



Avista Corp.

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VIA – Electronic Filing

June 25, 2020

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

RE: Advice No. 20-04-G; Schedule 493, Low Income Rate Assistance Program (LIRAP)

Filing Center:

Pursuant to ORS 757.205 and OAR 860-022-0025, attached for filing with the Public Utility Commission of Oregon (“Commission”) is an electronic copy of Avista Corporation’s, dba Avista Utilities (“Avista” or “the Company”), filing of its proposed changes to the following tariff sheets, P.U.C. OR No. 5:

Third Revision Sheet 493	Canceling	Second Revision Sheet 493
Second Revision Sheet 493A	Canceling	First Revision Sheet 493A

The primary purpose of this filing is to adjust the language regarding customer eligibility in the Company’s tariff Schedule 493, Residential Low Income Rate Assistance Program (“LIRAP”), to allow the Community Action Agencies (“Agencies”) within Avista’s service territory the utmost flexibility when determining eligibility for low-income programs. The language in Schedule 493, Special Condition 3, currently states that “Income Eligibility will be determined by the respective agencies and will be consistent with the eligibility determinations for state low-income energy assistance programs”. Though this verbiage is already flexible in nature, the Company proposes to further modify its tariff to read that “Customer eligibility for LIRAP is determined in cooperation with the agencies and captured in the LIRAP Guidelines.” This change will maintain the current

alignment with state low-income energy assistance programs, but also provide the Agencies with the discretion to determine eligibility based on existing participation in adjacent income-qualified [non-energy] programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps). Avista continuously strives to provide its Agencies with an open and adaptable low-income program, and as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic remain widespread, the Company believes the provision of these additional alignments will only further benefit its low-income customers.

The remaining tariff modifications are housekeeping in nature, to amend text for clarification purposes, remove redundant language, or provide better consistency across Avista's Oregon and Washington Low Income Rate Assistance Program tariffs. The Company has adjusted the maximum percentage available for total program administration and delivery costs from 21.78 percent to 21 percent as part of these housekeeping updates; this alteration *does not* reflect a change in process, as 21 percent has been the benchmark utilized by the Agencies for the past several years. Instead, this update is for clarification purposes and alignment with the Company's Washington LIRAP.

Lastly, the Company would like to note that the changes described herein related to eligibility were requested and are supported by the Community Action Partnership of Oregon ("CAPO"). It is Avista's understanding that both Northwest Natural Gas and Cascade Natural Gas have or will be making a similar tariff filing. If you have any questions regarding this filing, please contact me at (509) 495-2782.

Sincerely,

/s/ Shawn Bonfield

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AVISTA CORPORATION
dba Avista Utilities

SCHEDULE 493

RESIDENTIAL LOW INCOME RATE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIRAP)-
OREGON

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this schedule is to adjust rates in Schedule 410 – General Residential Natural Gas Service – Oregon, to generate funds to be used for bill payment assistance for Avista’s qualifying low-income residential customers, in accordance with ORS 757.315.

APPLICABLE:

To all residential Customers in the State of Oregon where the Company has natural gas service available. This Residential Low Income Rate Assistance Program (LIRAP) Adjustment is applicable to all residential customers taking service under Schedule 410.

(T)
(D)

MONTHLY RATE:

With Gross Revenue Factor: \$.00451 per therm
Without Gross Revenue Factor: \$.00438 per therm

SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

1. Each month, the Company will bill and collect low-income bill payment assistance funds from all Residential Customers. By the 10th of the month following the billing month, using the Company’s internal cashless voucher system, the Company will determine and send the monthly voucher amount showing the Program funds available to each participating Community Action Agency. By the 20th of the month following the billing month, the Company will remit payment to each Agency for allowed administrative and program delivery costs. Each agency will process client intake, authorize payments, and provide the Company with a payment report. Based on this payment report, the Company will transfer the authorized payments to the individual customer’s utility account.

(T)
(T)
(T)

(continued)

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By

Patrick Ehrbar, Director of Regulatory Affairs



AVISTA CORPORATION
dba Avista Utilities

SCHEDULE 493 (continued)

RESIDENTIAL LOW INCOME RATE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIRAP)-
OREGON

- 2. The Company will compute interest each month based on the average monthly fund balance undistributed at the company's currently authorized rate of return.
- 3. The Company is responsible for program administration and funds distribution to qualifying local agencies in accordance with terms and conditions ("Guidelines") established by the Company and the entity. All funds collected under this program, less program administration and delivery costs paid to the individual agencies, are distributed to income-eligible Residential Customers of Avista Utilities. (T)
- 4. Total program administration and delivery costs shall not exceed 21 percent of the total low-income bill payment assistance funds collected. Utilization of program administration and delivery costs will be summarized in the annual evaluation report described herein (Special Condition 6). (C)
(D)
(T)
(T)
- 5. Customer eligibility for LIRAP is determined in cooperation with the agencies and captured in the LIRAP Guidelines. (T)
(T)
- 6. The Company will provide an annual summary evaluation report on the progress of the LIRAP for review by the Commission by December 31st following the end of each program year.
- 7. The LIRAP program year is October 1st through September 30th. (T)

RULES AND REGULATIONS:

Service under this schedule is subject to the General Rules and Regulations contained in the tariff of which this schedule is a part, and to those prescribed by regulatory authorities.

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