



**Portland General Electric**  
121 SW Salmon Street · Portland, Ore. 97204

August 6, 2021

Public Utility Commission of Oregon  
Attn: Filing Center  
201 High Street, S.E.  
P.O. Box 1088  
Salem, OR 97308-1088

**RE: Advice No. 21-20, Schedule 307, Residential Bill Assistance Program  
Additional Funding**

Portland General Electric Company (PGE) submits this filing pursuant to Oregon Revised Statutes 757.205 and 757.210, and Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 860-022-0025, for filing proposed tariff sheets associated with Tariff P.U.C. No. 18, with a requested effective date of **September 8, 2021**:

First Revision of Sheet No. 307-1  
First Revision of Sheet No. 307-2  
Original Sheet No. 307-3

The Schedule 307 Residential Bill Assistance Program was implemented in Advice No. 21-01 consistent with Commission Order No. 20-401 in Docket No. UM 2114, Investigation into the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Utility Customers. The Order directed Utilities to establish a program to identify and manage residential customer arrearages associated with the COVID-19 pandemic to proactively assist residential customers prior to resuming disconnections and prevent bad debt accumulating on utility accounts.

This filing seeks Commission approval to add an additional amount of \$6 million in program funds to PGE's Schedule 307 Residential Bill Assistance Program. In addition, the filing seeks to direct this additional funding towards our Customer Assistance and Customer Reconnection Assistance programs.

All programs have been available for a limited time based on funding availability. PGE's current programs will be closed to new entrants once the current \$17.5 million in funding has been fully subscribed which we anticipate will occur at roughly the end of August to early September. PGE intends to close the matching programs to new entrants even if the Commission approves this filing, again directing the incremental funding to the programs noted above.

Customer Assistance is a one-time Company bill payment, up to \$500, to help Customers get current on their balance utilizing an instant grant. This assistance will be made available to Customers who are unable to get current without assistance. Reconnect Assistance is a one-time Company bill payment, up to \$500, to assist in reconnecting disconnected Customers. The Customer Assistance and Reconnect Assistance will run until assistance funds are depleted but in no event will continue past December 31, 2021.

Context for this Request:

The Commission recognized in its Order approving utility assistance programs that the initial funding level of 1% of Oregon retail revenues, or \$17.5 million for PGE, might need to be revisited in light of program status as well as the state of the economy and the pandemic. PGE's programs have been successful to date as we have helped approximately 30,000 customers including a disproportionate number of customers in targeted zip codes. It was appropriate that our programs initially focused on matching programs to incentivize payments, where possible, from customers as there was no threat of disconnection. As we move forward under the Commission's guidance and begin normal credit policies including disconnections, we believe that an emphasis on grant programs is now appropriate to best help customers stay connected or get reconnected quickly. Further, PGE will be fully subscribed just as some residential customers face the potential of disconnection in late August and beyond.

The request for additional funding here is intended to be timed to allow our programs to continue to operate, supplementing low-income assistance as well to provide additional time as we develop tools such as income differentiated rates pursuant to HB 2475 that will also help customer stay connected. Our initial forecast is that the \$6 million in additional funding will allow us to operate our program for an additional 2 to 3 months. This is an appropriate limited measure in light of uncertainties around the state of the pandemic, including the delta variant of COVID-19, as well as to provide additional time and support for low-income agencies to ramp their capabilities to provide the additional assistance funds those agencies have and will receive in the coming months.

To satisfy the requirements of OAR 860-022-0025, PGE responds as follows:

Schedule 307 does not increase, decrease, or otherwise change existing retail rates or have anything other than a de minimis impact on revenues.

Please direct questions to Mary Widman at (503) 464-8223. Please direct all formal correspondence and requests to the following email address [pge.opuc.filings@pgn.com](mailto:pge.opuc.filings@pgn.com)

Sincerely,

*\s\ Robert Macfarlane*

Robert Macfarlane  
Manager, Pricing and Tariffs

Enclosure

**SCHEDULE 307  
RESIDENTIAL BILL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this schedule is to implement the Residential Bill Assistance Program consistent with Commission Order No. 20-401. The Order directs Utilities to establish a program to identify and manage residential customer arrearages associated with the COVID-19 pandemic to proactively assist residential customers prior to resuming disconnections and prevent bad debt accumulating on utility accounts.

The program may identify and waive residential arrearages at an initial total amount of \$17,557,000. This amount represents one percent of the Company's 2019 Oregon retail revenues, not to be increased without prior Commission approval. The Company is seeking Commission approval to add an additional amount of \$6 million in program funds to continue offering the Customer Assistance and Reconnect Assistance programs described below.

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**AVAILABLE**

In all territory served by the Company.

**APPLICABLE**

This program is only available to Residential Customers.

**ELIGIBILITY**

The PGE Bill Assistance Program will be eligible to Residential Customers at least 31 days in arrears.

**ENROLLMENT**

Eligible Residential Customers may enroll in a bill assistance plan by calling PGE Customer Service, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at 503-228-6322 or 800-542-8818 for selected programs.

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**BILL ASSISTANCE OPTIONS**

Several options are available to assist Residential Customers manage bills regardless of account status. The program's intent is to help customers catch up on past due balances or get reconnected if they've been disconnected for non-payment. Programs are designed to match Customer payments anywhere from a one-time match up to a match for 12-months as well as provide one-time assistance for those unable to make a payment. The maximum amount of bill assistance per Customer is \$1,000 for all programs combined, including Customer Assistance. All programs will be available for a limited time based on funding availability. Programs are outlined below:

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**SCHEDULE 307 (Continued)**

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BILL ASSISTANCE OPTIONS (Continued)

1. 50/50 Plan – One-time Company bill payment to match Customer payment of an equal amount. To qualify, the Customer must be at least 31 days past due on payments. The Company match will not leave a credit on the Customer account. This program will be closed to new entrants after the initial \$17.5 million in funding is fully subscribed. (C)  
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2. Payment Match –Three-month Company bill payment plan to match Customer payments of equal amounts. To qualify, the Customer must be at least 31 days past due on payments. Matching stops after three months or when total account balance reaches \$0. This program will be closed to new entrants after the initial \$17.5 million in funding is fully subscribed. (C)  
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3. Extended Match Program – Company bill payment plan to match Customer payments for up to 12 months. Customer must enroll in a Time Payment Arrangement (TPA) plan, up to 24-months, to match payments up to the first 12 months of a TPA. To qualify, the Customer must be at least 31 days past due on payments. Matching stops after 12 months, when total account balance reaches \$0 or if the Customer is disconnected. This program will be closed to new entrants after the initial \$17.5 million in funding is fully subscribed. (C)  
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4. Customer Assistance – One-time Company bill payment, up to \$500, to help Customers get current on their balance utilizing an instant grant. This assistance will be made available to Customers who are unable to get current without assistance. This assistance will also cover any remaining Customer balance after receiving energy assistance, up to \$500. Customer Assistance funds will not leave a credit on the account. This program will run until assistance funds are depleted but in no event will continue past December 31, 2021. (T)  
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5. Reconnect Assistance – One-time Company bill payment, up to \$500, to assist in reconnecting disconnected Customers. This program will run until assistance funds are depleted but in no event will continue past December 31, 2021. Company will also offer enrollment in TPA plan up to one year. Customers that used one of the other options previously are eligible. (C)  
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**SCHEDULE 307 (Concluded)**

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS**

1. The Company will defer and seek recovery of all associated program costs not otherwise included in rates in accordance of Commission Order No. 20-376. The additional \$6 million in funding is also subject to deferred accounting and will be added to the balance of COVID-related deferred costs.
2. Additional programs or adjustments to the programs listed above may occur as we develop experience in operating these programs, upon Commission approval.
3. In addition to the reporting requirements outlined in Commission Order No. 20-401, the Company will provide quarterly reporting on the amount of assistance that has been provided and the number of customers enrolled by program, including cost to operate the program. Additional reporting may be provided as determined by the Commission.

**TERM**

The duration of this program is through December 31, 2021, until the Company reaches the spending limit, or until the Commission closes the program, whichever comes first.

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