12, 2018, Cascade filed a response to Bench Request No. 1. On January 29, the Company filed a supplemental response.
- 4 On March 2, 2018, Commission staff (Staff) filed a Motion Requesting an Opportunity to Respond to Bench Request No. 1 (Motion). In its Motion, Staff explains that "[t]he impacts of the TCJA can be difficult to understand, and as Staff has studied the issues involved its understanding has developed. After reviewing the Company's supplemental response ... Staff now believes it understands the Company's presentation of the impacts in this case and will be able to provide a helpful response for the Commission's

consideration.”¹ Staff proposes that the filing date for its response should be March 23, 2018.

5 On March 5, 2018, the Commission issued a Notice of Shortened Time to Respond to Staff’s Motion. The Notice provided any party that opposed Staff’s Motion the opportunity to respond by March 7, 2018.

6 On March 7, 2018, Cascade filed a response to Staff’s Motion. Cascade does not object to Staff’s request, provided that the Company is also afforded an opportunity to file a reply to any response filed. Cascade proposes that the filing date for its reply should be April 10, 2018.

DISCUSSION

7 We grant Staff’s Motion requesting the opportunity to respond to Bench Request No. 1. Staff notes in its Motion that the Commission directed Bench Request No. 1 to the Company but did not afford other parties an opportunity to respond. Consistent with our decision in another recent general rate case where information related to the TCJA became available during the pendency of the proceeding, we grant all parties the opportunity to respond to Bench Request No. 1.

8 As Staff notes, permitting Staff and other parties to respond to the Company’s responses will aid the Commission in its decision regarding the impacts of the TCJA and how those impacts should be addressed. In addition, no party objects to Staff’s Motion. In light of these circumstances, we find good cause to grant Staff’s Motion and allow all parties to respond to Cascade’s bench request response and supplemental response by March 23, 2018.

9 We also grant Cascade’s request to reply to the parties’ responses by April 10, 2018. Because Cascade bears the burden of proof in this case, the Company should be granted the opportunity to reply to other parties’ proposals. Cascade’s reply will also further assist us in developing a more complete record.

10 We note that Staff has filed motions seeking modifications to the procedural schedules in several recent cases in relatively late stages of those proceedings. We request that Staff, and indeed all parties, be respectful of the commissioners’, administrative law judges’, and policy staff’s schedules and time constraints when seeking such modifications.

¹Staff’s Motion ¶12.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 11* (1) Staff's Motion Requesting an Opportunity to Respond to Bench Request No. 1 is granted.
- 12* (2) Parties must file their responses to Bench Request No. 1 no later than March 23, 2018.
- 13* (3) Cascade Natural Gas Corporation must file its reply to parties' responses no later than April 10, 2018.

Dated at Olympia, Washington, and effective March 9, 2018.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

RAYNE PEARSON
Administrative Law Judge