

BEFORE THE IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF AVISTA) CASE NO. AVU-G-22-03
CORPORATION’S PETITION FOR A)
TEMPORARY EXEMPTION FROM GAS) NOTICE OF PETITION
SERVICE RULES 151 AND 152, UTILITY)
CUSTOMER RELATIONS RULE 203(3), AND) NOTICE OF MODIFIED
ASSOCIATED TARIFFS) PROCEDURE
)
)
) **ORDER NO. 35471**

On June 28, 2022, Avista Corporation d/b/a Avista Utilities (“Company”) Petitioned the Commission for a temporary exemption from provisions of Gas Service Rules (“GSR”) 151 and 152, IDAPA 31.31.01.151-.152, Utility Customer Relations Rule (“UCRR”) 203, IDAPA 31.21.01.203, and associated Company tariffs.

The Commission now issues this Notice of the Company’s Petition, Notice of Modified Procedure and sets public comment and Company reply deadlines.

BACKGROUND

GSR 151 and 152 set forth requirements for the periodic testing of customer natural gas meters and standards for natural gas service. UCCR 203 provides stipulations regarding the issuance of corrected bills, including specifics regarding the rebilling time period to be used in the event that the time when a billing problem began cannot be reasonably determined.

Consistent with industry practices, the Company tests three types of meters, including “diaphragm meters”, the meter type most used to serve residential loads and medium commercial loads—to verify performance of new and installed meters. Petition at 2-3. Meters that fail to meet the Company’s standards are tested more frequently or, eventually, removed from service. *Id.* at 4.

NOTICE OF PETITION

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that, to test diaphragm meters, the Company represents that it must temporarily remove the meters from service and take them off-site. However, due to supply chain issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic and other events, the Company states there is and will continue to be an insufficient amount of replacement meters to temporarily install while it tests its diaphragm meters and/or replaces failed meters.

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YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that, to maintain an adequate level of replacement meters to continue its current testing regime and replace failed meters, the Company represents it considered but ultimately decided not to seek meters from a second manufacturer, borrow or buy meters from other utilities, or use diaphragm meter alternatives. Thus, to build up an adequate supply of meters for its testing and replacement program, the Company seeks to pause its diaphragm meter testing program through December 31, 2023. *Id.*

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that the Company represents that UCCR 203(3)(a) limits the timeframe under which corrected billings can be sent to a customer to the six months preceding the date an error in the meter is discovered. *Id.* at 9. Pausing its meter testing and replacement program, the Company states, will require that some customers whose meters eventually test outside the prescribed parameters will need to be rebilled for billings more than six months before the meter error was discovered.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that once it resumes its testing and replacement program, the Company predicts it will discover meters that resulted in overcharges or undercharges to customers. Thus, the Company requests it be allowed to extend the rebilling period for customers who have been overcharged to 18-months from the time it resumes its testing program. *Id.* The Company explains customers who have been undercharged will only be rebilled for up to six months. *Id.* at 9-10. The Company states that, based on previous years' data, it estimates that if an average customer is overbilled for 18 months, the customer would receive a bill credit for \$26.10.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that the Petition is available for public inspection during regular business hours at the Commission's office. This document is also available on the Commission's website at www.puc.idaho.gov. Click on the "GAS" icon, select "Open Cases," and click on the case number as shown on the front of this document.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that all proceedings in this case will be held pursuant to the Commission's jurisdiction under Title 61 of the Idaho Code.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that all proceedings in this matter will be conducted pursuant to the Commission's Rules of Procedure, IDAPA 31.01.01.000 *et seq.*

NOTICE OF MODIFIED PROCEDURE

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that the Commission has determined that the public interest may not require a formal hearing in this matter, and it will review the case through written submissions under the Commission’s Rules of Modified Procedure Rules 201-204 of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission’s Rules of Procedure, IDAPA 31.01.01.201-204. The Commission notes that Modified Procedure and written comments have proven to be an effective means for obtaining public input and participation.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that persons desiring to state a position on this Application may file a written comment explaining why they support or oppose the Application. Persons who would like a hearing must specifically request a hearing in their written comments. **Persons shall have until September 13, 2022, to file written comments.** Comments must be filed through the Commission’s website or by e-mail unless computer access is unavailable. To comment electronically, please access the Commission’s website at www.puc.idaho.gov. Click the “Case Comment Form” and complete the form using the case number as it appears on the front of this document. To file by e-mail, the customer must e-mail the comments to the Commission Secretary and the Company at the e-mail addresses listed below. If computer access is unavailable, then comments may be mailed to the Commission and Company at these addresses:

For the Idaho PUC:

Commission Secretary
Idaho Public Utilities Commission
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0074
secretary@puc.idaho.gov

Street Address for Express Mail:

11331 W. Chinden Blvd.
Building 8, Suite 201-A
Boise, ID 83714

For the Company:

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YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that the Company must file any reply comments **by September 20, 2022.**

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that if no written comments or protests are received within the time limit set, the Commission will consider this matter on its merits and enter its order without a formal hearing. If written comments are received within the time limit set, the Commission will consider them and, in its discretion, may set the same for formal hearing.

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Company's Application be processed by Modified Procedure, Rules 201-204 (IDAPA 31.01.01.201-.204). Persons interested in submitting written comments must do so by September 13, 2022. The Company must file any reply comments by September 20, 2022.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that parties comply with Order No. 35375, issued April 21, 2022. Generally, all pleadings should be filed with the Commission electronically and will be deemed timely filed when received by the Commission Secretary. *See* Rule 14.02. Service between parties should continue to be accomplished electronically when possible. However, voluminous discovery-related documents may be filed and served on CD-ROM or a USB flash drive.

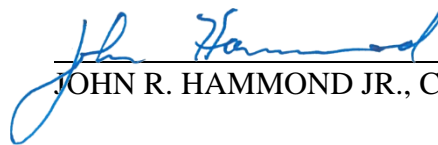
DONE by Order of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission at Boise, Idaho this 27th day of July 2022.



ERIC ANDERSON, PRESIDENT

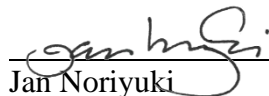


JOHN CHATBURN, COMMISSIONER



JOHN R. HAMMOND JR., COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:



Jan Noriyuki
Commission Secretary

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