

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION  
OF OREGON**

UM 1750

In the Matter of

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF  
OREGON,

Investigation Into Northwest Natural Gas  
Company's WARM Program.

RULING

DISPOSITION: MOTION GRANTED

By motion filed February 12, 2016, Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural requests postponement of the prehearing conference set in this matter for February 16, 2016. The company requests expedited consideration of its motion.

As grounds for its motion, NW Natural states that additional time is required to allow the parties to work together to resolve the issues in the docket. The company proposes several dates for the rescheduled prehearing conference.

NW Natural reports that all parties support its motion.

For good cause shown, the motion is granted. The prehearing conference set for February 16, 2016, is canceled. A prehearing conference will be set for March 28, 2016. A notice with specifics will issue separately.

Having reviewed NW Natural's Opening Report filed November 10, 2015, I understand that the purpose of the WARM program is to mitigate the effects that variations in winter weather have on the company's revenues and customers' bills. The effect of variations in winter weather on company revenues and customer bills relates to space heating. The program was designed so that customers are enrolled automatically, but can "opt out." The company's billing system cannot accurately identify customers without space heating, so such customers are included in WARM unless they opt out.

Although such customers plainly do not fit the WARM profile, NW Natural believes that they should participate in the WARM adjustment based on the company's sense of "fairness." (Report at 18). At the prehearing conference, I will ask the company to explain further how it is "fair" that customers who do not use gas for space heating should be included in the true-up costs for a program intended to track variations in gas use for space heating.

I caution the parties that I am not certain that together they represent all of the interests involved in this case – in particular that anyone is representing the residential/commercial customers who do not use gas for space heating. Accordingly, any proposed settlement will be subjected to heightened scrutiny.

Dated this 12<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2016, at Salem, Oregon.



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Patrick Power  
Administrative Law Judge