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BEFORE THE WASHINGTON

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UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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5 WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND)
6 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,)

7 Complainant,)

8 vs.)

Dockets UE-140188 and

9 AVISTA CORPORATION,)

UG-140189

10 d/b/a AVISTA UTILITIES,)

(Consolidated)

11 Respondent.)

12

13

PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING

14

VOLUME II

15

Spokane, Washington

16

August 26, 2014

17

6:00 p.m.

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Reported by Dorothy Stiles, RMR, CRR

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Washington CCR No. 2650

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VIDEO PRESENTATION

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CATHERINE ISABEL

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ROBERT HERITAGE

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PAULINE DRUFFEL

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ANNE WHIGHAM

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NICK BEAMER

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GERALD ROBINSON

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JAMIE McINTYRE

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SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

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August 26, 2014

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6:00 p.m.

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COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Okay. Good evening. We'll
6 all get started.

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This is a Public Comment Hearing of the Utilities &
Transportation Commission regarding the proposed rate
increase and the proposed settlement of that rate increase
for Avista Utilities in two docket numbers, UE-140188 and
UG-140189.

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13

UE stands for utility electric, and UG stands for
utility gas, as Avista is both an electric and gas utility.

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19

My name is Jeff Goltz. I'm one of the three members
of the Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission.
With me is my colleague, Commissioner Philip Jones. The
third member of our commission, Chairman David Danner, is
unable to be here. He's on the east coast with family this
week.

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21

22

23

As you'll notice, we have a court reporter here. So
we will have a transcript of this proceeding and he will
read the transcript before any decision is made on this
matter.

24

25

The purpose of this hearing is to take public
testimony. And I say testimony because it is under oath.

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1 It is part of the official record of our proceeding.

2 In every rate case the company makes a proposal to
3 increase rates. We have then opposing views. Frequently
4 by members of our Commission staff; by a ratepayer advocate;
5 and other interested parties.

6 In the normal hearing process we have documents,
7 exhibits, testimony by accountants, testimony by economists,
8 and so forth.

9 I would normally -- historically, I used to go into a
10 lot more discussion about that process. But a couple of
11 years ago we said well, why don't we just have a video
12 instead. So we're going to have a video in a couple of
13 minutes that explains that process in some more detail and,
14 frankly, probably in a better way than we could do it here.

15 I want to do a couple of thank you's. I want to thank
16 the City of Spokane for making the City Council chambers
17 available to us; as they have every time we've had a hearing
18 over here, at least the past few years.

19 And Roger Kouchi of our staff. Could you stand up,
20 Roger. You saw him as you came him.

21 Roger Kouchi is with our Consumer Affairs staff. And
22 we have in our Olympia office a whole team of consumer
23 affairs specialists, whose job it is to work with utilities
24 and work with consumers in case there are issues with your
25 utility service; whether it be your bill, whether it be your

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1 service, or whatever.

2 So if you are here and you have an issue with your
3 utility service and you want to address that and it's not
4 related to this rate proceeding, feel free to contact
5 Mr. Kouchi or feel free to contact any member of the -- or
6 selective members of the Avista staff who are here and will
7 be introduced in a moment.

8 As I mentioned, this was a utility proposed rate
9 increase by Avista. And the hearing for that is set for
10 September 23rd in Olympia.

11 Recently, the parties in the case entered into a
12 settlement agreement. It's not final until the Commission
13 approves it, if the Commission approves it. And the details
14 of the rate increase -- or I should say fair detail, at
15 least an outline -- is included in the handout that was out
16 front, prepared by the Attorney General's Office, Office of
17 Public Counsel.

18 So if you don't have that, I suggest you run out
19 really quickly and get one because it does contain the very
20 basics of this proceeding.

21 Avista Utilities -- under the terms of the settlement
22 agreement the electric revenues would increase by
23 \$7 million, or 1.4%, beginning in January of 2015. That's
24 as opposed to the \$18.2 million, or 3.8%, the company asked
25 for in its February filing.

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1 The basic charge that's on everyone's bill would go
2 from \$8 to \$8.50, not \$8 to \$15 as was originally proposed.

3 On the gas side, there would be an additional
4 \$8.5 million, or 5.6%, as opposed to the initial request for
5 increase of \$12.1 million, or about 7.8%. And the basic
6 charge would go from \$8 to \$9.

7 So the document prepared by the Office of the Attorney
8 General contains a little more information on that.

9 Now, the Utilities & Transportation Commission is set
10 up by statute. There's three members, as I mentioned.
11 We're appointed by the governor, confirmed by the senate.
12 And we are charged with regulating the rates and practices
13 of investor owned utilities, including Avista.

14 And it is our job -- the statutory language is rather
15 broad. It says we are charged with regulating in the public
16 interest, quote/unquote, the rates and practices of these
17 utilities.

18 And it's our job to determine appropriate rates. And
19 the statute also has language to give us some guidance. The
20 rates have to be fair, just, reasonable, and sufficient.

21 So it's our job to find that balance. And you'll see
22 a little bit more about that in the video.

23 We have here with us -- in addition to Mr. Kouchi of
24 the Commission staff, we have some other representatives of
25 some but not all of the parties.

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1 So I would like to first ask representatives of the
2 Commission staff who are also with the Attorney General's
3 office to introduce themselves. And then I'll go to the
4 company. And then I'll go to Office of Public Counsel. And
5 that's all I see right now.

6 So go ahead.

7 MR. SHEARER: My name is Brett Shearer. I'm an
8 Assistant Attorney General. I'm here along with my
9 colleague, Pat Oshie. And we represent the Commission
10 staff.

11 MR. MEYER: Good evening. I'm David Meyer and
12 I'm an attorney representing Avista. Glad to see you here
13 tonight.

14 I would like to introduce just a few members of the
15 Avista company. Starting with Scott Morris, who is --

16 Scott, if you would stand, please.

17 -- our chairman and CEO. Scott Morris.

18 Dennis Vermillion. Thank you, Dennis. He is the
19 president of Avista Corporation.

20 And there are three or four others in the audience.

21 Please stand. I don't want to introduce you.

22 I just wanted to call your attention to the fact that
23 they are here. They're available to answer questions
24 afterwards. If you want to stick around, we'll be glad to
25 visit with you.

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1 Thank you again.

2 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Ms. Gafken.

3 MS. GAFKEN: Good evening. My name is Lisa
4 Gafken. I'm an Assistant Attorney General with the Public
5 Counsel Division.

6 Thank you for coming out tonight. This is an
7 important process. Glad to see you here.

8 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Okay. Now, we'll go in a
9 second to the video.

10 I just want to say that they all introduced
11 themselves. For those of you that wish to testify, when you
12 introduce yourselves we're going to ask you to speak slowly,
13 but also spell your name, because we have a court reporter
14 here.

15 And I think the court reporter is familiar with most
16 of these people, because she met them earlier. But for the
17 rest of you, we'll ask you to speak slowly, speak your name,
18 and spell your name as well.

19 So now we'll have the video. And then we'll go into
20 the public hearing. And I'll set some ground rules for that
21 when we're done with the video.

22 Assuming this works. Okay. Here we go.

23 VIDEO PRESENTATION

24 * * *

25 Every month you receive several utility bills for

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1 your home. These bills tell you exactly how much money you
2 spent running the dishwasher, cooling or heating your house,
3 cooking, using water, throwing away garbage, or talking on
4 the phone.

5 I'm sure many of you have opened these envelopes and
6 wondered: How does my utility company decide how much to
7 charge for these services? Or, Who decides how much to
8 charge? And maybe most importantly, Why did my rates go up?

9 All of these are great questions. And I'm here to
10 provide you with some answers.

11 In the next few minutes I'm going to give you an
12 overview of the complex and difficult work done by your
13 Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission.

14 The Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission
15 regulates private investor owned utility and transportation
16 companies in Washington.

17 The Commission's responsibility is to ensure that
18 regulated companies provide safe and reliable service to
19 customers at fair, just, and reasonable rates. These rates
20 also have to be sufficient so as to allow the company to
21 earn a fair profit.

22 And before we answer those questions, let's start with
23 a brief look at where energy comes from in the first place.

24 The main sources of electric power for the utilities
25 regulated by the Commission come from a variety of different

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1 sources. Primarily, hydroelectric, natural gas, coal, and
2 wind power.

3 The electricity generated by those resources is
4 delivered to you through a network or grid of high voltage
5 transmission lines and substations. Ultimately, your
6 utility company brings the electricity right to your home
7 through neighborhood distribution lines.

8 The Commission regulates a number of different utility
9 and transportation companies, including landline telephone
10 companies, water companies, garbage collection companies,
11 and in-state residential moving companies. But our focus
12 here is on electric and natural gas companies.

13 The Commission determines the price you pay for the
14 utility and transportation services that you use. The
15 Commission also serves as the watchdog agency that enforces
16 the consumer protection and safety rules of the companies it
17 regulates.

18 WHAT IS THE COMMISSION'S ROLE IN SETTING RATES?

19 The Commission understands that when rates go up, your
20 life and your community are impacted. The Commission's
21 accountants and analysts work hard to set rates that are
22 fair to you, the consumer, and appropriate for the utility
23 company and its business needs.

24 WHAT CAUSES RATES TO GO UP?

25 There are a number of factors that can lead a utility

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1 to come before the Commission and request a rate increase.

2 For example, a utility company may need to replace
3 aging infrastructure.

4 Think of it like a car you own. Periodically you have
5 to replace the tires, the transmission, or the fan belt.
6 Those upgrades keep your car going. It's the same for
7 utilities.

8 With electricity, for example, companies have to
9 replace old transformers and distribution lines.

10 With natural gas, companies have to replace
11 underground gas pipes.

12 The old infrastructure may have been completely paid
13 for years ago, but the new upgrades require money and need
14 to be paid for now.

15 Alternatively, a utility might ask the Commission for
16 a rate increase because it has experienced wholesale price
17 increases.

18 Think of it like gassing up your car. When companies
19 have to make wholesale market purchases from other utilities
20 to meet demands from customers, they don't get to set those
21 prices. Sometimes the cost goes up beyond their control in
22 the same ways the price at the pump is beyond your control.

23 There are other factors that can impact rates.

24 First, voter approved state law requires utilities to
25 obtain a certain percent of their power from renewable

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1 resources, which can cost more.

2 Second, environmental regulations sometimes raise the
3 cost of certain energy resources.

4 And third, the federal government sets the cost of
5 transmission, getting the energy from the sources of
6 generation to the utility.

7 WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A COMPANY REQUESTS A RATE INCREASE?

8 The process of actually setting the rates can be
9 complex and time consuming. Some rate adjustments are a
10 result of passing through increased or decreased costs.

11 For example, if wholesale gas rates go up or down, the
12 increase or decrease in rates is simply passed through to
13 ratepayers in what is typically called a rate tracker.

14 Depending on the utility, trackers may also include
15 costs of required spending on conservation or energy costs
16 in general. These typically are costs beyond the control of
17 the utility.

18 However, when a company requests a rate change to
19 recover costs for other expenses and to recover costs of
20 infrastructure investments, it often files what is called a
21 general rate case.

22 A general rate case is structured like a legal
23 proceeding, with a judge, a panel of three commissioners,
24 and opposing teams of experts and lawyers.

25 This legal proceeding considers if a company's rate

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1 proposal should be approved; or, if not, how much the rates
2 should be changed.

3 SO HOW ARE RATES ACTUALLY SET?

4 First, the company submits a proposed set of rates,
5 along with a detailed justification of why the rates are
6 necessary. They come to the Commission and say: Here is
7 what we need to charge our customers and why.

8 Then Commission accountants and economists review
9 those rates to make sure that you, the consumer, aren't
10 being charged for unnecessary expenses.

11 WHAT DOES A RATE CASE INVOLVE?

12 In examining the rate request, the Commission's
13 accountants and economists typically look at the underlying
14 cost that the company has incurred in providing service.

15 The costs they examine are quite varied. For example,
16 they review the cost of infrastructure improvements. What
17 does it cost the company to replace parts, so to speak.

18 The cost of following state law. What does it cost
19 the company to meet these legal requirements for renewable
20 energy and conservation?

21 General overhead and expenses. What does it cost the
22 company for printing and mailing monthly bill statements,
23 paying employees, et cetera?

24 What is the company paying utility managers for
25 salaries and bonuses?

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1 Are there lobbying expenses included that should not
2 be included?

3 New investments in generation, transmission, and
4 distribution.

5 How fast is the community growing? And what does new
6 technology cost the company?

7 Federal, state, and local taxes. Which taxes are
8 appropriate to include in the proposed new rate?

9 Storm costs and other repair work. Are they accounted
10 for fairly or inappropriately?

11 Rate of return. How much should the company be
12 allowed to earn on its investments?

13 Like any business, utilities finance construction
14 needs through a combination of borrowed money and funds from
15 investors. Rates must be sufficient to cover the cost of
16 such work and also sufficient to provide a return adequate
17 to attract investment capital. This allows the company to
18 meet its obligation to serve you, the customer.

19 Aside from the Commission's staff of accountants and
20 economists, other groups also participate in a review of the
21 company's rates.

22 For example, the Attorney General's Office of Public
23 Counsel represents the interests of residential and small
24 business customers.

25 In addition, parties representing low income

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1 customers, industrial users, and environmental groups are
2 often involved in examining proposed rates and auditing the
3 company's costs.

4 Once the Commission staff and other interested parties
5 have completed reviewing these various costs, they will each
6 develop a set of proposed rates that usually differ from the
7 company's.

8 The Commission decides if the requested rates meet the
9 requirement of being fair, just, and reasonable to the
10 consumer.

11 The rates must also be sufficient for the company to
12 have enough money to pay its expenses, invest in
13 infrastructure, and earn a reasonable profit.

14 These proceedings are heard by the three
15 commissioners. Similar to a legal case, the hearing
16 includes the presentation of evidence and testimony. The
17 lawyers and commissioners cross examine witnesses about
18 costs, profits, and the impacts on customers.

19 In some cases the parties involved come to an
20 agreement on what the rates should be. However, the
21 proposed settlement still has to be presented to the
22 commissioners. They hold a hearing to consider comments
23 from the public and then accept, reject, or modify that
24 agreement.

25 In a rate case hearing the Commission listens to and

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1 studies the company's concerns, but it also listens to the
2 public's concerns. Commissioners take your input at public
3 hearings, in writing, over the telephone, or through the
4 Commission website.

5 These public hearings give customers the chance to
6 comment on the case directly to the Commissioners. Your
7 perspective and what you share becomes evidence in the case.

8 Specifically they want to hear what issues you believe
9 may impact the Commission's decision and your suggestions
10 for addressing specific issues raised by the request.

11 After hearing the evidence presented by the various
12 participants in the case, as well as receiving input from
13 the public, the three commissioners take that information
14 and begin to consider the final decision about the rate
15 case.

16 The commissioners study mountains of information and
17 carefully arrive at a decision. After immense effort by
18 both staff and commissioners, the Commission comes to a
19 conclusion about the final rates.

20 The Commission's motivation for all this effort is
21 quite simple: Looking out for your best interest as a
22 consumer, as well as ensuring that utility companies are
23 healthy enough financially to provide safe and reliable
24 service for you.

25 HOW DO I COMMENT ON OR RECEIVE UPDATES ON THE CASE?

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1 on the second page of the Attorney General's handout, there
2 are other ways. If you think of something later on this
3 evening that you want to say, there are other ways to do
4 that.

5 And I might add that the hearing on this matter will
6 be held September 23rd, in Olympia. And at least as to the
7 hearing on the settlement, as the gentleman in the video
8 mentioned, the Commission has the option of either approving
9 the settlement, rejecting the settlement, or imposing
10 conditions on the settlement.

11 In the later two cases, we would still have to have
12 further hearings beyond that.

13 So we have several people who have signed up. Several
14 people. And most of whom have indicated they wish to
15 testify.

16 So would all those people raise your -- stand up and
17 raise your right hand and I will administer the oath. And
18 if you agree with that, you simply say, "I do".

19 Do you solemnly swear under the penalty of perjury
20 that the testimony you are about to give in this proceeding
21 is the truth?

22 (Collective affirmative response.)

23 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Thank you.

24 So we'll begin. And a reminder again: Come up to the
25 podium. And we will take you one at a time.

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1 And sometimes there have been enough people where
2 we've actually imposed time limits. Normally, three to five
3 minutes. We probably won't do that tonight because we don't
4 have as many people here as we might sometimes have had.
5 But I don't think you need to go on and on and on.

6 If you have long comments, please feel free to make
7 them over the Internet or in writing.

8 And, also, if the person before you made the point you
9 did, feel free to simply incorporate that person's remarks
10 by mentioning that.

11 I ask you to speak slowly. And, again, speak and
12 spell your name.

13 So we'll start just in the order that I was given
14 them. We'll start with Mr. Kenneth Johnson.

15 And also if you could just say your name; say if you
16 are an Avista customer; where you're from; and if you're an
17 electric or gas customer, or both.

18 KENNETH JOHNSON: Thank you, Commission. And
19 thank you, Jeff. And Phil, I believe.

20 COMMISSIONER JONES: Yes.

21 KENNETH JOHNSON: And everybody here, including
22 Avista.

23 My name is Kenneth Johnson. I live in the Shadle Park
24 area. I have electricity and gas.

25 All I just want to say is I remember taking care of my

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1 dad and mom. They're no longer here. And our family's
2 other dads and moms are no longer here.

3 Life is so short. And they taught us that we're given
4 power and we're given material things, but we should just be
5 good stewards of it. Because in the end, we can't take
6 nothing with us. And it's how you live your life. And they
7 taught us to really help people.

8 And right now, I feel like -- our families feel
9 like --

10 Even my neighbors. I even talked to them. We're
11 hurting. We're hurting quite a bit, because we remember
12 when it used to be Washington Water Power. We used to have
13 one rate. Just pay your kilowatt hours and that's it.

14 But now there seems to be, like, two or three tiers on
15 electricity. Now we're given a basic charge. I guess it
16 first started with a zero amount; then it went to \$4; then
17 \$5; then \$6; and now it's \$8. And it adds up.

18 You know, right now \$16 just for basic service. I
19 don't think it's for electricity. It's just for having the
20 name Avista. And then we're charged for electricity and
21 gas.

22 And what I'm saying is when I take the bus and when
23 our families also drive, and we walk our dogs, we're seeing
24 our town deteriorate. I'm sure it's not just in Spokane,
25 but maybe Washington state and the entire United States.

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1 The land used to be real green. People would take
2 care of their lawns. Now, more and more land seems to be
3 turning brown. And even the cracks along the side of the
4 roads and in the curb, they're growing limbs.

5 Because before, we used to be able to use that money
6 to help, like, maybe buy weed control and also water our
7 lawns. And we used to be able to go and eat and help give
8 the tips to waitresses and waiters. But now we have to give
9 the \$8 and the other \$8 to utility companies.

10 And it's not just Avista, but the other utility
11 companies too. And we're just all hurting.

12 And also, like, I talked to a neighbor just today. We
13 changed all our light bulbs from incandescent to CFLs and
14 LEDs; and yet our electric bills are still higher than
15 previously. And we're trying to do our part to help this
16 earth, but yet we're hurting. We still have to pay more and
17 more.

18 As I drive down and we also walk around the
19 neighborhoods, even in the nighttime when we walk our dogs,
20 more and more neighbors are not turning on their patio
21 lights. Because, I guess, they have to save the
22 electricity, the electric bill. Keep it as low as possible
23 so they can help pay for other bills, like your groceries
24 and your food and your gas and your insurance and your
25 mortgages and your rent.

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1 It just seems like every year it just keeps getting
2 worse and worse. And if you drive along the neighborhoods
3 in Spokane, it's deteriorating. And it used to not be like
4 that. We used to have beautiful neighborhoods. And now, I
5 think, because we have to cut back in so many areas now just
6 to pay our utilities and just our basic needs, we're not
7 beautifying our city. And I think in the long run it just
8 hurts everybody.

9 I forgot. I wanted to say one more thing. I lost
10 track.

11 Thank you for the time though.

12 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Thank you.

13 KENNETH JOHNSON: Oh, I just want to say that we
14 are hurting. And also --

15 Oh, this is what I wanted to say. We drive along
16 Division and Sprague now and we're seeing more and more For
17 Lease signs or For Sale signs. There's just so many -- more
18 and more empty buildings. Because we can't go out there and
19 be a consumer and give back to the community and spend for
20 goods, because we have to pay for the utilities.

21 I know Avista and these other utility companies have
22 to make money. But how much money do you need to make? For
23 who?

24 I think it's better we benefit everyone than just a
25 few. Because in the end, when we're no longer here, our

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1 kids will be growing up. And we want to give this world to
2 them, a better place to live.

3 Because I found from our dads and our moms, life is so
4 short. We cannot take anything with us. Just our body.
5 It's how we live our life.

6 I'm just hoping that there are people who are
7 listening. And you, Commission, are our police officers.
8 You can help us, the ones who have no voice.

9 And I know Avista does have to make their money, too.
10 But do you have to make that much money?

11 That's all I have to say. Thank you very much.

12 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Thank you very much,
13 Mr. Johnson.

14 Next, Catherine Isabel.

15 CATHERINE ISABEL: Good evening. My name is
16 Catherine Isabel. Catherine spelled with a C,
17 C-a-t-h-e-r-i-n-e. And the last name is I-s-a-b-e-l, like
18 the first name.

19 I want to make some comments on this Avista handout.

20 It is mentioned that Avista needs money for key
21 capital investments and to recover the operating costs of
22 serving our customers.

23 That's kind of vague. There is no money or percentage
24 given. I think it's probably included in the \$15.5 million.

25 That's what they want; right? I assume. Because it

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1 only --

2 It says key capital investments. So, yeah. What is
3 that? It's vague. And to recover the operating costs.

4 It doesn't tell me that they're increasing their
5 minimum wage. They probably pay more than minimum wage and
6 all that. So that is really not specified.

7 Then it says something about the Low Income Rate
8 Assistance Program. LIRAP. It's funded through a separate
9 tariff.

10 What does that mean? Separate from what? Where is
11 the money coming from?

12 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Right.

13 Ms. Isabel, first of all, you can get more details
14 from any number of people here.

15 Mr. Shearer, for example, the attorney for staff, can
16 get into some more of those details.

17 But a separate tariff simply means it's a separate
18 charge on the bill. It's a legal term.

19 CATHERINE ISABEL: It says it's funded.

20 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: I'm sorry.

21 CATHERINE ISABEL: It says it's funded. I mean,
22 the money for low income people is funded. And where is the
23 money coming from?

24 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: It's coming from -- in
25 general, it's coming from the ratepayers.

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1 CATHERINE ISABEL: And when they talk about
2 rebates and giving a credit, that means --

3 The way I read it is we are asking for a lot more and
4 we know we are not going to get all of it. And then maybe
5 somebody from your Commission or somebody else is saying oh,
6 they really wanted too much, and then they give us a rebate.

7 You know, it's like when you buy a car and it costs
8 too much and there's a rebate.

9 I mean, to me that is so silly. You know, charge us
10 less in the beginning instead of charging too much and then
11 we get a little rebate.

12 Is there any data -- and maybe you don't know that --
13 how much the utilities, gas and electric --

14 I have both gas and electric. I have an energy
15 efficient gas furnace, but the rest is electric.

16 400,000 customers they have now. How much was it 10
17 years ago, 20, 50 years ago, compared to how many customers
18 they served? I think that would be interesting to see.

19 We know that life went up. You know, a cup of coffee
20 is no longer 10 cents as it used to be.

21 I used to live in New York City and a token to use the
22 subway was 10 cents. That was back in the '60s.

23 So, you know, I'm just saying we know everything is
24 going up. But the rate is going up in some areas way too
25 much. And in some areas, they go up little by little. But

0051

1 some of it is --

2 So is there any data available how much --

3 Avista is what? 125 years old or something. I think
4 they had a --

5 COMMISSIONER JONES: Yes. They celebrated their
6 125th year anniversary this year, 2014.

7 CATHERINE ISABEL: So they have been here for
8 quite some time.

9 COMMISSIONER JONES: Yes.

10 CATHERINE ISABEL: It would be interesting to see
11 how many people lived here then and what were the rates,
12 just to see how many thousands of percentage they went up in
13 the meantime.

14 COMMISSIONER JONES: I think you could probably
15 ask Avista for that after the meeting.

16 CATHERINE ISABEL: So you don't have any --

17 COMMISSIONER JONES: 1889 per kilowatt hour
18 information, how much they charged, I don't think we have.

19 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: I can tell you --

20 CATHERINE ISABEL: Wouldn't that be interesting,
21 though?

22 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: It is very interesting,
23 actually. And I remember seeing that data for Puget Sound
24 Energy in Olympia.

25 CATHERINE ISABEL: Maybe they don't want us to

0052

1 know.

2 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: No.

3 It's interesting. In the early days of this century,
4 rates were very high.

5 CATHERINE ISABEL: They were high?

6 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Very high.

7 CATHERINE ISABEL: Like, a hundred years ago?

8 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER JONES: Well, you have to compare it
10 to products and services. It's all relative to what a
11 dollar would buy.

12 CATHERINE ISABEL: A new car was \$400. I heard
13 that today.

14 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: We don't have that
15 information with us.

16 COMMISSIONER JONES: No.

17 CATHERINE ISABEL: Okay.

18 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: You might be able to get
19 some of that from Avista. They may have some old reports
20 that they could --

21 CATHERINE ISABEL: I'll call. Maybe somebody
22 will.

23 Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Thank you very much,
25 Ms. Isabel.

0053

1 Next is Robert Heritage.

2 ROBERT HERITAGE: My name is Robert Heritage.

3 It's H-e-r-i-t-a-g-e.

4 Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: And you're an Avista

6 customer for both electric and gas?

7 ROBERT HERITAGE: Yes. I have both.

8 I have two meters of electricity and one of gas. And
9 I pay \$31 a month on my basic bill just for the privilege of
10 doing it.

11 I've tried to talk them into putting my garage onto
12 a -- onto my house meter, and they tell I have to do it on
13 my own. But they still charge me \$15 a month for my garage,
14 instead of \$8 like the house is.

15 I burn less electricity and everything else in the
16 garage, and yet they seem to think that they have to jab me
17 with another \$15 charge.

18 And I just don't understand what's going on except for
19 the fact that the CEOs or whoever up there, they have to
20 have I don't know how many millions a year to live on. And
21 I can't do it. I have to live a lot less than what they
22 sure as heck do.

23 And I would like to see the rates dropped. This basic
24 rate that they're trying to get through at \$9 is utterly
25 ridiculous.

0054

1 They need to pay their employees out of their rates
2 rather than all this \$8 that they're jabbing everybody else
3 with.

4 And it just don't seem right to me that you can't just
5 either lower it down, drop it down to \$4. I wouldn't say
6 too much about that. But the idea of --

7 If it goes up to \$9 and so on, I'm going to move. And
8 I'm going to go find me a place that I can put in my own
9 electricity. To heck with them. And I hope they starve to
10 death. But you can't seem to think it's possible for them
11 to do it at the rates that they're going.

12 And so I understand. I have a stepson that's in power
13 line construction. And he is -- he works, has worked for
14 different companies. And he does just power line
15 construction. And I know he gets a good rate for pay.

16 But the point being that when they have to pay their
17 employees out of everything else, let them pay them out of
18 the money that they get extra for over and above their rates
19 for employees.

20 I'm not too adept to that kind of thing. But the
21 point being, I guess, I'm just here to get this basic rate
22 either cut down -- lower it or cut it off entirely. And I
23 don't think that it will probably happen, but it would sure
24 be nice.

25 As the gentleman in front of me said, you know, we're

0055

1 only here for a short time and we need a little bit of help.
2 And if they look around at the empty buildings and so on,
3 there's going to be a lot more of them if they keep going
4 the way they're going.

5 Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Thank you.

7 The next two didn't indicate whether they wanted to
8 speak or not.

9 Mike Allerton. Did you wish to speak?

10 MIKE ALLERTON: No.

11 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: And Julie Honekamp?

12 JULIE HONEKAMP: I'll be testifying tomorrow.

13 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Oh, okay.

14 And Pauline Druffel.

15 PAULINE DRUFFEL: I would like to speak.

16 My name is Pauline, P-a-u-l-i-n-e, Druffel,
17 D-r-u-f-f-e-l.

18 And I have just electric. No gas. And I live in an
19 apartment complex. So they probably have gas, but I'm not
20 paying that.

21 So I'm here with a little bit different focus, in that
22 I'm very concerned about energy usage over the planet. And
23 I'm conscious here that in spite of the fact --

24 Well, just recently our governor said that we should
25 replace our state's coal power with clean energy

0056

1 investments. And currently we're getting over 20% of our
2 electricity from burning coal. And coal is very dirty and
3 very bad for the environment overall, for our health and the
4 existence of the planet or the existence of life on the
5 planet, as far as I see it.

6 So the truth is I wouldn't mind paying somewhat more
7 for electricity if I thought that Avista actually was
8 working hard to get alternative energy into its system.

9 And I recognize that that's going to cost money.
10 However, the sun's energy, when it comes --

11 I mean, it costs money to build the solar panels, and
12 then the sun's energy is free.

13 And I'm aware that we have water power here in
14 Washington. And I'm grateful for that.

15 I also am aware that our dams stopped the fish from
16 being able to not migrate upstream, so that it really
17 impacted the salmon runs and the livelihood of lots of
18 native peoples who were dependent upon salmon. So if they
19 were going to --

20 What I read in this pamphlet was that they needed to
21 expand and replace facilities and equipment used every day
22 to serve customers. And I read someplace for
23 infrastructure.

24 I would love it if they spent some money redoing some
25 of those dams so that salmon fishing -- so salmon and other

0057

1 fish could navigate these streams in a natural sort of way.

2 I would love it if they worked to get more wind power.

3 I guess --

4 It seems like I'm donating some money each month for
5 alternative energy, but I don't understand how that works.
6 Because my understanding was that they weren't actually
7 getting any electricity from wind energy. But we have south
8 of here, near Rosalia, about 30 miles south, we have a wind
9 farm.

10 So just exactly how that's working, I don't know. And
11 I guess I should ask some of the Avista people if they could
12 tell me.

13 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: I'm sure they can help you
14 with that.

15 PAULINE DRUFFEL: So I guess that's the essence
16 of my response.

17 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Thank you very much.

18 PAULINE DRUFFEL: Oh, one more thing.

19 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Sure.

20 PAULINE DRUFFEL: When I came --

21 I've been living in Spokane for the last three years.
22 I used to live here, then I was gone for twenty-some years,
23 and then back.

24 It seems to me that my energy rates have increased
25 quite a bit in just three years time. So I agree with what

0058

1 other folks are saying. This, I wanted say again. And I'm
2 not seeing that the money is going --

3 Well, I know you have to improve infrastructure. And
4 I lived in California where some natural gas pipelines burst
5 and caused tremendous damage to -- engulfed three homes in
6 fire. So I know you have to improve infrastructure. I
7 agree with that.

8 Thank you so much.

9 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Thank you very much,
10 Ms. Druffel.

11 Anne Whigham.

12 ANNE WHIGHAM: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Did I pronounce that right?

14 ANNE WHIGHAM: No.

15 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: No.

16 ANNE WHIGHAM: But you were close.

17 Hi. I'm Anne Whigham. W-h-i-g-h-a-m. And it's Anne
18 with an e. We're very picky about our e's.

19 Hi. My name is Anne Whigham and I'm with Aging & Long
20 Term Care of Eastern Washington.

21 I'm also an Avista customer. And I have electric.

22 So I want to share with you how the increases have
23 affected the community over the past three years since the
24 year 2010.

25 And I'm going to present to you -- and I have a bunch

0059

1 of documents. I've been working on it.

2 Can I bring them up?

3 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Of course. And we'll
4 make sure --

5 Maybe if you also have a copy, you can leave it --

6 ANNE WHIGHAM: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: On the way out, give one to
8 Mr. Kouchi and he'll make sure it gets into the file.

9 ANNE WHIGHAM: Yes. I would like you to see
10 these. So take a look at these. Especially the long sheet.

11 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: All right.

12 ANNE WHIGHAM: So I don't know if you're aware of
13 the Elder Economic Security Index. It's put out by the
14 Wider Opportunities for Women.

15 And in Washington state, our Washington Association of
16 Area Agencies on Aging provided some funding so that we
17 could look at how elders are impacted in Washington.

18 One of the other ones -- and I'll give it to staff --
19 goes through county by county.

20 You can take a look at what are the costs of living.
21 And the costs are -- I think they're underestimated. But
22 what I really wanted you to see was I did a comparison
23 between 2010 and 2013.

24 When you look at the costs -- and there are different
25 groups. So there's single elder persons and there's

0060

1 couples. You can look at what happens if you don't have a
2 mortgage, if you're renting a one bedroom.

3 And honestly and truly, I'm a single older person.
4 And I don't know that I could find a place for \$571 that
5 would include my utilities and my insurance. So I think
6 they're underestimating.

7 And then it goes all the way over to elder couples who
8 are in the same categories.

9 When you look at that increase over the three-year
10 period of time, that's an 18% increase, all the way to the
11 high being a 22% increase in just cost of living.

12 And also it takes into consideration the fact that
13 that's good health.

14 So we looked at today -- and I talked with our SHIBA
15 representative. She said yes, the cost of Medicare -- and
16 that's just Medicare A and B, plus D; and we figured about a
17 hundred dollars in medications a month -- is \$406. And it's
18 gone up significantly from \$258.

19 Again, that's assuming good health. When you look
20 down at the bottom and you see what long term health care
21 costs are, they're very, very significant.

22 Then I went and did a comparison of the incomes and
23 also the federal poverty guidelines. That went up 6%. So
24 they only raised it 6%.

25 So realize by not raising it higher, that means

0061

1 seniors or any low income individual -- if it only goes up
2 6% and their cost of living is going up 18 or 22 percent,
3 they're losing every single time.

4 They're not qualified for services. They're not
5 qualified for some housing programs. They're not qualified
6 for some of the Medicaid programs. So they're continuing to
7 lose out every single time.

8 SSI payments were \$710 a month. Now they've gone up
9 to a whooping \$721.

10 We have a huge amount of people in Spokane that are
11 qualified for Medicaid, that are low income. When they did
12 the Medicaid expansion, significant numbers in Spokane went
13 onto Medicaid.

14 So we're dealing with a low income population
15 throughout Spokane County. And when you go into some of the
16 outlying areas, it's even higher.

17 And then when you look at the average Social Security
18 benefit -- I said, Wow, that's really great. They've gone
19 up from \$14,000 up to \$15,000. Well, that's because some
20 of --

21 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: I'm sorry. Where are you
22 looking on this?

23 ANNE WHIGHAM: I'm in the center there. The
24 Average County Social Security Benefit.

25 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: I see it. Okay.

0062

1 ANNE WHIGHAM: Yes. But when I looked at the
2 actual rate --

3 So I took the \$14,106 and I looked at what the COLA
4 was. And COLA only occurred three times. And they actually
5 threw in 2014. It only went up 7%.

6 So those of us that are older, retiring, a little bit
7 higher income, that's going to raise up the price a little
8 bit.

9 So what I'm trying to show you is that these -- the
10 cost of living --

11 And there's one, by the way, for families. The Wider
12 Opportunities for Women has done the same thing for
13 families.

14 And it isn't just that my individual rates are going
15 to go up. When you have small business rates, when you have
16 industry rates going up, I end up paying for that. When you
17 look at my cost of food has gone up significantly, you look
18 at my rent.

19 And I'm one of those where they're paying for my heat
20 and my water. If those rates go up, guess what? My housing
21 rates are going to go up? All while my -- everything is
22 going up.

23 So the impact to the community is great. Spokane is a
24 low income community. The impact in this area is
25 significant every time there's any kind of an increase. And

0063

1 it isn't just residential.

2 So thank you for listening to me.

3 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Let me ask you one question.

4 ANNE WHIGHAM: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: And that is so this chart
6 that you showed us, the back page --

7 ANNE WHIGHAM: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: You said you derived this.

9 Now, is this a copy of something from that document?

10 ANNE WHIGHAM: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Okay. Thank you.

12 ANNE WHIGHAM: What I did was to put in --

13 I had the rates from 2010. I put in the rates from
14 2013, and I did my own calculations.

15 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Oh, I see. So this you
16 derived from that.

17 ANNE WHIGHAM: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Okay. Thank you.

19 ANNE WHIGHAM: Yep. Yep. And I'll make copies
20 available over here if other people want them.

21 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Just make sure that
22 Mr. Kouchi gets one.

23 ANNE WHIGHAM: I will.

24 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Thank you.

25 ANNE WHIGHAM: Yes.

0064

1 COMMISSIONER JONES: I have a question or two.

2 So what's the percent of population -- I think this
3 came up in our last rate case -- that qualifies for Medicaid
4 funding?

5 ANNE WHIGHAM: That's a good question.

6 COMMISSIONER JONES: You mentioned it's gone up a
7 lot. Is it 20, 25, 30 percent.

8 ANNE WHIGHAM: What do you think, Nick?

9 NICK BEAMER: I think it's over 30%.

10 ANNE WHIGHAM: Yeah. Over 30%.

11 COMMISSIONER JONES: That's Spokane County? Or
12 Pend Oreille, Lincoln, Adams?

13 Are these the surrounding counties or just Spokane?

14 ANNE WHIGHAM: I think it's just Spokane.

15 COMMISSIONER JONES: Okay.

16 ANNE WHIGHAM: The other thing I presented to
17 you, on the back of that first page shows the aging
18 population in our area. And it takes into account all of
19 our counties that we cover as an Area Agency on Aging.

20 So the aging population is really going up, as you
21 know.

22 COMMISSIONER JONES: Yes.

23 ANNE WHIGHAM: They keep talking about the aging
24 tsunami. And I hate that, because I don't want to be a
25 tsunami. I would rather be a nice age wave.

0065

1 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: I'm on this graph now,
2 actually.

3 ANNE WHIGHAM: Yeah. Yeah, I know. It's really
4 hard, isn't it?

5 COMMISSIONER JONES: I think I'm getting close.

6 And then do you have any comment on the LIRAP funding?
7 The energy projects signed this settlement agreement, as you
8 know.

9 ANNE WHIGHAM: Right.

10 COMMISSIONER JONES: It provides a funding
11 increase of about \$112,000 additional on the electric side.

12 Is that a good thing? What are your comments?

13 Because I know not everyone qualifies for --

14 ANNE WHIGHAM: Exactly.

15 COMMISSIONER JONES: -- LIRAP. Right?

16 ANNE WHIGHAM: So here's the issue. And I'm
17 going to fall in that, because I'm going to retire soon and
18 then I'm in trouble. And I've got to tell you, after doing
19 this today, I may be rethinking retirement.

20 It's a great program. And I appreciate what Avista
21 does. And we've met with Avista. They've been great.
22 They've met us. They answered a lot of our questions.
23 We've had some good meetings with them.

24 It's great for low income individuals. It's this
25 group just above that that doesn't qualify for anything.

0066

1 And those are the ones that are really getting caught.

2 When you look at the income level of \$15,647 for 2013
3 for a single person, or 25,000, look at what the federal
4 poverty line is.

5 We're really promoting in Washington state that they
6 start using the Elder Economic Security Index. Especially
7 for seniors, but there's also one for families.

8 I think you know the Federal Poverty Guidelines were
9 devised a long time ago based on how much did a family of
10 four eat. That's what it was based on. It wasn't based on
11 any real data. It was just what do we think. So this is
12 looking at --

13 There's a whole group of us. And I'm going to be
14 included. My husband died nine years ago. I got caught in
15 the 2008 loss. I lost a job, I lost everything. I had to
16 sell my house to get out from under. I've done everything
17 right, and I'm going to be one of those people that's not
18 going to qualify for anything.

19 So when those rates go up, they're really going to
20 impact people that are not qualified.

21 COMMISSIONER JONES: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Thank you very much.

23 (Applause.)

24 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Okay. Nick Beamer.

25 Mr. Kouchi, will you work with perhaps Mr. Shearer to

0067

1 make sure these documents get into the official record.

2 NICK BEAMER: Well, good evening. My name is
3 Nick Beamer, spelled N-i-c-k; and then B-e-a-m-e-r.

4 I am also an Avista customer, both gas and electric;
5 and live on the lower south side in Spokane.

6 I'm not here speaking on behalf of myself, however.
7 Tonight I'm here speaking on behalf of our Planning and
8 Management Council of Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern
9 Washington. And I am executive director for that
10 organization.

11 Our Council members are volunteers; about 35 of them.
12 And they live in Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Spokane, and
13 Whitman Counties; many in the area covered by Avista, as
14 well.

15 Council members have spent time looking at this rate
16 case. As was mentioned previously by Anne, we met with
17 staff from Avista. Our staff met with them, as well. And
18 we do appreciate the time they took to help explain this
19 case.

20 Based on the Council's understanding of the general
21 rate case issues, but also tempered by knowledge of the
22 people that we serve --

23 And many of the statistics that Anne gave tell you a
24 lot about the individuals that we serve. In 2013, there
25 were 9,300 individuals that were served by both ourselves

0068

1 and contractors of Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern
2 Washington. 3,900 of those were low income individuals.

3 Based on that information, the Council voted not to
4 support the rate increases originally proposed by Avista.
5 Rather, the Council voted to support the recommendations
6 proposed by the Commission staff for lower rate increases,
7 along with the increase proposed in additional LIRAP
8 funding.

9 Anne already mentioned the fact that we have many
10 people in that group on Social Security, which isn't going
11 up by much at all -- 1%. Many older adults in our area
12 qualify for Medicaid.

13 I don't have the actual statistics in Ferry, Stevens,
14 and Pend Oreille, but I can just tell you they are higher
15 than they are in Spokane from the graphs that I've seen.

16 Therefore, as we look ahead at the impact of this rate
17 case, it's clear. Especially in the base rates. Those were
18 just astronomical, in my view. The proposed increases in
19 the base rate.

20 Everybody pays that base rate, no matter whether
21 they're low income or not. You can't get away from it. You
22 can't save by not having as much energy use. You still have
23 to pay that base rate.

24 Sometimes it's translated into rental. Sometimes it's
25 by homeowners that are trying to make it as they get older.

0069

1 Many of our clients have multiple chronic conditions,
2 multiple illnesses. Some of them rely on electricity in
3 order to be able to live at home.

4 That is our goal, is to help people live at home as
5 long as possible. It's harder when electric rates go up
6 faster than income and faster than other goods and services
7 that they have to pay for.

8 Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify
9 tonight. And good luck in looking ahead at this particular
10 rate case.

11 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Thank you. And good to see
12 you again. You were here last year, as I recall, as well.

13 NICK BEAMER: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: And probably before that,
15 too.

16 NICK BEAMER: Right.

17 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: You said your Council voted
18 to support the positions taken by Commission staff --

19 NICK BEAMER: Correct.

20 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: -- on the LIRAP funding.

21 Did your Council vote on whether to support the
22 proposed settlement? Or have you done that?

23 NICK BEAMER: Yes. It was to support the
24 proposed settlement, as shown by the staff materials.

25 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Okay. Thank you very much.

0070

1 NICK BEAMER: You bet.

2 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Okay. The last person I
3 have signed up is Mr. Gerald Robinson.

4 GERALD ROBINSON: That's G-e-r-a-l-d
5 R-o-b-i-n-s-o-n.

6 I'm Gerald Robinson. And I both receive gas and
7 electricity from Avista. And it's my pleasure to be able to
8 speak in front of everyone.

9 Actually, I'm speaking on behalf of thousands of
10 people in our community which aren't here tonight. And
11 those are the people that are impoverished. And they
12 wouldn't come to this meeting, necessarily.

13 And what I'm -- what I'm suggesting is a rate decrease
14 for people who are impoverished and who don't have a program
15 that's available to them. And also for Avista to take a
16 look at some additional programs to help these kind of
17 people.

18 I used to work as an adjudicator with the State of
19 Washington Unemployment Insurance. And a lot of times the
20 first thing I would hear is: I need my unemployment
21 benefits right now because I'm losing my home or I'm being
22 evicted or my wife is leaving me or something of that
23 nature. And I had to explain I couldn't do that. You know,
24 I had to interpret the State of Washington laws.

25 But, you know, this isn't an abstraction to me. My

0071

1 sister right now, who did have a very good job with the
2 County as a mental health professional, has lost her job and
3 is running out of unemployment benefits and is over 62. And
4 actually, she's looking for any kind of a job right now.
5 But there are a lot of people out there who fall into that,
6 in that category.

7 I volunteer for the Second Harvest food bank. And we
8 saw a DVD just last week, a young woman. She must have been
9 in her 20s or early 30s. And she almost had tears in her
10 eyes. I was surprised they put this on the DVD. And she
11 said, Well, if it wasn't for Second Harvest, how would I
12 feed myself and my babies? I mean, she was -- I don't think
13 she was married.

14 So once again, is this really an abstraction? Do you
15 know anyone like that? Well, I happen to know someone like
16 that personally, that I met yesterday in my church.

17 She's 38. She has a two-and-a-half-year-old little
18 girl. She's just the cutest little thing running around the
19 church.

20 She doesn't have a job. She just moved into a
21 one-room efficiency and she's trying to get furniture. She
22 doesn't have any furniture in her house.

23 And the question is when it gets cold in a few months,
24 what are you going to do? Are you going to balance either
25 getting food for her children or paying her heating bill or

0072

1 perhaps clothes? I mean, something like that.

2 And these are the hard choices that people in our
3 community who aren't here, they're going to face this
4 winter.

5 I know people that don't have that problem with this
6 rate increase. It's, like: Okay. We're going out tonight.
7 Instead of the \$65 bottle of wine, we'll take the \$45
8 bottle. That will solve the problem right there.

9 But I know a lot of people that are not in that boat.
10 I know some that are.

11 Let me tell you one more thing. I also work at the --
12 volunteer at the Women and Children's Free Restaurant. And
13 I observed --

14 I mean, the food they get there is pretty good. I
15 mean, it's donated. So sometimes you've got to get it out
16 before it spoils. But I saw a whole room of children,
17 little children, eating, and older women. You know, and
18 younger women.

19 You know, if they weren't going to get this food, you
20 know, if it wasn't going to be served, I'm not sure they
21 would have something to eat that night. Or perhaps it would
22 be very minimal. I'm not sure.

23 But, once again, it's not an abstraction to me. One
24 of my best friends is a woman who is 67. I also know her at
25 church. I know her pretty well. But she doesn't have a

0073

1 husband anymore. And, you know, it's funny, she --

2 It's like, I'm not sure I'm going to be able to pay my
3 mortgage here. You know, I'm not sure I'm going to get it.
4 And I'm not sure I've got enough food. I can't really
5 invite you over tonight because I don't really have enough
6 this week. I want to make sure I get enough bread. You
7 know, I'm going to freeze it.

8 I wouldn't want to be in that predicament. Luckily, I
9 got a job with the State of Washington. But she is.

10 As a matter of fact, I know another woman like that.
11 She's just about my age. I'm retired, and she has to work
12 two days a week. And she's got a lot of physical problems.
13 So I don't think she has enough. I don't think she's going
14 to have enough.

15 I mean, I don't want to speak too loudly here. And
16 I'm not going to talk much longer.

17 But you know what? There's a whole large segment, not
18 just here in Spokane, of elderly women who don't have a
19 husband, who don't have enough money. I mean, they have a
20 smile on their face, but these people are barely making it.
21 And then there's young women with little kids who are also
22 not making it.

23 So let me just wrap this up. I don't want to make
24 this too long. But I would like Avista to consider a rate
25 decrease for some of these people who don't have many

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1 programs to cover them, or maybe some other programs.

2 Do a little bit more. Work a little bit harder here.

3 Think a little bit about other people, you know.

4 The community -- when I was an adjudicator, I had this
5 burden on my back to make sure people got their unemployment
6 benefits. This is Avista's burden.

7 You know, I would like them to work a little bit,
8 think a little bit: How can we improve a rate increase or
9 some programs for these poor people?

10 And there's a whole bunch of them out there. And
11 there's getting to be more of them. I mean, it's kind of a
12 national tragedy, really.

13 So that's all. But I do really appreciate you
14 listening to me. And I hope I didn't go on too long.

15 Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Thank you, Mr. Robinson.

17 So that is the end of --

18 (Applause.)

19 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: -- the list that we have.

20 Is there anyone else that now has an idea they want to
21 speak to something? Or did I missing anyone?

22 Ma'am. Did you take the oath, by any chance?

23 JAMIE McINTYRE: Yes, I did.

24 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Okay.

25 JAMIE McINTYRE: My name is Jamie McIntyre.

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1 J-a-m-i-e. Last name McIntyre, M-c-I-n-t-y-r-e.

2 I'm a social worker for Aging & Long Term Care of
3 Eastern Washington. I am both an electric and gas customer,
4 as well. But I would like to speak to the needs of older
5 adults and individuals living with disabilities within our
6 community.

7 Having been a social worker here for the last eight
8 years, I've worked with people living with mental illnesses,
9 as well as disabilities. I've had homes that I've gone into
10 where people did not have enough money to pay their electric
11 bills. They're wearing jackets and have blankets over them
12 because they don't have the money to pay those basic needs.

13 I've seen people making the choice between having to
14 buy medication, putting food on the table, or paying their
15 bills.

16 And I ask you as a Commission to be mindful of those
17 individuals living on a fixed income when you do make this
18 decision.

19 Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Thank you very much.

21 (Applause.)

22 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Okay. Again, for those of
23 you that may have other thoughts, we're going to be in the
24 Spokane Valley City Council chambers tomorrow at noon. So
25 if you want to go out there, that's fine as well.

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1 Or, again, make comments online through our website.
2 And that information is included in the Attorney General's
3 handout, or Mr. Kouchi has it in the back, or you can find
4 it on our website.

5 So anything else?

6 COMMISSIONER JONES: No.

7 COMMISSIONER GOLTZ: Thank you.

8 I want to again thank the City of Spokane for making
9 this available.

10 Thank you to you all for taking the time to come out.
11 We really appreciate it. This is very useful.

12 And we'll be having a hearing on this proposed
13 settlement and the case on September 23rd. And we will
14 strive to get a decision out as soon as we can after that.

15 Thank you very much for coming. Good evening.

16 (Conclusion of proceedings.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF WASHINGTON)
) ss.
COUNTY OF SPOKANE)

This is to certify that I, Dorothy Stiles,
Certified Realtime Reporter and Washington Certified Court
Reporter in and for the State of Washington, residing at
Spokane, reported the within and foregoing Public Comment
Hearing; said Public Comment Hearing being taken before me
on the date herein set forth; that said Public Comment
Hearing was taken by me in shorthand and thereafter under my
supervision transcribed; and that same is a full, true, and
correct record of the Public Comment Hearing.

I further certify that I am not a relative or employee
or attorney or counsel of any of the parties hereto, nor am
I financially interested in the outcome of the cause.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
this date: September 4, 2014.

DOROTHY STILES, RMR, CRR
Washington CCR No. 2650