

ISSUED: July 22, 2011

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
OF OREGON**

UM 903

In the Matter of

NORTHWEST NATURAL GAS
COMPANY, dba NW NATURAL

2011 Spring Earnings Review.

RULING

**DISPOSITION: MOTION TO AMEND PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE
CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**

On July 21, 2011, Staff of the Public Utility Commission of Oregon (Staff) filed a motion to modify the procedural schedule in this docket. On behalf of all parties, Staff proposes moving the deadline for position statements/opening comments to July 27, 2011, and the deadline for reply comments to August 8, 2011.

OAR 860-022-0070 states as follows:

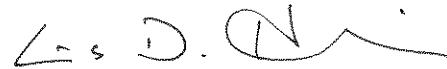
Each LDC will file test year results of operations by May 1. * * * Commission staff will complete its review and distribute summary conclusions by June 10 to all parties. Staff will present the results of the earnings review at the first regular public meeting in July; alternatively, if issues are unresolved among all parties, a settlement conference including all parties will be conducted. By August 1, the parties will file position statements with the Commission on unresolved issues, if needed. The Commission will issue its decision on unresolved issues, if any, by August 15. Unless otherwise directed by the Commission, each LDC will file its annual gas cost tracking filing by August 31, including amortization of credit amounts in the deferred account, if any, resulting from the earnings review.

The procedural schedule initially adopted in this docket deviated from the schedule established in OAR 860-022-0070 by providing for two rounds of comments, rather than one. The second round of comments, however, was due on August 1, 2011, the deadline established by rule. The schedule now proposed by the parties extends the deadline for the second round of comments to August 8, 2011.

Because the parties believe two rounds of comments will help clarify the issues and better inform the Commission on key issues, I am inclined to adopt the agreed schedule. It is unclear, however, whether the parties expect a Commission order by August 15, 2011, under the schedule now proposed. At this point it is unclear how many contested issues will be raised and how complex those issues may be. This makes it uncertain whether the Commission can, as a practical matter, issue an order fully addressing all issues raised by August 15, 2011.

For this reason, the procedural schedule proposed by Staff is adopted, subject to the condition that all parties agree to waive the August 15, 2011 deadline for a final Commission order. Any party that does not agree to this condition may file an objection concurrently with its July 27, 2011 position statements/opening comments. If an objection is received, reply comments will be due August 1, 2011.

Dated at Salem, Oregon, this 22nd day of July, 2011.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. D. Hardie", written over a horizontal line.

Lisa D. Hardie
Administrative Law Judge