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November 17, 2020

Oregon Public Utility Commission  
Attn: Filing Center  
201 High Street SE, Suite 100  
Salem, OR 97301-3612

**Re: UM 1631 – Cascade Natural Gas Corporation’s Petition for Partial Waiver of OAR 860-021-0410(2) and OAR 860-021-0415(2) and (3)**

Cascade Natural Gas Corporation encloses for filing with the Oregon Public Utility Commission its Petition for Partial Waiver of the above-referenced OARs.

Please address correspondence on this matter to me, with copies to the following:

Michael Parvinen  
Director of Regulatory Affairs  
Cascade Natural Gas Corporation  
8113 West Grandridge Boulevard  
Kennewick, WA 99336-7166  
Telephone: (509)734-4593  
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Email: [CNGCRegulatory@cngc.com](mailto:CNGCRegulatory@cngc.com)

If you have any questions, please contact me at (509) 734-4593.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael Parvinen

Michael Parvinen  
Director, Regulatory Affairs  
Cascade Natural Gas Corporation  
8113 W. Grandridge Blvd.  
Kennewick, WA 99336-7166  
[michael.parvinen@cngc.com](mailto:michael.parvinen@cngc.com)

Attachments

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION  
OF OREGON  
UM 1631**

In the Matter of

CASCADE NATURAL GAS  
CORPORATION

Petition for Partial Waiver of OAR 860-021-  
0410 and OAR 860-021-0415.

PETITION OF  
CASCADE NATURAL GAS  
CORPORATION

**1 I. INTRODUCTION**

2 Cascade Natural Gas Corporation, ("Cascade" or "Company"), files  
3 this petition under the provisions of ORS 756.040 and in accordance with OAR 860-021-  
4 0005. Cascade respectfully petitions the Oregon Public Utility Commission ("Commission")  
5 to issue an order granting a temporary, partial waiver of OAR 860-021-0410, Emergency  
6 Medical Certificate for Residential Electric and Gas Service, and OAR 860-021-0415,  
7 Time Payment Agreements (TPAs) for Residential Electric and Gas Services.  
8 Specifically, the Company requests partial waiver of subsection (2) of OAR 860-021-0410,  
9 which requires that a medical certification to the utility be confirmed in writing within 14  
10 days by the qualified medical professional prescribing medical care, and subsections (2) and  
11 (3) of OAR 860-021-0415, which limits the timeframe for time-payment arrangements to 12  
12 months and requires a down payment for such arrangements. This temporary waiver request  
13 is made in accordance with Paragraphs 5 (TPAs) and 16 (medical certificates) of the  
14 Stipulated Agreement on Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic on Energy Utility Customers  
15 (Stipulated Agreement), as approved by the Commission in Order No. 20-401 of docket UM  
16 2114 dated November 5, 2020. As such, Cascade respectfully requests that the  
17 temporary, partial waivers of OAR 860-021-0410 and OAR 860-021-0415 be approved

1 effective immediately, and remain in effect until October 1, 2022, as noted in the Stipulated  
2 Agreement, or unless and until any permanent changes are made to these rules.

3 **II. GOVERNING AUTHORITY**

4 As mentioned above, subsection (2) of OAR 860-021-0410, requires that a medical  
5 certification to the utility be confirmed in writing within 14 days by the qualified medical  
6 professional prescribing medical care, and subsections (2) and (3) of OAR 860-021-0415,  
7 limits the timeframe for time-payment arrangements to 12 months and requires a down  
8 payment for such arrangements. OAR 860-021-0005 allows the Commission to grant  
9 waivers of any of the Division 021 rules for good cause shown.

10 **III. COMMUNICATIONS**

11 Communications regarding this petition should be addressed to:

12  
Michael Parvinen  
Director of Regulatory Affairs  
Cascade Natural Gas Corporation  
8113 West Grandridge Boulevard  
Kennewick, WA 99336-7166  
Telephone: (509)734-4593  
Facsimile: (509)737-7166  
Email: [CNGCRegulatory@cngc.com](mailto:CNGCRegulatory@cngc.com)

13 **IV. BACKGROUND**

14 On June 9, 2020, the Commission conducted a Special Public Meeting on the “Impact  
15 to Utility Customers during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Future Economic Recovery.”  
16 During this public meeting, the Commission heard from investor-owned utilities, customer  
17 groups, and other stakeholders regarding the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including  
18 actions already taken by the utilities as well as additional actions still needed to protect

1 customers during the COVID-19 health and economic crisis. The Commission then  
2 assembled a team of representatives from across the state, led by Commission Staff, to address  
3 various aspects of the COVID-19 challenge. At the request of Commission Staff, docket UM  
4 2114 - Investigation into the Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic on Utility Customers, was  
5 opened to assist in these efforts. After a thorough investigation consisting of data collection  
6 and workshops between June 30, 2020 and September 3, 2020, Commission Staff released its  
7 final report on September 21, 2020, including Appendix A, which is a term sheet for energy  
8 utilities containing basic terms and conditions to address the disconnection of utility services  
9 and the imposition of late fees due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

10 On September 24, 2020, the Commission authorized Staff, affected utilities and  
11 stakeholders to execute stipulations incorporating the term sheet developed during the UM  
12 2114 investigation. Between September 24, 2020 and October 23, 2020, Avista Utilities,  
13 Cascade Natural Gas Company, Idaho Power Company, NW Natural, Pacific Power,  
14 Portland General Electric Company, Commission Staff, Oregon Citizens' Utility Board,  
15 Community Action Partnership of Oregon, Northwest Energy Coalition, Verde, and  
16 Multnomah County Office of Sustainability helped to refine the term sheet for energy  
17 utilities and incorporate it into a Stipulated Agreement to assist customers and utilities during  
18 the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

19 **V. DISCUSSION**

20 At the November 3, 2020 Public Meeting, Commission Staff presented its final  
21 discussion and recommendations regarding the approval of the Stipulated Agreement  
22 endorsed by the Parties, which the Commission ultimately adopted. At that time,

1 Commission Staff also provided comments regarding potential energy utility action that may  
2 be required as a result of the Stipulated Agreement’s impact on various administrative rules.

3 In its Staff Report for the November 3, 2020 Public Meeting, Commission Staff stated:

4 OAR 860-021-0410, Emergency Medical Certificate for Residential Electric and Gas  
5 Service – Action required by all utilities. Under OAR 860-021-0410(2), a medical  
6 certification to the utility must be confirmed in writing within 14 days by the  
7 qualified medical professional prescribing medical care. This rule differs from the  
8 requirements of paragraph 16 of the Stipulated Agreement, which allows for two  
9 months to submit the confirming certification. Because this paragraph will be in  
10 effect until October 1, 2022, a temporary rule would not be appropriate. Each utility  
11 will need to request a temporary waiver of the rule through October 1, 2022, unless  
12 and until any permanent changes may be made to this rule. [Emphasis added]

13 OAR 860-021-0415, Time-Payment Agreements for Residential Electric and Gas  
14 Service – Under sections (2) and (3) of this rule, payment plans are limited to 12-  
15 month periods and a down payment is required. Under section (4), “The energy utility  
16 and customer may agree in writing to alternate payment arrangement, provided the  
17 utility first informs the customer of the availability of the payment terms in sections  
18 (2) and (3) of this rule.” Paragraph 5 of the Stipulated Agreement requires each utility  
19 to offer up to 24 months to residential customers with no down payment through  
20 October 1, 2022. Each utility may wish to request a temporary waiver of sections (2)  
21 and (3) of this rule through October 1, 2022, unless and until any permanent changes  
22 may be made to this rule. [Emphasis added]

23 Good cause exists to grant Cascade’s request for partial waivers because the  
24 waivers are in compliance with the approved Stipulated Agreement and Commission Staff’s  
25 recommendations described above. They will also prevent customer confusion regarding the  
26 need to schedule medical appointments to provide immediate emergency medical  
27 certification and alleviate the financial pressures potentially caused by a down-payment  
28 requirement associated with utility time-payment arrangements. Further, no customers will  
29 be harmed by the granting of these waivers. Lastly, the Company requests expedited  
30 consideration of this Petition to facilitate a timely response to the ongoing COVID-19 public  
31 health crisis, and to immediately effectuate the Stipulated Agreement as approved by the  
32 Commission in Order No. 20-401 of docket UM 2114 on November 5, 2020

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## VI. CONCLUSION

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Cascade respectfully requests that the Commission issue an order approving the Company's request for temporary, partial waiver of OAR 860-021-0410(2) and OAR 860-021-0415(2) and (3) through October 1, 2022, effective immediately upon Commission approval.

Respectfully submitted this 17<sup>th</sup> day of November 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Cascade Natural Gas Corporation

By: /s/ Michael Parvinen

Michael Parvinen  
Director, Regulatory Affairs