

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
OF OREGON**

UM 1565

In the Matter of

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF
OREGON

Investigation of Fuel Switching and
Cross Fuel Energy Efficiency Issues.

RULING

DISPOSITION: REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY RELIEF FROM
DISCOVERY DEADLINES GRANTED

On March 26, 2012, Northwest Natural Gas Company (NW Natural) filed a motion for prehearing conference, procedural schedule, and protective order.

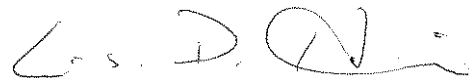
In its motion, NW Natural seeks, among other things, relief from deadlines for its responses to outstanding discovery requests served by Portland General Electric Company. NW Natural explains that this investigation is in its early stages, that parties are still working on issues lists, and requests that discovery be delayed until a formal schedule is adopted. NW Natural also asserts that PGE's data requests seek confidential commercial information that requires issuance of an appropriate protective order before NW Natural should be required to respond.

Ruling

At this stage of the proceedings, the parties have simply been meeting in informally to identify the issues that will define the scope of this investigation. The parties are to file issues lists on Wednesday, March 28, 2012. Because the scope of this investigation has not yet been defined, it is impossible to determine whether certain discovery requests are relevant and within the scope of this docket. For this reason, I agree that discovery requests are, as a practical matter, premature at this time. NW Natural's request for temporary relief from its pending discovery requests is therefore granted. Deadlines for discovery will be established when a formal procedural schedule is adopted.

A prehearing conference will be scheduled after the parties make their next filings on March 28. The remaining issues raised by NW Natural's motion—the need for a procedural schedule and an appropriate protective order—will be addressed at the prehearing conference.

Dated this 27th day of March, 2012, at Salem, Oregon.



Lisa D. Hardie
Administrative Law Judge