



Idaho Public Utilities Commission

P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0074

C.L. Butch Otter, Governor

Paul Kjellander, Commissioner

Marsha Smith, Commissioner

Kristine Raper, Commissioner

Case No. AVU-G-15-03, Order No. 33422

Contact: Gene Fadness (208) 334-0339, 890-2712

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Commission taking comments on Avista proposal to resume natural gas efficiency programs

BOISE (November 24, 2015) – Avista Utilities, which serves about 78,000 natural gas customers in northern Idaho, is asking state regulators to resume its natural gas energy efficiency programs after they were suspended in 2012 because of low natural gas prices.

The programs offer rebates and other incentives to customers who install weatherization as well as high-efficiency natural gas appliances. The programs were suspended when natural gas costs dipped to about 50 percent lower than the expense the utility was avoiding with the programs in place.

If the Idaho Public Utilities Commission approves resumption of the programs, Avista would also re-institute its rider to fund the programs, which would be about 1.7% of a customer's billed rate. For a residential customer who uses the company average of 61 therms per month, the monthly increase would be about \$1.11, effective Jan. 1. Overall, natural gas rates just declined sharply with a 14.5% reduction in the company's annual Purchased Gas Cost Adjustment, the variable portion of gas rates adjusted every Nov. 1. The permanent portion of natural gas rates – the base rate – is expected to increase by 3.5% on Jan. 1 if the commission approves a negotiated settlement proposed by Avista and other parties.

In order for the Idaho Public Utilities Commission to approve resumption of the efficiency programs, the utility must demonstrate that the savings from the program are greater than the expense to customers. Avista estimates that the first year savings (2016-17) will be about 233,000 therms in its Idaho territory.

The commission is taking comments on Avista's proposal through Dec. 10. Comments are accepted via e-mail through by accessing the commission's Website at www.puc.idaho.gov and clicking on "Case Comment Form," under the "Consumers" heading. Fill in the case number (AVU-G-15-03) and enter your comments. Comments can also be mailed to P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0074 or faxed to (208) 334-3762.

The commission's order and other documents related to this case are available on the commission's Website. Click on "Open Cases" under the "Natural Gas" heading and scroll down to the case number above.

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