

DECISION MEMORANDUM

**TO: COMMISSIONER KJELLANDER
COMMISSIONER SMITH
COMMISSIONER HANSEN
COMMISSION SECRETARY
COMMISSION STAFF
LEGAL
WORKING FILE**

FROM: DANIEL KLEIN

IPC-E-03-17

DATE: OCTOBER 31, 2003

RE: FORMAL COMPLAINT OF YOLANDE BENNETT

On October 10, 2003, the Commission received a request to file a formal complaint (attached) from Ms. Yolande Bennett against Idaho Power. Ms. Bennett is requesting that charges for electrical service from May 2003 to July 2003 be adjusted to the same amounts billed for the same time period in 2002.

BACKGROUND

Ms. Bennett left her home March 26 to travel to California. Ms. Bennett maintains she turned everything off but her refrigerator and water heater. Her bills were being forwarded to California, and she noticed her bills were quite high for her not being at home. Ms. Bennett was in contact with Idaho Power during her absence and voiced her concerns with the high bills. Ms. Bennett maintains she was overbilled approximately \$150.

In response to Ms. Bennett's concerns, Idaho Power verified meter reads after the May and July bills were issued. After Ms. Bennett spoke with a Customer Service Assistant Coach on July 8, 2003, a neighbor went into the house at Ms. Bennett's request to make sure everything but the refrigerator was turned off at the breaker. Upon Ms. Bennett's return home, an Idaho Power Delivery Service Representative met her at home on July 25, 2003 to check for problems inside the residence. At that time, the meter was showing very little usage. The residence is an all-electric two-bedroom townhouse with baseboard heating and no air conditioning. The Delivery Service Representative set up a watt per hour meter on the refrigerator to determine usage. No problem was identified.

On July 29, the customer's meter was replaced and sent to Boise for testing. The old meter tested at 99.55% accurate. Idaho Power maintains that the baseboard heating must have been left on during the customer's absence. The Company maintains that degree-day data supports this theory.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Commission Staff has been in contact with both Ms. Bennett and Idaho Power. Ms. Bennett's usage during the period in question is considerably higher than in the past.

	March	April	May	June	July	August
2002	1409	856	590	270	129	329
2003	1253	730	1399	1689	670	230

The cause of the discrepancy between this year's and past year's usage, however, has not been determined. Idaho Power's meter test indicates that the customer's usage was accurately measured. There is no evidence that Idaho Power incorrectly billed the customer or failed to respond to the customer's concerns about her bill. The parties have attempted to reach an agreement informally and have been unable to do so. Staff recommends that the Commission not initiate a formal complaint.

COMMISSION DECISION

Does the Commission wish to accept Ms. Bennett's request to file a formal complaint?

Does the Commission have a sufficient record to rule on this issue if it declines to accept the formal complaint? Or, should a summons be issued?


Daniel Klein

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