WAC 480-90-178 480-100-178 Topic	Commenter	Comment	Staff Response
TopicEconomichardshipexperiencedby ratepayersas a result ofutilityequipment orbillingpracticeerrors	State Rep. Matt Shea 4 <sup>th</sup> Legislative District	<ul> <li>The rulemaking does not adequately explore the existence of ratepayer inconvenience or hardship that presently exists or would exist if companies can back-bill for up to six months of under-billing.</li> <li>Suggested data that should be sought and analyzed before the rule is finalized: <ul> <li>What percentage of customers who are back-billed ask for help with payment arrangements and what percentage are already receiving low-income assistance of any sort for their utilities?</li> <li>What the average dollar value of back-billed amounts is of those who ask for payment arrangements?</li> <li>What is the relationship, if any, between those asking for payment arrangements and the number of months of "underbilling" for which they were back-billed?</li> <li>How many who ask for payment arrangements on the original timetable, or need extension?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Chairman Danner responded to Representative Shea by letter on Oct. 13. A copy of the letter is posted in Docket U-144155.
		<ul> <li>What is the average length of a payment arrangement schedule and average monthly payment amount for those arrangements made to satisfy a back-bill?</li> <li>Do any number of those who were back-billed subsequently curtail/reduce their average monthly utility usage—a sign of potential financial hardship?</li> </ul>	

Unassigned	PPL	Pacific Power and Light (PPL) requests unassigned usage be removed	Staff disagrees. Staff believes unassigned
usage		<ul> <li>fractific Fower and Eight (FFE) requests unassigned usage be removed from the proposed draft rules. The company believes any changes to the rules regarding unassigned usage should be addressed in WAC 480-100-128(2)(f). However, should the commission determine to include unassigned usage in the proposed changes to WAC 480-100-178, PPL recommends that "unassigned usage" be included as a separate subsection.</li> <li>PPL proposes to move unassigned usage from subsection (6)(a) to a new subsection (6)(b) to differentiate it from the corrected billing received due to a meter failure or malfunction or billing error.</li> </ul>	energy usage is easy to detect and correct within six months. The company should take immediate action to contact the occupant to apply for service. If a customer fails to respond, the company should take timely action to disconnect service to preclude undue lengthy corrected bills.
	PSE	Puget Sound Energy (PSE) requests the Commission remove "a meter with unassigned energy usage" from the draft rules requiring a utility to issue a corrected bill within sixty days upon determination. PSE supports a sixty day threshold for issues related to stopped meters, meter failure or malfunction, but not issues related to unassigned energy usage ("UEU"). Unlike a stopped meter, a meter with unassigned energy usage is the result of a customer failing to start energy service with the utility after move-in. As discussed in PSE's previous comments, reaching the UEU threshold is not time-based but rather based on reaching a threshold of usage that is balanced between allowing adequate time for the customer to sign-up for service and avoiding the cost of a PSE truck roll. In some circumstances, the utilization is very low and may take months before the initial threshold triggers an investigation.	
	NWNG	The Company acknowledges that when it learns of unassigned energy usage that a corrected bill is issued. However, because unassigned energy usage is the direct result of the failure of a customer to inform the Company of their obligations for service, the inclusion of these	Staff agrees to revise the definition of unassigned energy usage as proposed by Northwest Natural Gas (NWNG).

		<ul><li>types of bill corrections in a rule where the purpose of the rule is to address corrected bills due to some cause related to the utility's facilities or utility action, is problematic.</li><li>Extended periods of unassigned usage are somewhat rare, but they do occur. The Company's preference would be to exclude unassigned usage from this rule altogether.</li></ul>	NWNG recommended revising <b>Section</b> (5)(b)(ii) as follows: (ii) for the purpose of this rule, unassigned energy usage meter is defined as a meter that <u>is installed at a valid service</u> address and has accurately recorded and transmitted energy usage during a period of time where there was no active gas service account at that premise. Correctly records and transmits energy usage but does not have a customer assigned to the account.
<b>Clarification</b> changes	PPL PSE	PPL proposes replacing "Upon discovery of" and "discovered" with "When the utility has determined" and "confirmed" with "determines" in the last sentence. This change would give more clarity as to when the sixty day clock starts for issuing a billing correction. PPL proposes to clarify the rules by stating from the "date the utility determines the error" in order to allow time for investigation and confirmation of the error. <i>WAC 480-90-178(5)(a) and WAC 480-100-178(5)(a):</i> PSE is unclear with the term "upon discovery" and "discovers" in this section of the draft rules. PSE recommends replacing "upon discovery" with "from the date the utility determines" in the first sentence and replacing "discovers" with "determines" in the last sentence. This change would give more clarity as to when the sixty day clock starts for issuing a billing correction. A potential billing error often requires investigation	Staff disagrees that the terms "upon discovery of" and "discovered" should be replaced with "when the utility has determined." Staff would agree to change the last sentence in paragraph (5)(a) to read: However, except as provided for in subsection(7), when a utility discovers that it has under-billed a customer, it may not seek to collect from that customer for any period greater than six months from the date the error occurred.

	and confirmation, and it is unclear whether sixty days would begin before or after a utility has investigated and confirmed the meter is malfunctioning. From PSE's perspective, the rules would be made clear by stating from the "date the utility determines the error" in order to ensure time for investigation and confirmation of the meter malfunction and issuance of the corrected billing statement.	Staff believes this change would provide the utilities the flexibility required to determine the date when the error occurred.
	WAC 480-90-178(6)(f) and WAC 480-100-178(6)(f): PSE proposes to eliminate the phrase "an explanation of" from this section because it is unclear and ambiguous what should be included in an explanation of the availability payments arrangements beyond the payment arrangements themselves. For clarity, PSE proposes this section to read "the availability of payment arrangements in accordance with WAC 480-90-138(1) <sup>2</sup> , Payment arrangements."	Staff disagrees with PSE's proposal to eliminate the phrase "an explanation of" from WAC 480-90-178(6)(f) and WAC 480-90-178(6)(f). The utility should provide an explanation of the availability of payment arrangements in accordance with WAC 480-90-138(1) and WAC 480-100-138(1).
NWNG	NWNG recommends that the sentence be modified to remove any ambiguity created from the use of the word "discovery." The Company's suggested language is as follows:The utility must issue the corrected bill within 60 days from the date the utility confirmed that an account had been the under- or over-billeding.	
Avista	In Section 5(a), Avista proposes that the language in the first sentence: "a utility must issue a corrected bill to a customer to recover or refund billed amounts" be modified to read: "a utility <b>may</b> issue a corrected bill to a customer to recover under-billed amounts and must issue a corrected bill to a customer to refund over-billed amounts." Essentially, this modification gives the utility flexibility to not back bill a customer who has been under-billed, which is helpful in certain situations. For example, in a switched meter or mislabeled meter base situation, the	Staff disagrees. The company should always make an attempt to issue a corrected bill to a customer to recover under-billed amounts and must attempt to issue a corrected bill to a customer to refund over-billed amounts.

		customer may no longer be a customer to issue the corrected bill. This	Staff would agree with Avista's proposed
		flexibility would be both a benefit to the customer and the utility.	language modification in Section 6(f).
			In Section 6(f), Avista proposes the
		In Section 6, Avista proposes that item (e): "The actions taken to	language be modified to read as follows:
		eliminate the cause of the bill correction" be removed. The reason for	"When issuing a corrected bill for
		the bill correction is already included in part (a), therefore, the company	<b>under-billing</b> , an explanation of the
		does not believe this requirement will add additional value. Also,	availability of payment arrangements"
		messaging is limited on a bill so the company would propose to	The company proposes this modification
		eliminate any requirements that may not be needed. Issuing a letter will	as payment arrangements do not apply to
		be necessary in some situations, but also comes at an added cost.	situations when a utility issues a
		be necessary in some situations, but also comes at an added cost.	corrected bill or refund for an over-
		In Section 6(f), Avista proposes the language be modified to read as	billing.
		follows: " <u>When issuing a corrected bill for under-billing</u> , an	oming.
		explanation of the availability of payment arrangements" The	
		company proposes this modification as payment arrangements do not	
		apply to situations when a utility issues a corrected bill or refund for an	
	NWNG	over-billing.	Staff diagonage with NWNC's managed
	NWNG	Section (6). NWNG has suggested changes to several items in this	Staff disagrees with NWNG's proposed
		section.	changes to Section (6). The required
			information should not be made available
		First, NWNG suggests that the last sentence in the first paragraph of	upon request. All the information should
		this section be revised as follows:	be provided when the corrected bill is
			sent to the customer. Staff can agree to
		When a corrected bill is issued, the utility must provide the	modify the language in paragraph (6) to
		following information with on the corrected bill or in a letter	read:
		sent to the customer.	
			When a corrected bill is issued, the utility
		This change will accommodate the use of bill inserts, as stating this	must provide the following information
		information on the actual bill in many cases cannot be	on the corrected bill, in a bill insert, in a
		accommodated.	letter or any combination of methods that
			clearly explains all the information
		Second, with regard to item (b), NWNG suggests that this section be	required to be provided to the customer.
		revised to make this something that is available on request, but that	

is not a required feature of the corrected bill. There are a couple of reasons that support making this an optional item. Specifically, (i) in many instances, the correction will be made in the form of a line item adjustment on a subsequent bill, and a breakdown is simply not available or necessary; (ii) the creation of a breakdown in a form that is useful to the customer can be time consuming and burdensome; and (iii) because in most cases where a billing issue covers multiple billing months we are in direct communication with the customer, many customers do not want or need a detailed breakdown with the corrected bill. While we are not opposed to providing the breakdown, we would only want to provide it if the customer requests it. NWNG suggests item (b) be revised as follows:	
(b) <u>How to request</u> of a breakdown of the bill correction for each month included in the corrected bill;	
Third, with regard to item (e), NWNG suggests the following revisions:	
The actions taken to <u>resolve the issue that resulted in</u> eliminate the cause of the bill correction, <u>if applicable</u> ;	
Because the utility is not eliminating the bill correction but is eliminating the cause of the bill error, NWNG suggests rewording item (b) as shown above. The addition of "if applicable" at the end recognizes the fact that not all bill corrections require a corrective action by the utility.	

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Residential	PPL	PPL supports limiting the adjustment period for meter failures or	Staff disagrees. The companies have
and		malfunctions for residential customers to six months. However, PPL	failed to provide compelling reasons and
nonresidential		proposes a 36-month adjustment limitation for under-billing to	evidence why nonresidential customers
service		nonresidential customers for meter failures or malfunctions. Residential	should be excluded from this rulemaking.
		metering is relatively simple to track and identify errors. The	In fact, the data shows the number of
		complexity of nonresidential metering can make it difficult to identify	non-residential accounts billed in excess
		problems. In addition, nonresidential customer adjustments tend to	of six months is very small, and the total
		include higher dollar adjustment amounts that should not be subsidized	amounts billed on corrected bills to
		by residential customers.	nonresidential customers in excess of six
	PSE	WAC 480-90-178(7)(c) and WAC 480-100-178(7)(c): PSE proposes to	months is similar to the total amounts for
		add a new subsection (c) that includes an exemption for non-residential	residential customers. See attachment
		meters from the provisions of section $5(a)$ . The company argues that the	(page 36) for table showing company
		exemption is necessary because utilities require flexibility to address the	comparisons. The amounts reported for
		varying scenarios that occur with non-residential versus residential	nonresidential customers are very small
		customer billing and metering. The varying nature of the non-	in comparison to the companies' total
		residential customer class makes it difficult for the utility to identify	revenues, and the difference between the
		slowed or stopped meters. For example, a business may operate	impact of corrected bills issued in excess
		seasonally, temporarily close, or not notify the utility of equipment or	of six months to non-residential
		facility changes. Another rationale for exempting non-residential meters	customers and those issued to residential
		from these draft rules is the additional time and resources needed to	customers is not significant.
		address the unique and customized nature of larger meter sets. This is	
		particularly prevalent with larger, non-residential natural gas meters for	
		industrial customers. These customized meter sets require additional	
		time to be designed, scheduled, etc. to ensure precise and accurate	
		measurement.	
	NWNG	NWNG suggests that the six-month limitation regarding bill corrections	
		be applicable only to residential customer bills. As such, we	
		recommend that corrected bills related to non-residential customer bills	
		be included as an exception under the proposed new section (7).	

Over-billing	PPL NWNG	<ul> <li>PPL requests that the adjustment period for over-billing be the same as required for under-billings. However, should the commission determine that adjustments for over-billings should be treated differently, PPL proposes language that would not require a utility to issue corrected bills for over-billings beyond 36 months.</li> <li>As proposed, the use of the word "collect" implies that the intent is to impose the six-month restriction only to under-billings. If that is Staff's intent, then NWNG recommends that a limitation on over-billings also be established. If Staff finds that six months is too short, NWNG would recommend a 12-month limitation on refunds for over-billings. There is considerable administrative cost incurred in investigating and processing corrected bills, and an open-ended timeframe for processing over-billings would be administratively burdensome.</li> </ul>	Staff disagrees. The Commission's records retention policy is six years <sup>1</sup> . The commission adopted by reference the Regulations to Govern the Preservation of Records of Electric, Gas, and Water Utilities published by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC). Staff believes that the companies should be required to refund over-billings for the entire period of time for which they are required to keep records.
Billing errors	PPL	PPL disagrees with staff's recommended six-month adjustment period for under-billing related to billing errors. Billing errors can be related to issues that are difficult to capture in a process, such as the customer signing up for service at the wrong address, the meter base being labeled incorrectly, internal wiring issues, etc. Utilities should not be penalized when the source of the error is based on problems beyond the control of the utilities. The utilities previously proposed a 36-month limitation for all billing error adjustments.	Staff disagrees. The companies have submitted a comprehensive list of quality control measures to ensure that billing errors are caught in a timely manner. While there may be billing anomalies that occur infrequently, staff believes the companies are able to identify the majority of billing errors that occur within six months.
Definitions	PPL	PPL proposes changes to the definitions for clarity. PPL requests the removal of the term "erratic meter" from the definition of "meter failure or malfunction." The company believes "meter failure or malfunction" is adequately defined without the term "erratic meter" included in the definition.	Staff disagrees. Staff investigations of informal complaints have found that there are instances when the meter shows erratic meter readings as it begins to fail.

<b>Conflict</b> with	PPL	PPL believes the proposed rule also requires a revision to WAC 480-	Staff believes the proposed rules clearly
WAC 480- 100-183	PPL	100-183(5). WAC 480-100-183(5)(a) requires a revision to wAC 480- 100-183(5). WAC 480-100-183(5)(a) requires utilities to refund or bill customers for the proper usage from the date that they first were billed for the malfunctioning meter, if the date if known. If the date is unknown, WAC 480-100-183(5)(b) limits the adjustment period to no more than six months.	delineate the timeframes allowed for corrected bills. The proposed rules are not in conflict with WAC's 480-90- 183(5); 480-100-183(5).
		PPL proposed the following existing language in WAC 480-100-183(5) be deleted:	
		<ul> <li>(5)</li> <li>(a) If the utility can identify the date the customer was first billed from a defective meter, the utility must refund or bill the customer for the proper usage from that date:</li> <li>(b) If the utility cannot identify the date the customer was first billed from a defective meter, the utility must refund or bill the customer for the proper usage not to exceed six months.</li> <li>To eliminate confusion and to prevent having two conflicting rules depending on whether the utility initiated the investigation or the customer, PPL proposed replacing the language in WAC 480-100-183(5) as follows:</li> </ul>	
		(5) If a meter test reveals a meter error greater than specified as acceptable in WAC 480-100-338, Accuracy requirements for electric meters, the utility must repair or replace the meter at no cost to the customer. In accordance with WAC 480-100-178(5)(a), 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), Payment arrangements.	

		CORRECTED BILLING ISSUES RULEMAKING DOCKET U-144155 COMMENT SUMMARY – OCTOBER 2015	
Consistent treatment under WAC 480-100-128	PPL	<ul> <li>PPL believes there is a conflict with WAC 480-100-128(2)(f), which states the utility "must charge the customer for service used in accordance with the utility's filed tariff" when it determines service has been used prior to receiving an application for service in the context of a possible disconnection. PPL proposed the following revision to WAC 480-128(2)(f):</li> <li>The utility has determined a customer has used service prior to applying for service. The utility must charge the customer for service used in accordance with WAC 480-100-178(5)(b).</li> <li>PPL proposes WAC 480-128(2)(f) be revised to state:</li> <li>The utility has determined a customer has used service prior to applying for service. The utility must charge the customer for service used in accordance with WAC 480-128(2)(f) be revised to state:</li> <li>The utility has determined a customer has used service prior to applying for service. The utility must charge the customer for service used in accordance with [remove: the utility's filed tariff] WAC 480-100-178(5)(b).</li> </ul>	Staff believes the proposed rules clearly delineate the timeframes allowed for corrected bills. The proposed rules are not in conflict with WAC's 480-90- 128(2)(f); and 480-100-128(2)(f).
	NWNG	<ul> <li>NWNG is also concerned that subjecting bill corrections for unassigned usage to the six-month limitation might be in conflict with WAC 480-90-128(2), which provides for disconnection of service without notice or without further notice, and states at (2)(f):</li> <li><i>"The utility has determined a customer has used service prior to applying for service. The utility must charge the customer for service used in accordance with the utility's filed tariff."</i></li> </ul>	
Need for System Changes and Training	PPL	The company believes the final rules will require changes to current business practices and processes. The company requests staff consider the system changes and training that utilities may need to complete when determining the schedule for implementation of the final requirements in this preceding.	PPL was the only company addressing a need for additional time for system changes and training. Staff believes the time for system changes and training would be minimal and should be addressed individually with each company.

Degrange to	PPL								
Response to	FFL								
Staff Question				Re	Residential		Non Reside		
1. Please					Total			Total	
provide the				Accounts		Accour		amount	
three most				corrected		correct		billed in	
recent years				more than				excess of 6	
of data			Year	6 months	months	months		months	
regarding the			2012		4 \$745.5	59	0	\$0.00	
number of			2013		2 \$1,436.5	50	0	\$0.00	
corrected bills			2014		1 \$846.6	56	2	\$841.59	
issued for		l		ents due to	bankruptcy and				
under-billed			included.		I	0			
amounts due									
to meter									
failure or									
malfunctions,									
or unassigned				Tetal We	hin ston				
energy usage			V	Total Was	snington				
meters that			Year	Revenue					
exceeded six			2012		2,511,323.12				
months in			2013	\$313	3,273,892.31				
duration.			2014	\$319	9,351,198.18				
	Avista	Year		Resident	ial	N	on Resi	dential	The data submitted by the companies do
	Number of Total amoun		Total amount	Numbe	er of	Total	not substantiate their concerns to		
			accounts	issued	billed in	accounts	issued	amount	eliminate nonresidential customers from
			correcte	d bills	excess of six	corrected	d bills	billed in	this rulemaking.
			exceedi	ng six	months*	exceedii	ng six	excess of	
	months		mont	months		The percentage of the amounts billed in			
		2012	8		\$3,019	2		\$555	excess of six months are very small
		2013	5		\$2,932	1		\$332	compared to the companies' total
		2014	4		\$1,258	1		\$3,823	Washington revenue. Staff believes there

					sued Tot tot \$62 \$63		the sum of total	is minimal impact regarding the effect of restricting corrected bills to six months for both residential and nonresidential customers.
	PSE	Year	Resi Number of accounts issued corrected bills exceeding six months	Total amo billed in excess of s months		Non R Number of accounts issued corrected bills exceeding six months	Total amount billed in excess of six months	
		2012	572	\$473,216		110	\$517,811	
		2013	433	\$323		69	\$278,368	
		2014	536	\$424	,585	88	\$606,874	

	Yea	ar To	tal Revenue				
		Comparevent	any's total le				
	20	)12	\$3,248,843,000				
	20	)13	\$3,187,335,000				
	20	014	\$3,116,123,000				
NWNG	Year		Residential	Non	Reside	ntial	
		# of accounts with corrected bill exceeding 6 months	Total amount billed in excess of 6 months	# of accounts with corrected bill exceeding 6 months	billed of 6 i	amount 1 in excess nonths	
	2012	1	\$ 84.6 8	0	\$	N/A	
	2013	0	\$	0	\$	N/A	
	2014	2	\$ 40.2 4	0	\$	N/A	
	data pr		WNG does not track b ve is specific only to c ion.				

		Year 2012 2013 2014	Total Revenu \$69,95 \$73,98 \$71,56	4,449 8,411				
	CNGC	with a until the num	nique fiel ber of oc	ld order typ currences, t	e. CNG does	not have a synthesis the occurrer	under-billed rea ystem record of aces, or the resu	
Response to staff question 2: Please provide the three most recent years of data regarding the number of	PPL		Year 2012 2013 2014	Resi Accounts corrected more than 6 months 4 2 1	dential Total amount billed in excess of 6 months \$745.59 \$1,436.50 \$846.66	Non R Accounts corrected more than 6 months 0 0 0 2	esidential Total amount billed in excess of 6 months \$0.00 \$0.00 \$841.59	The data shows the revenue impact of restricting the corrected bills for nonresidential customers to be very small.
corrected bills issued for under-billed amounts due to all other billing errors (excluding		Year 2011 2011 2014	Total Reven 2 \$30 3 \$3	ded. Washington	ankruptcy and a	charges/fees		

meter	Avista	Year	Resider			]	Non Resid	lential
tampering, fraud and estimated bills.)			Number of accounts issued corrected bills exceeding six months	an bil exce	otal nount led in ss of six onths*	account correct exceed	ber of ts issued ted bills ling six nths	Total amount billed in excess of six months*
Examples include:		2012	0		\$0		4	\$34,123
corrected bills		2012	1	-	2,137		0	\$0
for incorrect prorated bills;		2014	0		\$0		0	\$0
mislabeled meter bases; incorrectly installed meters; incorrect billing rate			ollar amounts incluc to customers who v		sued corre Total R	ected bills		
schedules; and incorrect billing multipliers					Comp total re			
				12	\$625,6			
				13	\$651,3			
	PSE		20	14	\$675,3	86,929		
	ISE	billing co	eter and billing co prrections related to oes not include an	to stop	ped met	er and U	EU probl	
	NWNG	Year	Residentia	al		Ν	Von Reside	ntial

			# of operation	Total amount	# of operation	Tet-1	omount 1-:11-1	
			# of accounts	Total amount	# of accounts		amount billed	
			with	billed in excess	with corrected		ess of 6	
			corrected bill	of 6 months	bill exceeding	month	IS	
			exceeding 6		6 months			
			months					
		2012	0	\$ N/A	3	\$	147,110.25	
		2013	1	\$ 27.4	0	\$	N/A	
				9				
		2014	0	\$ N/A	0	\$	N/A	
			1					
		Year	Total Reven	nue				
		2012	\$69,954,44	9				
		2013	\$73,988,41	1				
		2014	\$71,567,78	5				
	CNGC	Same r	esponse as au	estion number 1.				1
			1					
Degnongo to	PPL		a. Please pro	ovide additional ra	tionale and ave	mnles	of why it is	Staff baliavas the companies have not
Response to	I'IL			to exclude non-re		or with it is	Staff believes the companies have not shown a compelling reason for excluding	
staff question				wer supports exclude			tomers from	nonresidential customers from the six
<b>3:</b> The				nth limitation for a	-			
				nui minitation 101 a	ujustinents 101 I			month billing correction limitation.

4. 1.0	10 / 1	1 - 1'CC' 1/ ·	1.1		
rationale for		can be difficult to	-		
requesting the	0	urs for nonresident		U U	Avista agreed that the rule should be
exclusion of	-	les of metering or l	applied to both residential and		
non-		tial customers that	nonresidential customers.		
residential	utility:				
customers		er stops during a p			
from the six		nd the customer doe	es not notify	the utility when	
		operations resume.			
month billing		tomer modifies the			
correction		g equipment to proput does not notify			
limitations is		out does not notify t taff's concerns, Pao			
unclear.	÷	a billing adjustmer			
	customers.	a onning aujustiller	n miniation	ior nonicolucitual	
		the following addi	tional data	nogonding	
		the following addi ercial customers.			
		how seasonal com			
		mpanies to identif			
	problems.	<b>r</b>	,		
		Seasonal	Total		
		Customer	Revenue		
		Customer	Total		
	N	umber of	amount		
	ac	counts issued	billed in		
		orrected bills	excess of	Seasonal	
		ceeding six	six	Customer	
		onths	months	Revenue	
	2012	2	\$92.00	\$12,429,049.14	
	2013	2	-\$626.94	\$12,823,928.67	
	2014	5	-\$69.14	\$14,161,537.96	
	Only sched	lule 40 customers a			
	customers a	are also included ir	other respo	nses herein.	

	<ul> <li>While seasonal nonresidential customers primarily use electric service during the "irrigation season", the irrigation season varies for each customer. Factors such as the type of crop being grown, weather conditions, crop rotations, etc. can all affect when a customer starts and stops their irrigation season for the year. This variation can make it difficult to identify a meter failure or malfunction. For example, if the meter starts to slow or stops in the fall when irrigation seasons typically end, it may look no different than the seasonal nonresidential customer slowing down operations for the season. It would be cost prohibitive for the utility to send an employee out at the end of the irrigation season to verify whether the meter has failed or the seasonal nonresidential customer as simply stopped irrigating for the season. Additionally, access to meters can be an issue which prevents utilities from being able to resolve meter or billing issues promptly.</li> <li>Unassigned usage can also be difficult to address with seasonal nonresidential customers. If a new customer takes over the service at the end of the irrigation season but does not apply for service, they could have minimal usage during the off season. The usage may be so low that it does not prompt an investigation of the unassigned usage. It could be over six months before the seasonal nonresidential customer begins to irrigate, prompting the utility to investigate.</li> </ul>	
Avista	Avista believes the draft rules, as written, should apply to residential and non- residential customers. Typically, the terms that describe commercial customers are in reference to the rate schedule a customer is being billed for service. For example, "small business customer" or "commercial customer" refers generally to Avista's Schedule 11, General Service customer. "Large Commercial Customer" generally refers to Avista's Schedule 21, Large General Service customer and "Industrial Customer" generally refers to Avista's Schedule 25, Extra Large General Service	

		Avista is not ablommercial custo				
PSE	usage patter stopped me represent a The data in higher amo amount wa average no In 2014, th for resident pattern cha average an excluding n needed to a This is part meters for	it is extremely of rms are due to a eter. In addition much higher bill PSE's response ount. In 2012, fo s \$2,414 versus n-residential am e total average n tial. Utilities ner nges for non-residential n address the uniquicularly prevale industrial custor time to be design	business's opera , non-residential lling amount (on e to question #4 or example, the \$248 for resider ount was \$4,481 on-residential a ed flexibility to idential customa addressed. Final neters is the add ue and customizent with larger, n ners. These cus	ational changes customer bills average) than below demons total average r ntial. In 2013, l versus \$179 f mount was \$3 address the case ers and to ensu- lly, another rat itional time an ed nature of la on-residential tomized meter	s or a slowed/ ing adjustments a residential. otrates this non-residential the total for residential. 62 versus \$56 uses of usage uses of usage uses of usage the larger cionale for ad resources rger meter sets. natural gas	
	accurate m	easurement.		1	1	
	Year		Commercial omers	Total Revenue		
		Number of accounts issued corrected bills exceeding six months	Total amount billed in excess of six months			
	2012	3	\$13,630	n/a		

	· · · · ·				ГГ	
	2013	4	\$16,592	n/a		
	2014	4	\$18,318	n/a		l
				-		l
						l
NWNG	There are a numb					
	six month billing		itation. These	reasons include.	, but are not	l
	necessarily limite	ed to:				
	(1) 7	The dollar amo	unts associated	with meter fail	ures or	
	( )				sperienced with	
				imple, see the C		
		· ·		e, where two no		
					would have been	l
				e had been in ef serve to increase	5	l
		customers.	ins unimatery s	serve to merease		l
	-		ntial meter set c	configurations c	an be complex	l
				e typical resider		l
				et configuration		l
				ilures. As such	·	l
				of time without		l
				er be experience	ver-billings that	l
		esidential custo		er be experience		l
				rs tend to have	varying	l
				out the year, ofte		l
				ly low usage. 7		l
		0		ifficult to deterr	•	l
		given period the neter failure or		e or decrease is	the result of a	l
	ľ	neter failure or	manunction.			l
	There were no se	asonal custome	er accounts that	t were issued co	rrected bills that	l
	exceeded six more					l
	associated with s	easonal custom	er use.			

	Any seasonal use customer, whether residential or non-residential, pose a problem in the Company's ability to quickly identify a meter malfunction or failure. This is largely due to the fact that these customers could go several months – maybe even an entire 12 consecutive month period or more – with zero use. For the most part, these are customers that use natural gas only for space heating purposes. In the non-residential sector, this is often associated with freeze protection. It would not be prudent for the Company to assume that extended consecutive zero use reads (e.g. six months or more) is merely the result of the customer's behavior. As such, NW Natural's policy is to initiate an account review or meter investigation on zero-use meters where six months of consecutive zero use has been recorded. It would be unduly burdensome and costly for the Company to perform these investigations more frequently because in general, the zero use meter read is not attributable to a meter failure or malfunction.	
CNGC	Errors with residential bills are more easily detected than errors with nonresidential bills because residential customers typically have an easily identifiable and fairly consistent annual load curve. A residential customer may have a fairly constant baseline load from a water heater and a more substantial heating load that increases as the weather gets cooler. Gas drier usage and stovetops do not use enough gas to create significant deviations in the residential load profile.	
	By contrast, non-residential customers do not have a typical load profile. A non-residential customer may use gas for heating or for an industrial process. Adding or subtracting working hours or production runs could significantly change a non-residential customer's usage. Nonresidential customers' usage responds to economic and market	

			Year 2012	Resid Number of accounts issued refunds exceeding six months 24	Total amount of refunds in excess of six months* (\$9,351)	information.			
related to overbilling.	Avista		2014	-	-\$2,450.49		Staff acknowledges the additional		
corrected bills			2013	-	-\$949.02		-\$50,663.79 -\$6,683.62		
data for			2012	23	-\$2,111.39	11	-\$748.45		
three years of			Year	months	months	months	months		
provide the most recent				corrected more the 6	billed in excess of 6	corrected more the 6	billed in excess of 6		
4: Please				Accounts	amount	Accounts	Total amount		
Response to staff question	PPL	ſ		Res	sidential Total	Non F	Residential		
		The terr convers certain t custome from ye grown a	m "seas ationall times of ers may ear-to-ye and the npany c	onal" is not u ly to refer to f the year. For have season ear based on crop yield.	tion reporting used in the co spikes in usag or instance, w al spikes in d a number of t e a way to retr	5			
		may hav historic	ve atypi use or t	ical usage par to other non-	tterns when c residential cu	ompared with stomer, detec	Because they h either their ow cting metering or re difficult		

		2013	27	(\$7,1	71)	1	(\$3,444)	
		2014	62	(\$3,4	79)	10	(\$18,058)	
PSE	Year		Resid	lential		Non Re	sidential	
		acco issue refur exce	d	Total amount of refunds in excess of six months	acc refu exc	mber of ounts issued unds reeding six nths	Total amount of refunds exceeding six months	
	2012	2	13	-\$3,226		3	-\$7,242	
	2013		30	-\$5,363		1	-\$4,481	
	2014	4	33	-\$1,861		13	-\$4,704	-
NWNG	Year			dential			Residential	
		# of accounts with	ref f	otal amount of funds in excess nonths	of	# of accounts with	Total amount of refunds in excess of 6 months	
		corrected bill exceedin 6 months	ıg			corrected bill exceeding 6 months		
	2012	1	\$		62	3	\$ 181	1
	2013	8	\$	2	87	3	\$ 326	1
	2014	6	\$	2	31	4	\$ 501	1
CNGC	field or	der type	e, the co	ompany does	not	have a system	ds with a unique m record of the ces, or the results	of
				s, the reason such billing a			es, or the results	01

<b>Response to</b>	PPL	Identifying and Preventing Billing Errors	The companies have reported extensive
staff question			quality control processes that analyze
5: Please		The Company has several automated and manual processes that	billing and metering information to help
describe all		analyze billing and metering information to help prevent billing	prevent billing errors.
current		errors. Several of these processes are described below.	
procedures in			Staff believes that some additional
place to		Suspends Process	refinements in the companies' procedures
prevent and		The Company's automated "suspends process" assists in	could further reduce billing errors. This
identify		identifying many potential billing errors including, but not	would include increased customer
billing errors		limited to, misread meters, rate schedule errors, meter	education and communication.
resulting		register inconsistencies and meter failures. There are	
from:		currently over 50 different types of automated billing	
incorrect		suspends that require a billing agent complete an electronic	
prorated bills;		review of the bill prior to the statement being sent to the	
mislabeled		customer. Suspends may result in re-reads, meter site	
meter bases;		visits/exchanges or a telephone call to the customer to	
incorrectly		gather/clarify information before the statement is sent.	
installed			
meters,		System Edits	
incorrect		The Company's billing system has a number of built-in	
billing rate		system edits that prevent incorrect meter installations based	
schedules; or		on the specific meter type being installed, including phase,	
incorrect		billing multiplier, current/voltage transformer ratios, service	
billing		profile, meter asset status, communication type, etc. These	
multipliers.		edits prevent errors from occurring during the initial setup	
		and exchange of meters in the system.	
		Verify Service Information (VSI) Process	
		When an instrument-rated metering installation is initially	
		installed, rewired, tested or a meter is exchanged, a	
		verification service information (VSI) procedure is followed	
		to ensure billing errors are avoided. The VSI process	
		includes a full inspection of the installation, a review of	

billing determinants, meter characteristics and	
voltage/current testing.	
Validation One-Line Team (VOLT) Process (Installations	
Over 1 MW)	
The Company follows a VOLT procedure that tracks the	
installation of any single meter measuring over 1 MW of	
load. The VOLT process is a cross-functional team audit	
with participants from the meter engineering, billing, account	
management and contract groups. The VOLT audit is	
performed prior to the first statement being sent to the	
customer to prevent any errors in the initial setup of an	
account. This procedure may also be implemented whenever	
significant changes occur at the site.	
significant changes occur at the site.	
Verification Reports	
Monthly or daily reports are reviewed to determine if	
customers are being billing on the correct rate schedule.	
• Separately metered new services (barn, garage, shop)	
BPA qualification review	
<ul> <li>Non-residential account type billing on residential</li> </ul>	
rate schedule	
<ul> <li>New irrigation rate schedule account review</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Missing or mis-matched data on the load screen</li> </ul>	
review (indicator of possible incorrect rate schedule)	
Quality Monitoring	
The Company's call centers monitor random customer calls	
and agent back-office work for quality and accuracy when	
customers apply for service. If an agent incorrectly sets up a	
customer's account or selects an incorrect rate schedule, the	

	error is corrected and additional training is provided to the agent. <u>Preventing Mislabeled Meter Bases</u> Accurate labeling of meter bases is the customer's responsibility (WA Rule 8A). The company does everything it can to ensure customers are aware of this responsibility, including publishing	
	guidelines in the Company's Electric Service Requirements (ESR) booklet, which is available online at <u>www.pacificpower.net/esr</u> . Labeling of meter bases is addressed in the following sections of the Company's ESR:	
	<ul> <li>7.7.3, requirement 10</li> <li>7.8.3, requirement 7</li> <li>10.6, requirement 1</li> </ul>	
	The Company also has a "Multi-Meter Verification Process" for business accounts. When multiple meters are installed on a single business structure, such as a strip mall or individually metered business offices in a complex, a letter is sent to the initial customer that signs up for service to remind them to verify the meter information at the site is correctly reflected on their bill.	
Avista	Avista has many procedures in place to prevent and identify billing errors	
	from occurring. From a system perspective, meter installs, changes, or	
	removals are primarily completed through the Company's Mobile	
	Dispatch System. With this application we are able to set validation rules	
	to ensure data integrity. These rules help in preventing errors from being	

entered in the system and to ensure that the proper equipment is being	
installed in the field. In addition, some of the specific procedures in place	
to prevent and identify billing errors are as follows:	
<ul> <li>to prevent and identify billing errors are as follows:</li> <li>Incorrect prorated bills – Avista's Customer Care &amp; Billing system has built in functionality for the automated proration of bills. This functionality insures that bills are prorated correctly.</li> <li>Mislabeled meter bases – Avista requires all meter sockets in multi-unit dwellings with separate meters to be labeled. Avista will not install any meters at multi-metered facilities until each individual meter is properly labeled and each circuit is physically verified jointly by the installing electrician and Avista's meter installer. The building owner is responsible for the proper identification of electric and natural gas meters, which includes making sure the building number/letter matches what was provided during the joint verification. In addition, for natural gas meters, each type meter is physically different from one another and labeled from the manufacturer with the meter size and model. When installing a natural gas meter, the meter installation field order will specify the size of meter required to properly serve the customer.</li> <li>Incorrectly installed meters - Only Avista-owned metering equipment will be used to provide billing information. Avista uses Journeyman meter technicians</li> </ul>	
who have completed three years of meter specific training	
to install meters. Each technician works with electricians	
and Customer Project Coordinators to provide the proper	
metering given the specific installation. When natural gas meters are installed, the natural gas service person verifies	
the piping and meter are level and plumb to ensure proper	
the piping and meter are rever and plumb to ensure proper	

regulator flowing meter in natural g show na installati Incorrec the rate s who cre order. T schedule Incorrec billing r who ins multiplic as part o meter n Current be allow multiplic complete from ma natural g the mete batches manufac	<ul> <li>of the meter. Additionally, the pressure setting is verified under both flowing and non-conditions (actual values are entered into the tallation field order). Lastly, the test hands on the as meter index are visually checked to ensure they tural gas usage before completing the meter on field order.</li> <li>t billing rate schedules - For new installations, chedule is entered by the employee in the office test the new premise (meter location) and field he meter technician reviews the billing rate to make sure it is appropriate.</li> <li>t billing multipliers – For electric meters, the nultiplier is determined by the meter technician ralls the meter based on the installation. The r is written on the meter and is also documented the field order completion. In the field order, the ultiplier entered must be "1" if there are no Transformers (CTs) present or the order will not ed to be completed. If there are CTs present, the r must match the CT ratio before the order can be d. These verifications prevent field technicians scing mistakes while entering the multipliers. For as meters, the meter multiplier is programmed by r manufacturer. Avista randomly samples new of meter orders when they are received from the unrer to ensure they are properly programmed. so verifies the meter multiplier is correct in the n performing certain types of work on gas meters not as an enters.</li> </ul>	
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PSE	WAC 480-90-178(5)(c) and WAC 480-100-178(5)(c): PSE proposes to eliminate this section from the draft rules because there are existing rules that establish requirements for utilities to develop and maintain procedures for meter testing, repairing and replacement of meters. It is unclear to PSE the value in requiring utilities to file a "plan" and provide ongoing updates for identifying and repairing meters to have on file at the Commission. The Commission can already request such information from utilities on its billing and metering procedures at any time, and therefore an additional requirement to file a "plan" is duplicative, burdensome and does not belong in the final rule. It is unclear what value will be gained by adding an additional administrative filing.	Staff disagrees the reporting requirements of the proposed rules in WAC 480-90- 178(5)(c) and WAC 480-100-178(5)(c) are overly burdensome. Staff believes the one-time initial report with updates as necessary would be helpful for the following reasons: (1) It serves as a frame of reference when reviewing the companies' procedures; and (2) The plans can be helpful in comparing best practices of the regulated companies.
NWNG	<ul> <li>Section (5)(c). NWNG is fundamentally opposed to the inclusion of this new section in this rule as it is currently proposed. Our concerns are set forth below:</li> <li>First, the requirements for identifying, repairing or replacing meters that are not functioning correctly are already governed by other rules – specifically WAC 480-90-343 and WAC 480-90-183. These rules have been in effect for many years, and as a result the Company has tariff provisions and associated well established procedures in place for ensuring compliance with these rules. Incorporating a seemingly new requirement in this rule serves only to create an unnecessary duplication of effort, and may ultimately only create potential conflict and confusion.</li> <li>Second, NWNG is concerned with Staff's proposed requirement that</li> </ul>	
	a utility file its procedural document with the Commission. This new language imposes an unnecessary degree of oversight that seems to result in little more than the micro-management of utility practices. The additional reporting requirement proposed by Staff serves to add unnecessary administration for both the utilities and	

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for the Commission, given that the Commission Staff may, at any time, invoke the right to request a copy of the utility's procedures and practices should a concern arise. In short, the proposed requirement to file a procedure, and any updates to such procedure, with the Commission is potentially onerous and of questionable value.	
NWNG suggests that the proposed draft rule language in this section be deleted in the entirety, and that this section be revised as follows:	
A utility must develop and maintain procedures describing its practices regarding the issuance of corrected bills that result from (a) meter failure or malfunction; (b) unassigned meter usage; and (c) other billing errors, as defined in this rule, not later than May 1, 2016. The utility must submit a copy of such procedures to the Commission within ten (10) business days of receiving a request.	
In further comment, NWNG would not be opposed to incorporating language in its tariff that would generally describe its practices regarding the issuance of corrected bills as a means to comply with this new section of the rule.	
<ul> <li>NWNG utilizes the following procedures to prevent / identify billing errors:</li> <li>a. <u>Incorrect prorated bills:</u> When there is a change in rates, the new billing rates are entered into the Company's Customer Information System (CIS) in a test environment where test bills for each rate schedule are generated and reviewed. Once tested and the bill calculation accuracy is verified, the test site is</li> </ul>	

systematically moved to production (rather than re-entering	
values into production). Once moved to production, a sample of production bills is reviewed to again verify the rates and proration are calculating accurately. In addition, the Company's Account Services Department randomly samples bills on a	
weekly basis to review and verify the accuracy of all aspects of the bill.	
b. <u>Mislabeled meter bases:</u> For purposes of this response, NWNG assumes this item is in reference to a situation that we refer to as "crossed-meters" where the meters have been mislabeled, usually by a building contractor. To mitigate crossed-meter situations from occurring, the Company's field services team does the following:	
When a meter is set by a Company contractor, a NWNG Quality Assurance (QA) inspector will verify the physical meter number at the premise matches the meter number entered into the as- built paper report completed by the installation crew.	
When a meter is set by Company personnel, a NWNG QA inspector will verify that the meter number at the premise matches the electronic order issued by the Company's P-CAD system.	
Once verified, the meter numbers are entered into the CIS to activate the customer account.	
c. <u>Incorrectly installed meters:</u> The Company uses a variety of methods to help mitigate the occurrence of meter installation errors. These include:	

<ul> <li>Meters come from the manufacturer with the Automated Meter Reading (AMR) device installed. The Company sample tests the devices upon arrival to confirm proper registration.</li> <li>Any meter set (or meter change) order must pass certain predefined conditions. If the conditions are not met, the meter order is elevated for additional review. The conditions that would cause a meter order to escalate include:         <ol> <li>Meter pressure of old meter does not match newly installed meter.</li> <li>Number of index digits does not match meter profile.</li> <li>Meter number not eligible for install</li> </ol> </li> <li>If a meter fails to transmit a meter read for two consecutive months, a meter inspection order is automatically generated and investigated by field services.</li> <li>At the time an account bills, the CIS bill logic auto checks for certain conditions. If the condition is not valid, a bill exception will be created and a billing clerk must review / resolve the condition before the bill will be released. Such conditions include:</li></ul>
iv. Low / high use (various) v. No use (ZUSE)
d. <u>Incorrect billing rate schedules</u> : As new premises are initialized into the system, a NWNG representative determines whether the account is residential or non-residential. The customer class associated with the rate schedule must match the customer class

designated on the account. For example, residential Rate	
Schedule 2 cannot be selected if the customer class designation is commercial.	
is commercial.	
As customer turnover occurs on an existing premise, the	
Customer Contact Center (CCC) representative (CSR) queries	
the customer to determine whether the existing rate schedule	
assignment is the appropriate rate schedule for service to the	
new customer. For residential and small commercial accounts	
there is just one rate schedule option for each (Schedule 2 for	
residential and Schedule 3 for commercial).	
Larger use non-residential customers (typically where usage is	
expected to be more than 2,000 therms per month) are handled	
by the Major Account Services Department as there are multiple	
rate options available. These customers are required to sign an	
election form to document which rate option they desire to be	
placed on. Clerk entry of these rate schedule elections is	
reviewed by a second individual to confirm that the account is	
properly set-up.	
At the time an account bills, a bill exception will be created if certain conditions exists. A billing clerk must review / resolve	
the condition before the bill can be released. Such conditions	
include:	
Rate schedule not valid for state (RSWS)	
<ul> <li>Rate schedule not effective during billing period (RSCH)</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Rate schedule requires contract but contract not found</li> </ul>	
(CRRS)	
• Rate schedule does not agree with contract record	
(RSMM)	

CORRECTED BILLING ISSUES RULEMAKING DOCKET U-144155 COMMENT SUMMARY – OCTOBER 2015	
<ul> <li>e. <u>Incorrect billing multipliers:</u> Meters are grouped by families as they are purchased and each family is assigned one meter multiplier value. This value follows the meter except where there is a need to change the meter multiplier, such as when certain attachments are added to the meter set.</li> <li>Each time an account bills, there is system logic in CIS to confirm that the meter multiplier associated with the meter agrees with an algorithmic formula. A bill exception stops any bill that fails this logic and must be reviewed / corrected by a billing clerk.</li> </ul>	

#### Appendix showing table mentioned in staff response to company comments (page 7) regarding residential and nonresidential service.

The amounts reported for nonresidential customers are very small in comparison to the companies' total revenues, and the Difference between the impact of corrected bills issued in excess of six months to non-residential customers and those issued To residential customers is not significant.

	Non-residential		Residential				
	Number of accounts billed in excess of 6 months (2012- 2014)	Average annual total amount billed in excess of 6 months (2012- 2014)	Percent of average annual revenue	Number of accounts billed in excess of 6 months (2012- 2014)	Average annual total amount billed in excess of 6 months (2012- 2014)	Percent of average annual revenue	Average annual revenue
Avista	8	\$12,944	0.002%	18	\$3,115	0.000%	\$650,789,883
PSE	267	\$467,684	0.015%	1,541	\$406,967	0.013%	\$3,184,100,333
NWNG	3	\$49,037	0.068%	4	\$51	0.000%	\$71,836,882
PPL	2	\$280	0.000%	7	\$1,010	0.000%	\$311,712,138
CNGC	Not reported	Not reported		Not reported	Not reported		