

**PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OREGON
STAFF REPORT
PUBLIC MEETING DATE: February 22, 2022**

REGULAR X CONSENT EFFECTIVE DATE March 1, 2022

DATE: February 1, 2022

TO: Public Utility Commission

FROM: Imee Anderson

THROUGH: Michael Dougherty **SIGNED**

SUBJECT: OREGON PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION STAFF:
(Docket No. UM 1012)
Requests an order to establish the annual fee level for electric, gas, water, and wastewater utilities at 0.43 percent.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Public Utility Commission of Oregon (Commission) issue an order setting the annual fee rate at forty-three hundredths of one percent (0.43 percent) of 2021 gross operating revenues for electric, natural gas, water, and wastewater utilities.

DISCUSSION:

Issue

Whether the Commission should set the annual fee rate paid by electric, natural gas, water, and wastewater utilities to 0.43 percent of gross operating revenues.

Applicable Rule or Law

Pursuant to ORS 756.310, OAR 860-021-0033, OAR 860-021-0034, OAR 860-036-1050, and OAR 860-037-0095, each electric, gas, water, and wastewater public utility is required to pay to the Commission an annual fee to defray the costs of performing the duties imposed by law upon the Commission. The annual fee is imposed on gross operating revenues derived within Oregon at a rate determined by Commission order.

The gross operating revenues of an electric company do not include revenues from sales of power for resale to the extent that the revenues from those sales exceed an amount equal to 25 percent of the total revenues received by the electric company from sales of electricity to end users in the preceding calendar year. ORS 756.310(3).

The rules also state that the Commission's order shall be entered on or after March 1. The fee must be paid no later than 5:00 p.m. April 1 of the year after the calendar year upon which the fee is based. The fee payable shall not exceed forty-five hundredths of one percent (0.45 percent) of the Oregon gross revenue during the prior calendar year. ORS 756.310(3).

Analysis

Each year, the fee level is set based on gross operating revenues of utilities for the previous calendar year. Senate Bill (SB) 68, enacted in 2019, allows the Commission to set the annual fee to a percentage amount not to exceed forty-five hundredths of one percent (0.45 percent) of the provider's gross revenue.¹ To ensure adequate funding for the Commission, Staff recommends that the fee level should be increased from three hundred seventy-five thousandths of one percent (0.375 percent) to forty-three hundredths of one percent (0.43 percent) of 2021 gross operating revenues for electric, natural gas, water, and wastewater utilities.

The Commission's reserve balance is currently projected to be about \$4.0 million on March 31, 2022. The estimated total collection and revenue at 0.43 percent rate is \$20.7 million by April 1, 2022. In addition to the funds collected from energy, water, and wastewater utilities, the Commission will also collect \$1.37 million from telecommunication utilities.²

The estimated expenditure for April 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023, is \$24 million, which includes the PUC's program and operational costs, implementation and reoccurring costs of the E-Discovery Docketing System, costs associated with the implementation and adherence to HB 2021 (establishment of Oregon clean energy standards)³ and SB 762 (wildfire risk mitigation),⁴ increased rate case activity, and the second year of biennial statewide government service charges and assessments. Commission Staff will continue to be prudent with expenditures.

¹ SB 68 (2019), available at [oregonlegislature.gov/2019/SB0068](https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/2019/SB0068).

² UM 940, *Staff Report for the September 21 Public Meeting*, p.2 (2021).

³ HB 2021 (2021) available at [oregonlegislature.gov/2021/HB2021](https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/2021/HB2021).

⁴ SB 762 (2021), available at [oregonlegislature.gov/2021/SB0762](https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/2021/SB0762).

Estimated Fee Collection as of April 1, 2022

Projected Natural Gas, Electric, Water and Wastewater Revenue	\$ 20,665,597
Projected Telecommunications Revenue (at maximum rate 0.35%)	\$ 1,368,542

Total Estimated Fee Collection as of April 2022	\$ 22,034,139
Additional Est Revenues (RSPF Admin Transfers + Misc Rev.) April 2022 to March 2023	\$ 2,252,441

Estimate Total Revenues for the period April 2022 to March 2023	\$ 24,286,580
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Estimated Expenditures for Utility Regulation and Administration

April 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023	\$(24,049,848)
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Estimated expenditures are less than projected revenue by \$236,732. The estimated reserve balance by March 31, 2023, is \$4,213,891; a 2.43 ending balance in months of operating expenditures.

Conclusion

Based on Staff's analysis, the annual fee rate should be set to forty-three hundredths of one percent (0.43 percent) to ensure adequate funding for the Commission.

PROPOSED COMMISSION MOTION:

Approve setting the annual fee assessment rate at forty-three hundredths of one percent (0.43 percent) for collection year 2022 for electric, natural gas, water, and wastewater utilities.