

**PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OREGON  
STAFF REPORT  
PUBLIC MEETING DATE: July 28, 2020**

REGULAR  CONSENT  EFFECTIVE DATE August 1, 2020

**DATE:** July 14, 2020

**TO:** Public Utility Commission

**FROM:** Kathy Zarate

**THROUGH:** Bryan Conway, Michael Dougherty, John Crider, and Matthew Muldoon **SIGNED**

**SUBJECT:** CASCADE NATURAL GAS:  
(Docket No. ADV 1140/Advice No. O20-06-01)  
Application to change the language regarding customer eligibility in the Company's tariff Cascade's Rule 32.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve Cascade Natural Gas's (Cascade or Company) Advice No. O20-06-01, effective with service on and after August 1, 2020, as requested.

**DISCUSSION:**

Issue

Whether the Public Utility Commission of Oregon (Commission) should allow Cascade to modify Cascade's Rule 32, Oregon Low-Income Assistance Program (OLIBA) to incorporate modifications that mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for Cascade's customers.

Applicable Law

The Commission may approve tariff changes if they are deemed to be fair, just, and reasonable per ORS 757.210. Tariff revisions or corrections may be made by filing revised sheets with the information required under the Commission's administrative rules, including OAR 860-022-0005 and OAR 860-022-0025. OAR 860-022-0025(2) specifically requires that each energy utility changing existing tariffs or schedules include in its filing a statement plainly indicating the increase, decrease, or other change

made with the filing, the number of customers affected by the proposed change and the resulting change in annual revenue; and the reasons or grounds relied upon in support of the proposed change.

Filings that make any change in rates, tolls, charges, rules, or regulations must be filed with the Commission at least 30 days before the effective date of the change. ORS 757.220; OAR 860-022-0015.

### Analysis

Cascade filed Advice No. O20-06-01 on June 29, 2020. The purpose of the filing is to make modifications to the language in the Cascade's Low-Income Assistance Program (OLIBA) Tariff to provide the Company and its partner Community Action Agencies more flexibility to determine customers' eligibility for assistance from OLIBA.

Cascade's OLIBA program is funded from revenue collected by its natural gas customers on schedules 101 (residential), 104 (firm commercial), 105 (general industrial), 111 (large volume), and 170 (interruptible service).

The revenue is included in the Company's Public Purpose Charge, which applies a charge to utility bills equal to a percentage of customers' total charges for gas service. The current charge is equal to 4.928 percent for the 2020 calendar year.<sup>1</sup>

The low-income programs include the OLIBA program, the Oregon Low Income Energy Conservation (OLIEC) program, and the Conservation Achievement Tariff (CAT) program. OLIBA funds collected under the designated schedule rates are administered and delivered to qualifying residential customers through agreements established with Community Action Agencies (Agencies) that serve Oregon counties in Cascade's authorized service areas. The funds are distributed by Agencies in a manner similar to the Federal and State-sponsored Low Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

The Company also states that it continuously strives to provide its Agencies with an open and adaptable low-income program as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic remain widespread. To address potential impacts, Cascade proposes to add the following language to its OLIBA Tariff to increase its and the agencies that implement the program more flexibility to ascertain eligibility for low-income assistance:

*The Oregon Low-Income Bill Assistance Program (OLIBA) or agencies may separately choose to make eligible for assistance any household of which the account holder is a recipient of Temporary Assistance for Needy*

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<sup>1</sup> Filled Advice No. 020-06-01 page 2.

*Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), benefits under the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps), or other state or federal programs that meet the eligibility guidelines of OLIAP. Agencies will document enrollment into adjacent poverty programs in client files.<sup>2</sup>*

Conclusion

Staff supports Commission action to approve the Company's filing.

**PROPOSED COMMISSION MOTION:**

Approve Cascade's ADV 1140/Advice No. O20-06-01 to go into effect for service rendered on and after August 1, 2020.

Cascade ADV. 1140

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<sup>2</sup> Rule 32. Sheet 32.2. NO 4