

CASE: UE 426
WITNESS: MELISSA NOTTINGHAM

**PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
OF
OREGON**

STAFF EXHIBIT 1800

**Supplemental Opening Testimony
Incremental Public Comments
Received by the Commission**

April 15, 2024

1 **Please state your name, occupation, and business address.**

2 A. My name is Melissa Nottingham. I am the Consumer Services and Please
3 spell out Matt (RSPF) Manager. My business address is 201 High Street SE,
4 Suite 100, Salem, Oregon 97301.

5 **Q. Please describe your educational background and work experience.**

6 A. My witness qualifications statement is found in Exhibit Staff/401.

7 **Q. What is the purpose of your testimony?**

8 A. Consistent with the Commission's Internal Operating Guidelines as addressed
9 in Order 20-065 in Docket No. UM 2055, public comments received by the
10 Commission are now made part of the Staff's Opening Testimony in a General
11 Rate Case (GRC). The first round of public comments was included in Staff
12 Opening Testimony Exhibit/Nottingham 402.

13 To purpose of this testimony is to include supplemental public comments
14 since opening testimony as shown in Exhibit Staff/1801. Exhibit Staff/1801 also
15 includes both the transcripts from the virtual Public Comment Hearing on March
16 14, 2024, and the Public Comment Hearing in Ontario, Oregon on March 20,
17 2024. Staff are viewing comments and will address them as practicable in
18 Rebuttal Testimony.

19 Presenting comments at a Commission Informational Hearing or through
20 the Commission's website does not subject the commenting person to cross
21 examination. Any party, though, may respond to Staff's summary of the public
22 comments or the comments themselves in evidentiary testimony.

1 **1. Summary of Comments**

2 **Q. How are public comments obtained by Staff?**

3 A. Comments may be submitted via an online form, an email, a letter, or a
4 telephone call. All comments are submitted and published to the docket's
5 webpage and is available for review at any time. Please see: [Docket UE 426](#)
6 [IDAHO POWER REQUEST FOR A GENERAL RATE INCREASE](#).

7 **Q. Please summarize the supplemental public comments received after**
8 **opening testimony in this rate case.**

9 A. Idaho Power's request for general rate increase has received 28 additional
10 comments since opening testimony including comments from two Baker
11 County Commissioners.

12 All comments were opposed to the Idaho Power's proposed rate
13 increase. Residential customers are concerned about the impact of a 26% on
14 household budgets and the difficulty of to manage increasing energy costs with
15 other essential services. Irrigators expressed concern about the impact of
16 increasing electricity costs and the impact to their farms and the local
17 economy. County commissioners also expressed concern about the impact of
18 the rate increase on customers with fixed or limited incomes and the impact of
19 higher electric costs on a county owned and operated campground. Ten
20 commentors did not necessarily oppose a rate increase, but stated the
21 proposed increase was too high to manage.

22 **Q. What issues were raised during the Public Comment Hearings?**

23 A. During the March 14th, 2024, Public Comment Hearing, two comments were

1 provided with both focused on affordability and the impact on higher electric
2 bills on households struggling with limited incomes and existing arrearages.

3 Approximately, twenty members of the community attended the March 20,
4 2024, Public Comment Hearing in Ontario. The comments were primarily
5 focused on the impact of increasing rates on irrigators, and the subsequent
6 impact not only on the individual farmers but the local economy. Residential
7 customers clearly stated their inability to absorb higher electric bills on budgets
8 already stretched by increased prices.

9 **Q. Are any of these issues addressed in Staff's Opening Testimony?**

10 A. Yes. In Exhibit 300, Michelle Scala, Energy Justice Program Manager,
11 discusses the impact of rate increases on energy justice communities.

12 In Exhibit 1500, Dr. Bret Stevens, Ph.D. analyzes the Company's load
13 forecasting, class cost-of-service study, rate spread, rate design, and rate
14 base. As part of Dr. Steven's testimony, he will review rate design by revenue
15 class.

16 **Q. Does this conclude your testimony?**

17 A. Yes.

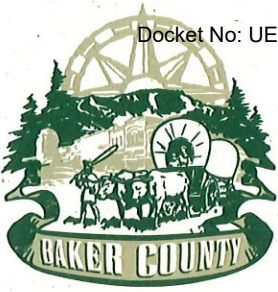
CASE: UE 426
WITNESS: MELISSA NOTTINGHAM

**PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
OF
OREGON**

STAFF EXHIBIT 1801

**Supplemental Opening Testimony
Incremental Public Comments
Received by the Commission**

April 15, 2024



Shane M. Alderson
Commission Chair
salderson@bakercountyor.gov

Christina Witham
Commissioner
cwitham@bakercountyor.gov

March 28, 2024

Bruce A. Nichols
Commissioner
bnichols@bakercountyor.gov

Oregon Public Utility Commission
Puc.publiccomments@puc.oregon.gov

Sent via Email

RE: Idaho Power Rate Increase

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the Idaho Power proposal for a general rate increase, specifically regarding its potential impact on our agricultural communities that rely on power for irrigation.

As you know, farms and ranches in Oregon and Idaho are already struggling with high inflation, regulation of both land and water, aging infrastructure, water storage and availability. While I understand that infrastructure investment in the Hells Canyon Dam complex and surrounding area requires capital, I implore the Oregon Public Utilities Commission and Idaho Power to consider the potential impact a dramatic rate increase could have on our constituents and your customers.

I urge you to take a thoughtful and measured approach to this proposal and to work towards a solution that is fair for all parties involved.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shane M. Alderson".

Shane Alderson,
Baker County Commissioner Chair



Natural Resources/Parks Office
1995 Third St.
Baker City, OR 97814
541-519-1719

April 2, 2024

Oregon Public Utility Commission
Attn: AHD-UE 426
PO Box 1088
Salem, OR 97308-1088

Baker County Parks does not support the rate increases proposed by Idaho Power.

Baker County owns and operates Hewitt and Holcomb Parks along the Powder River Arm of the Brownlee Reservoir. The campground consists of (60) RV sites that have electric and water hookups available to the campers. In addition, there are (3) restroom/shower facilities, a family home, (2) wells with pumps, a shop, and an office that all have electricity needs. The County takes pride in keeping our rates as low as possible to promote camping access to people of all income levels.

The proposed rate increases are astronomically too much, and should the increase be approved, the Parks will be harmed through increased costs leading to an increase in what we charge campers or relying on the County's General Fund to make up the difference. Neither of these options are workable.

Families are already having to reduce life needs and vacations due to inflation including fuel, restaurant, and grocery costs, simply camping and spending time enjoying the outdoors and making memories should not suffer the same cost increases.

Baker County Parks requests that the Oregon PUC denies the rate increases to Idaho Power.

Thank you,

Doni

Baker County Natural Resources/Parks Coordinator
dbruland@bakercountyor.gov

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Christina R. Witham", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Commissioner Christina Witham
Baker County Commission

Public Comments Received on the Commission's Website

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| Julie Spencer NYSSA | I call your attention to the Idaho Power proposed rate increase we received yesterday in our bill. This is ridiculous, and a real hardship to those of us on limited incomes in this poor area. Please see what you can do to stop this exorbitant request. I am writing also to all of my state and federal representatives. Idaho Power has a monopoly in this area, so we have no other source for our electricity. |
| Rick Meis HALFWAY | <p>Please accept this comment on the Idaho Power rate case UE 426.</p> <p>As an Idaho Power customer I wish to testify against Idaho Power's proposed nearly 27% rate increase for residential customers in Eastern Oregon. Baker County is not an affluent area, especially the Pine and Eagle valleys that Idaho Power serves.</p> <p>There are many people, including friends, who could see an increase of \$30 per month for their households. This significant increase could create difficult choices for many families who may not have an extra \$30 in their budget. And, as you all know, the costs of other basic needs have been rising substantially, like food and health care.</p> <p>I did call Idaho Power to ask some questions as the information they sent in the bill which was a very weak presentation with no real justification. I was instructed to go to the company website; which is no better for providing substantive information.</p> <p>I asked the woman I spoke with if the company could put another notice in the next bill that would actually draw attention to the fact that it is important customer information and not just another junk piece of filler in the envelope. They did not.</p> <p>A whole lot of people probably just threw the notice away since it appeared to be just another junk blow-in added to the bill. The first two neighbors I asked never saw it before they tossed it. That is a bad job on the part of Idaho Power.</p> <p>The cost of living is running pretty high right now. I do understand that a lot of it from poor decision-making in this time of an ever-worsening climate crisis.</p> <p>I might suggest that you add sidebars to any approved rate increases that utility companies must promote and educate on the reduction of consumption by consumers. An old friend and guest instructor at Montana State University worked for the Northwest Power Planning Council (now called the Northwest Power and Conservation Council). He got me involved in following the Councils' work.</p> <p>Continued on Next Page</p> |

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| | <p>At that time, power companies were actually talking about using less energy as the best way to make more power available. Even (some) politicians echoed that. Not anymore.</p> <p>That is a significant societal mistake that is costing us dearly at every level. Do note, as a former business owner who dealt with 'standards' like Energy Star, I know that most things rated Energy Star efficient are not all that efficient. It is a lowest common denominator rating system, like Green Star and Green Seal and so forth. We sure ought to be able to do better.</p> <p>The Oregon Public Utility Commissioners could use the widespread raft of rate increase proposals to again raise the issue of reduction of consumption as the best way to both save money and free up energy already in place for other increasing needs.</p> <p>Again, I oppose the Idaho Power rate increase at that overly large level. Thank you.</p> |
| Jacqueline Cuevas NYSSA | <p>We are already pay extra fees for this and that. Making more cost raises only makes those in low-income households struggle to pay and then what? You shut off service because they can't pay \$200 a month when they need to keep their family warm, and the price keeps increasing.</p> |
| D Bourasa VALE | <p>We allow them to do this then when is it going to stop. I have gone to the seminars and learned how to help with power usage. I have altered my farming practices to try and help with power usage with no benefits. Still pay the high rates. As a farmer and rancher in this day and age and the way the government is putting restrictions on farming and the cost of farming, is just another slap in the face. Vote no on this.</p> |
| Donna Carter HALFWAY | <p>I don't mind allowing IDP a realistic rate increase but a 26.76% is excessive. I could support a 5 or 6% increase.</p> |
| R Haidle ONTARIO | <p>Is this rate revision in anticipation of breaching the dams? If not, what is the anticipated revision after dams are breached?</p> |
| Michael Derrick ONTARIO | <p>I would like to say that I feel these rate hikes are beyond a reasonable increase rate. I have a property management business and I know many of our tenants are struggling due to the increased cost of everything. As for rent, we have increased rents but not close to the amount allowed by law as we see these hardworking tenants struggling to make ends meet.</p> <p>Our owners need a reasonable return on their investment and costs have increased but not at the rates Idaho Power is requesting. It seems that a 10% adjustment downward on the agricultural and residential customers would be sufficient. Continued on Next Page</p> |

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| | <p>The other groups should see about a 5% decrease in the rate increase. Thank you for your time</p> |
| <p>Jeffrey Hess NYSSA</p> | <p>I oppose any rate hikes for Idaho Power. The cost of electricity is already too high. We as consumers have no other options unless we go solar, which is an expensive upfront cost. Idaho Power should increase incentives for solar power and pay for the cheaper energy sources.</p> |
| <p>N/A ONTARIO</p> | <p>I am opposing to a 26.76% increase as a resident of Malheur County. I cannot afford a 26.76% increase to my monthly bill. I am struggling to make the necessary monthly payments currently. I am in support of a 5-10% increase for this year and then another increase next year of 5-10%.</p> <p>Increasing the monthly bill annually in smaller increments helps when I get a cost-of-living increase yearly to help offset the increase from Idaho power. If you increase it now by 26.76%, that will not give me any time to make the financial adjustments needed to help offset the increase.</p> |
| <p>Abby Apodaca ONTARIO</p> | <p>Please do not raise rates as consumers are already struggling to afford basic necessities.</p> |
| <p>Phil Wreden HALFWAY</p> | <p>It's not to say Idaho Power has cost increases to provide electricity to public and businesses but a 26% increase for residential senior customers on fixed income will add to our burden and our financial woes. It's just going to make it a challenge to stay reasonably comfortable during the winter months especially. Burn more wood, which costs more every year, and adds to pollution.</p> <p>For me personally, summer months are manageable with keeping my house closed up and then opening in the evening when temperatures drop. Then, again, if we are contending with forest fire smoke in summer, it'll be tough to open doors and windows, potentially adding to our financial burden by running fans and a/c (if available).</p> <p>If our yearly Social Security COLA increased with the general inflation, a small increase for power might be more easily managed, but that doesn't happen. My property taxes have increased from about \$600 2003 to over \$1200 in 2024 because of rising property values. Food costs keep going up. Now electric. Fixed income, not so much. Thank you for your consideration.</p> |
| <p>Ron Benton BEND</p> | <p>I'm a resident of Boise, Idaho, and I oppose the requested rate increases by Idaho Power to residential customers. The rate increase is well beyond the cost-of-living adjustments and even inflation over the last twenty-four months. I'm not opposed to a rate increase, but the nearly 27% ask is exorbitant.</p> |

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| D.A. Danser BAKER CITY | I simply wished to state that an almost 24% rate hike makes it very difficult indeed for those of us who live on Social Security income only, or in my case, a widows pension. I can go on and on whining, but that will do nothing. I simply prefer that you take into account those of us on a fixed income. We can't AFFORD that kind of increase! Do I eat, pay a bill, or refill a prescription? Thank you for your time, and the opportunity to comment. |
| Irene Gilbert LA GRANDE | I submitted a comment letter regarding this rate increase earlier and am submitting a second one today. This format does not work for me. I am requesting that the previous comments be incorporated into your comment page regarding the request for Idaho Power to receive a rate increase that exceeds FERC 1000 requirements. There is no legitimate reason provided in their application that justifies charging their Oregon customers more for the same services as those living in Idaho. My letters provide multiple details that document my concerns which do not work with this form. |
| Veronica Routtu ONTARIO | Already only using and heating 2 rooms in winter, (one at a time) bought motion sensor LED lights for several rooms to minimize electric use, flipped the switch on the fuse box for the furnace to off. During summer I roast because I cannot afford to run the air conditioner anymore. Continuing to look into other options to use the least amount of electricity possible! |
| N/A | This is not right – some families are barely making it! And I am guessing we have no right in voting on this as customers – correct? We just gonna keep paying until we can't afford utilities? |
| Kacia Fletcher | <p>I am emailing to strongly discourage a rate increase from Idaho Power. I understand that everything is going up, and this can mean increases for a company as well. However, unless the company is in dire need of rate-increase please consider not implementing this increase. As a middle-class American with a family, I am struggling to make ends meet.</p> <p>Prior to COVID, we lived mostly comfortably with the ability to save, and I made less than I currently do. However, with inflation, food cost, increase in taxes and house insurance and multiple companies raising their rates, we are stretching every penny. Our electric bill is already incredibly high, close to \$150-200 per month. We do everything we can to conserve energy, but it is still high. Thank you for taking the time to consider my opinion.</p> |

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| Alli Key | <p>To whom it may concern, I am strongly opposed to the proposed rate hikes slated for this fall and urge the Oregon Public Utility Commission to not accept the proposal made by Idaho Power. I'm sure Idaho Power is no stranger to rising costs. However, so is its entire customer base.</p> <p>This is no small hike in rates. Asking families to pay an extra 26% would harm many families that are barely making ends meet or push families that are scraping by closer to the poverty line. In the 2008 economic crisis, I had to watch my parents choose between paying the electric bill or paying the gas bill. I know there are many families in this historically high inflation economy that are facing the same choices every month.</p> <p>This increase would also put pressure not only on many businesses across our counties but especially harm small businesses trying to stay afloat in our current economic climate. Businesses will then have to pass this higher operation cost onto the consumer. Consumers will be forced to either pay the higher price or find cheaper alternatives. Either choice harms business or the strength of consumer buying power.</p> <p>Again I urge the OPUC to turn down the rate increase proposal. Thanks you.</p> |
| N/A | <p>With Idaho Power proposing a rate increase, they will be the highest profiting Power Utility in Oregon. Further, the citizens of Idaho make up the largest increase in new customers and yet Idaho Power had a 9% increase in Idaho. It is my position that Idaho Power receives a price increase of 16%. This should provide Idaho Power ample increase to cover the increased costs while providing excellent service to Oregon residents.</p> |
| N/A ONTARIO | <p>I would like to comment on the rate increase for Idaho Power customers. I would like to say I disapprove of the increase due to the hardship it will cause me and my family. I work a full-time job live check to check.</p> <p>I have 3 grandchildren which we need power for heat, water source, entertainment, business and schoolwork. I believe the rate is already why about the standard of living for our area. I see solar panels and wind machines all over and wonder when the power cost is going to go down since we're a nation of saving power. Those are my thoughts on a personal level.</p> <p>On a service provider to the community at larger I know some of our clients who are struggling to keep their power on, that's where we come in and assist. Some of those clients need for medical purposes and/or they have small children who rely on power for a normal life. Continued on Next Page.</p> |

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| | <p>We should not be putting an unburden stress on people over profits. Human life must live on, and we are all God's children, and the power of money is the devil. Please do take in consideration my comment on this matter, PLEASE.</p> |
| Stephanie Sesker ONTARIO | I oppose |
| Angie Martinez NYSSA | <p>They're making it hard for people to even afford to live in this economy. They raised it enough; it should not be raised more. My bill went up tremendously.</p> |
| Roger Findley ONTARIO | <p>I am a 3rd generation farmer from Ontario, Oregon. My Grandad and Dad came here from the dust bowl in SE Colorado in 1937, looking for a new start. They homesteaded the farm I am currently farming.</p> <p>The farm consists of 93 acres of irrigated land from the Owyhee Project and 270 acres above the canal irrigated by deep wells. One well has a 100 hp electric motor, the other a 200 hp electric motor. The total electric bill for the 200 hp motor in 2023 was \$24,462 which equals \$153 per acre. The Owyhee project land was \$75 per acre.</p> <p>In 2019, the total electric bill for the 200 hp motor was almost \$32,000. To help mitigate Power rate increases in the past I have installed solar (14kW in 2010), installed a variable speed drive on the motor (2013), and put in more solar (2014). In 2019 (with the \$32,000 total bill) I decided to expand the 2010 solar array from 14kW to 50kW. Thats what dropped my 2023 total bill down to \$24,462.</p> <p>With IP's proposed rate increase for irrigators (35%) I will need to mitigate again but I can't with solar as IP wants to do away with net metering on any expansion of existing solar. They are proposing a new rate schedule to replace net metering which is not beneficial to me.</p> <p>I am between a rock and a hard place. I would like to keep the farm intact for the next generation as it is an economic unit, but with the extremely high-rate increase, I don't know if that will be possible. I checked wheat prices today and it is down 20% from last year. Corn prices are down 25% from last year. Alfalfa hay prices are less than half what they were last year. Meanwhile fuel, fertilizer, chemicals, repairs, new equipment, and labor are all up 15 to 20 percent over last year. I could be facing a crossroads of keeping the farm if this huge rate increase is granted.</p> |

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| <p>Clayton Crowhurst ONTARIO</p> | <p>As an owner and operator of an affordable housing property in Ontario our organization, Northwest Housing Alternatives, vehemently opposes the proposed rate increase by Idaho Power. Not only will this rate increase mean increased operating costs for our property, diverting funds away from tenant supports and services, but will also have a disparate impact on the low-income families that live at our property and across the region.</p> <p>Due to inflation, below average wage increases, and other regional economic factors many low-income families already struggle to just pay for the bare essentials of their lives. This rate increase is done with no regard to these families and will force many more Oregonians into a position of default and collections with an investor-owned utility that has historically shown little to no regard for their lower income customers.</p> <p>Idaho Power has also worked to tamp down on customer solar generation while reducing the amount that they are willing to pay for customer generated power. Coupled with this rate increase it is clear that this rate increase is not about raising revenue for transmission infrastructure improvements. It is being initiated to extract as much capital out of Eastern Oregon as possible and redistribute it to shareholders and executives.</p> <p>Please do not allow this rate increase and hold Idaho Power accountable in delivering power at accessible rates to the customers who are forced to access their services.</p> |
| <p>Steven R. Lewis Frances R. Lewis</p> | <p>As both a residential customer and also an irrigator, these proposed rate increases are outrageous and a financial disaster. How can people be expected to absorb rate increases of 35.67% into their budgets. This is a giant inflation creator. Irrigators will have no choice but to pass along these increases for their crops and food production.</p> <p>As a residential customer and a fixed income retiree, how are we expected to live with a 26.76% increase? Idaho Power thinks by offering discounts for low-income people, that solves the problem. It does not!</p> <p>If you don't qualify, then what? Telling us there are discounts is just an insult! Why aren't the increases following the inflation rate?</p> |
| <p>Chris Kathriner ONTARIO</p> | <p>Idaho Power rates are already too high. Now they want more. When does it end? Since 2003, I have seen my power rate double.</p> <p>Consumers, Farmers, Residents cannot continue to pay for Idaho Power to increase its profits.</p> |
| <p>Bethany Flerchinger</p> | <p>To Whom it May Concern, I am currently an Idaho Power customer and very concerned about the rate increase that has been proposed in rural Oregon. I am a small farmer and have been</p> |

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| | <p>fortunate enough to make small upgrades around our property to improve productivity. With this came an upgrade to our irrigation system several years ago. We installed wheel lines where there was originally gated pipe, and this has increased our hay production by an extra cutting and enough regrowth for grazing in the fall and winter. This upgrade alone has paid for itself.</p> <p>However, if there is a rate increase of 35% for irrigation customers the upgrade will no longer make sense for our operation. I think this would be the case for many farmers in our area. With the amount of pivots being put in, I can understand the need to upgrade the power system in our area, but with a fee increase of a third of what we are already paying, many people may rethink this.</p> <p>Budgets are already tight, and margins close in farming and to implement a rate increase this substantial would be detrimental to our bottom dollar as well. Eastern Oregon is a farming area where families rely on the farms and ranches for supporting their families and their livelihood. Increasing power costs will not only affect our irrigating costs, but our homes as well.</p> <p>There is also a proposed rate hike for residential use, commercial use, large power customers, and small power customers. This means that not only will we be paying 35% more for our own irrigation use, but also the trickle-down effect of all of the inputs that we use on our farms and ranches.</p> <p>Unfortunately for the farmers and ranchers we do not control the prices we get for our commodities and are left to "take it in the shorts" when input costs increase and our commodity prices don't or even go down. Please take into consideration the people who are paying for electricity and effects this will have on our community where people already have a hard time paying their bills.</p> <p>According to numerous statistics, including the Oregon Health Authority, Malheur County is the poorest county in Oregon with nearly 26% of it's population at or below federal poverty level. A residential rate increase of 26.76% would be detrimental to Malheur county residence off the farm as well.</p> <p>These considerations need to be taken into account before any rate increase in implemented. Thank you for your time and I would appreciate these points, as well as many other valid points, being taken into consideration before electricity rate hikes are implemented in our area.</p> |
| <p>Kathy Clarich VALE</p> | <p>I am in opposition of Idaho Power rate increase. My husband and I own approx. 80 acres which we just put pivots on to conserve water as we quite often are in drought. Running the pivot for 36 hours was over \$300 in electricity and with the 35% increase it would be over</p> |

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| | <p>\$400 and that is just for 1 1/2 days for 35 acres when the weather is in the hundreds then the water is on every-day. This really puts a burden on us small farmers to try and even break even with all the other costs for crops.</p> <p>I believe that if they need money to build the transmission line from Hemenway then all Idaho power customers should pay equally. We were told at the meetings that the transmission line is to sell power to California, so Idaho Power should not increase our rates to build that line. This is not the time to raise the rates on the Oregon customers. Please help the rural Oregonians and not grant this rate increase.</p> |
| Irene Gilbert La Grande | <p>I submitted verbal comments on this rate revision docket at the public hearing in Ontario. I then submitted written comments on Mar. 26 for this docket. On April 2, I asked why my comments did not appear to be on the docket for this rate case.</p> <p>On April 3, Ellie Knoll asked for confirmation that my comments were on the docket. I have received nothing. <u>I want to assure that my comments are on the public record as I want standing during hearings regarding this rate increase.</u></p> <p>I represented the public interest in the B2H Transmission line. and based upon my longstanding work in representing the public in energy matters continue to do so.</p> <p>In this proceeding I also represent myself since I am directly impacted by rate increases for Idaho Power. These increases will increase the costs of goods and services I use on a daily basis which use energy from Idaho Power to produce and grow them. In addition, my costs of energy will increase due to the fact that my utility will have increased costs to provide energy moved along transmission lines who will pay increased rates due to rate increases provided to this company.</p> <p>The cost for my utility to purchase energy on the open market when necessary, will increase due to Idaho Power being able to pay higher rates for the energy they purchase and sell on the wholesale market due to their increased profit margins and increase in total revenue available to them.</p> |
| Irene Gilbert La Grande | <p>I submitted verbal comments on this rate revision docket at the public hearing in Ontario. I then submitted written comments on Mar. 26 for this docket. On April 2, I asked why my comments did not appear to be on the docket for this rate case.</p> <p>On April 3, Ellie Knoll asked for confirmation that my comments were on the docket. I have received nothing. <u>I want to assure that my comments are on the public record as I want standing during hearings regarding this rate increase.</u></p> |

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| Irene Gilbert La Grande | <p>I just reviewed the CUB comments.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is clear that there needs to be a change in a system that reinforces utilities for construction of new development rather than encouraging them to maintain and upgrade existing facilities. A review of the amount of new construction being proposed compared to the proposals to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure makes it clear that there is no real interest in the latter and there is no financial incentive to focus on this option. 2. Low-income customers of this utility are those least able to participate in Oregon programs which provide credits and incentives for weatherization, installing energy efficient heating, changing out light fixtures for more efficient light sources, purchasing energy efficient appliances, insulation, installation of rooftop solar, etc. They lack resources to pay for whatever homeowner or renter payments are required so the disparity between the financially disadvantaged and the rest of the state will continue to increase. They are also the ones who are most significantly impacted by the rate increase proposed. 3. In addition, Idaho Power has transferred their financial risk to their customers. They have told the Energy Facility Siting Council that the Oregon PUC will require their customers pay the costs of site restoration should Idaho Power fail to do so due to bankruptcy, wildfire, or other unforeseen events. Because of this, the Site Certificate requires only a \$1.00 bond to pay for restoration in the event that Idaho Power fails to do so. Idaho Power is claiming that they currently have a financial need that requires a revenue increase beyond the ability of many of their customers to assume. |

Continue: At the same time, they have inserted additional risk to their customers related to the B2H construction by arguing successfully to not include Mitigation for impacts to Federally Protected Threatened and Endangered Species, successfully arguing against having the site certificate require that they comply with state Invasive Weed laws. Noise laws or the Forest Practices Act, as well as assuming Bonneville Power's financial commitment to the project. These risks have been magnified by their insistence that agencies responsible for monitoring their actions and decisions ignore the risk that **PaciCorp** is adding due to the projected billions of dollars of damage claims against them, their poor record for maintaining their equipment, their huge and increasing dept load, etc. These kinds of actions increase the future financial risk to **Idaho Power's** customers. Placing the burden of future costs of not addressing these issues in the site certificate on their customers compounded with the current unreasonable rate increases are simply unsustainable.

Public Comment Hearing

March 14, 2024

6:00 pm

Virtual

Public Comments Received:

1. JULIE: Hi. So, as far as how their expenses go, what is the breakdown of that, what they are spending on? Because it -- it only says percentage, but it doesn't give a clear breakdown. With an increase like 20% over, the public should be able to see that, and also factor in the fact that the income guideline would have to reflect the increase, too. I hope that makes sense. (inaudible - audio cuts out). And as far as guideline -- like income guideline, like for me example, I don't even qualify for the -- what, the 45,000 that is like at the lowest amount. And what I would like to see, if this was to pass, would -- would the income guideline be revised to factor in the increase in utilities? Okay. Thank you for listening to my question.¹
2. BALBINA: Thank you. I -- my name is Balbina. I work with the Community in Action with the Energy Assistance Department. I have noticed -- or I do see many, you know, households with a fixed income with a really -- most of them have a really high past due balance, or they're just barely making it, and I just feel that with this increase it would just put them in a larger financial hardship. And I know there was a comment made about maybe the financial assistance or the discount percentage program that, you know, many might be able to qualify for, but I wonder if, you know, the rate increase will go up, you'll have a higher monthly payment or due -- due amount, but then with that increase, I don't know if it will just put them back where they were. Anyhow, I'm not sure, but I have noticed, you know, many clients or customers say, "I'm barely making it. I have a plan on how much money goes to where, and I just only have \$20 left for the month. So I just feel like they'll have a financial hardship with this increase.

¹ Consolidation of all comments by the speaker.

Public Comment Hearing

March 20, 2024

6:00 pm

Four Rivers Cultural Center

Ontario, Oregon

Public Comments Received:

1. SENATOR FINDLEY: Thank you. Chair Decker, I want to thank you for coming to Eastern Oregon. I -- it's truly a pleasure that you come and listen to us. This is a huge deal for Malheur County. Malheur County is the fourth county in Oregon, we're heavily dependent on agriculture for our well-being, and this rate increase is a significant impact to agriculture, 36%, 27% -- nearly 27% for residential. I want to encourage you to explore with the Community In Action and other public assist agencies that keep running out of money and paying power bills for low income people. We have a tremendous number of low income. Most of the cities exceed the low income threshold for poverty. (Inaudible) programs to pay these energy assistance run out of money on a regular basis, so I -- while I understand the need for a rate increase, they haven't done it in a long time, that's good, but I think we need to make sure that it's palatable for constituents or residents of Malheur County. I have received several emails and letters from my constituents that expressed a great concern: "How can I do this? How are we going to pay our bills?" Because they do not know. Irrigation -- the agriculture community and through the TMDL, the total maximum daily load of rivers and streams have pushed flood irrigation away to pump irrigation -- pressurized irrigation. So we've pushed irrigators into a more expensive model, and the fact that now to say "Okay, we made you buy all these pumps, we made you do all this improvements, now we're going to raise your rates." That's kind of a *(inaudible)*. So, I encourage you to look at that as we go through this. I think you're going to hear from some great folks on exactly what those impacts are. I think it was last fall -- early last fall when Idaho Power had -- there was a docket open on Idaho Power on their renewable energy support on how they would -- were walking away from some of their PURPA projects, from their renewable energy projects. That wasn't received as well as it could have been, and the fact that we keep -- as Oregon's renewable energy goals and targets are to move towards more renewable projects, it didn't seem that Idaho Power, through that process, was being that supportive of those projects in Oregon. I'd encourage you to look at that. I'm excited to hear about a *(inaudible)* battery storage system that they have in there. For the most part, Idaho Power has moved out of all services facilities in Malheur County. All the communities used to have Idaho Power offices *(inaudible)*, they no longer have them. Those are all located *(inaudible)*. So, and

Idaho Power has been a great partner. They've been a great community supporter. I don't want to let you think for a second that they're not, but they're not the same Idaho Power that was in every community and participated with stuff. I don't think that as you -- as you talk with some of our folks that Idaho Power embraces the renewable portfolio for Oregon as the House Bill 2021 requested. Just Monday, this week, I attended a meeting and listened to the Idaho Power folks talk about their wildfire mitigation issues, and -- and I was perplexed because they showed a map of polygons in Malheur County that were high fire danger. And I looked at that and I thought, hmm, wow, I spent 32 years in wildland fire, so I know a little bit about fire stuff. They were irrigated farm grounds. Said, "This is our high risk area." How can this be? How can -- how can irrigated farm ground be a high risk fire area? And if you're putting resources in to protect a crop of beets, sugar beets, I don't think you need to. So, I found that was kind of interesting that they were putting their stock in -- you know, were doing the wildfire mitigation stuff, but it doesn't -- there's no reality to it. I did not have an opportunity to push back on several of their comments because it wasn't the right time. But I do think if some of the rate increase is due to wildfire mitigation, I believe we should dig into that a little more because I do not think it's a valid concern. So, I appreciate you coming. I will provide comments for you, and I will try to give a summary of the constituents that have reported to me with their concerns. I was kind of hoping -- you know, I sent out a newsletter the other day to a whole lot of folks, and I thought there would be more people here. I was kind of disappointed they're not. It's a big deal when you come, it is certainly appreciated. Thank you so much.

2. ROGER FINDLEY: Good evening. I'm Roger Findley. I reside at 3535 Butte Drive in Ontario. Actually, if you draw a (inaudible) between (inaudible) and Ontario, then go to (inaudible) that's (inaudible). Some people asked if Senator Findley is my cousin. Yes, he's my (inaudible) cousin -- younger cousin, okay, much, much younger. (Laughing) And I like to -- when he does good things I like to say, "Well, yeah, I taught him all those things." When he does bad things, "I don't know where he learned this." So, anyway. So, I'm a third generation farmer. I farm on the same property that my grandfather and my dad (inaudible) sagebrush in 1937. They were victims of the dust bowl, and they came here from northwest -- northeast Colorado, and they lived their first year in a tent on the place, in the shepherd's tent. And they used sagebrush to keep warm, cook with, and so we've had the farm for -- well, in 13 more years we'll have a Century Farm, and that's our goal is to keep it in the family to get the Century designation. So, I'm a third generation farmer. I'm hoping that we get a fourth generation of Findleys coming on, but nobody seems to be too interested in that right now. So the farm consists of, (inaudible) 160 acres and a 93 acre water right from the (inaudible) Irrigation District. And then my dad, being the kind of person he was,

wasn't satisfied with just 93 acres, and so he developed the land above the canal, and we have two (inaudible) on that. So we irrigate about 250 acres more land above the canal, 93 acres below the canal, and we have two deep German pumps that pump water (inaudible), one's 100 horsepower, and the other one's a 200 horsepower motor. So, Idaho Power and I, you know, we've got a really great relationship. Idaho Power's been a great facility to work with. I just can't stand the rate increase. So, last year just on the one and 200 horsepower water pump, my power bill was \$24,462. So that amounts to, on the land it irrigates, and it irrigates 160 acres. It irrigates -- I mean, that amounts to \$153 an acre. Now, the (inaudible) water, which is just right across the canal from where I irrigate (inaudible), the water comes to about \$75 an acre. So, my water's twice as expensive as the irrigation water from the Owyhee Canal. Now, I know Idaho Power said that they have not had a rate increase since whatever (inaudible). That's not exactly true. I mean, they haven't had an official rating, (inaudible), that's true, but there's other ways of increasing the bill. Okay? And you all know that. And my bill continues to go up every year with new things coming on the bill. I wrote down -- so at first there's a (inaudible) charge, now for residential (inaudible) irrigation \$16. We used to have a charge for Boardman, (inaudible) that's gone away now. But we have one on (inaudible). PM -- P -- excuse me -- PN -- PCAM. I don't know what that stands for, but we're billed for it. We also have what's called an annual power cost update, and this year for irrigation that was about 1.7 cents a kilowatt hour. We are getting charged for energy efficiency. We're getting charged for solar, (inaudible) Oregon solar. So there's a number of different things (inaudible) if you see rate, but it increased the power bill. So I looked back on my records, and in 2019, my power bill was right at \$32,000 for that 160 acres. So, I did some things to lower my costs of irrigating. I put in a lot of solar, okay? Well, as a matter of fact I've been putting in solar since 2010. I knew for me to continue to irrigate, (inaudible) going up even back in 2010, I was going to have to do something to supplement my income. So, I wrote a (inaudible) grant with USDA and I put in my first 14 kilowatt solar. That was 2010. When my power bill got up to \$32,000 in 2019, I decided I needed (inaudible) put in some more solar, which I did. And so now I produce about 50 -- I've got 50 kilowatts solar that produces power two months of the year, (inaudible) irrigating, you know, five months out of the year, so seven months out of the year is going into the piggy bank for me, so those first couple months are about free. Now, I'd like to put in more solar because I'm going to have to do something if my rates go up 35%. I'm not sure how I'm going to be able to stay in business with those wells by the canal if I get a 35% increase in rates. So, I was thinking about, well, maybe it's time to invest in more solar, but Idaho Power also sent out a letter that said, "Well, we're changing the net (inaudible) with irrigators." And, you know,

they're grandfathering my existing solar in, but I can't increase the (inaudible) on that meter. All I can increase is 10%, but if I increase over 10% I go into a different schedule, and that (inaudible). And I haven't looked at the new schedule, but I can assure you it's not as good as (inaudible) because they wouldn't be (inaudible), right? They're not going to give me a better deal, they're going to give me a worse deal. And so I'm kind of caught between a rock and a hard place as far as what I'm going to do as far as irrigating goes. I know that you mentioned that our costs -- well, Idaho Power's costs are going up, but so are farmers' costs going up. We all know what fuel, fertilizer, repairs, new equipment have done over the last few years. I looked on the internet before I came in here tonight, wheat prices are down 20% in the last year, (inaudible) prices 25%, alfalfa's down over 50% from what it was last year. And I grow wheat, alfalfa, my renter grows a little bit of corn, and so it's a financial bind for us. I'm just not sure how we're going to be able to survive with the costs going up and Idaho Power going up. So, I would conclude by saying thank you very much for coming over. We know that it's a long way between here and Salem, Portland? Yeah. So, but the highway does go both ways. We appreciate you coming over, saving us a trip over, and it's been a long time since we've had the Oregon PUC here to grace us, so thank you very much.

3. PAUL STEIN: Paul Stein. 24871 (inaudible) Boulevard in (inaudible), Oregon. Been there 70 years. This is the Mountain Time Zone. But they -- one of these guys triggered something for me when they talked about the Idaho Power people being part of the community. And this good looking lady behind me, her husband is my oldest son, and the Idaho Power -- I don't know what you called it back then -- the district -- the district manager, I guess the (inaudible) manager -- anyhow, he was such a part of our community. He put the lights up and helped sponsor all that at the football field. He was a fabulous, fabulous coach, and he beat me more than I beat him, because he was a lot smarter than me. But he was such a big part of our community. Then they moved him to Ontario, and then to the district office in (inaudible). Five or six years ago he had moved down to Lehi, Utah, and they asked me to speak at his funeral. My point with this is, is they were part of the community. Back when he was here, I built my first onion storage, and I didn't have to fork out any money because they said, "We're going to let you work this off." That doesn't happen with my second, my third one, and my son's got huge storages. We've -- between my two sons and myself, we farm a lot of ground, and it's heavy row crop ground. I am also -- part of the reason that we don't have a lot of people here today is because all the farmers are out planting, and I jumped off a tractor because I thought this was important. I used to be the onion president for Malheur County, and so I'm speaking on behalf now of Cory Maag (phonetic) who took my place when I retired a couple years ago.

Our storages alone, plus all of our drip equipment -- so I have -- just me, myself, and I couldn't even tell you how many Cameron's got -- I have three pumps on the Snake River, and then I have nine that are filler stations that have to have the same horsepower as what we've got pumping out of the Snake River, and then the majority of our ground is all under irrigation districts, the old Owyhee and the Owyhee Irrigation District. It's confusing when you say both. And another thing that I'm really worried about, I have ten employees, one of them's a widow, one of them is -- I have another one that's a young widow, and you start throwing these increases out to residential people, it's a huge, huge hit to these people, especially, I'm gonna say, older people who are on a fixed income, and I think we need to really think about that now. I will tell you, I can't survive without Idaho Power. Let's just face it. I still have onions in the onion storage, and when it's 73 degrees outside it's going ca-ching, ca-ching, ca-ching, but I can't survive without them, and pumping our water. And I've known them to be wonderful people. So, I don't want in any way, shape, or form to have you think that we don't care about Idaho Power, because we do, and they are important to us, but as has been said, said (inaudible) county and all of Oregon, and I have two and a half miles of river frontage where I once sat over in Salem testifying, I have two and a half miles of river frontage where I'm only 800 feet away from a friendly agricultural state in Idaho, and I see Christie Brinkley -- now, none of you are old enough to know, she's 70 years old, and used to be a model -- and I turned around -- nobody would be old enough here on this one either -- I turned around and (inaudible) standing next to me. And they got it over there there's enough old guys. But I appreciate you being here and it's -- this is really important that we -- we take this very seriously. Thank you.

4. IRENE GILBERT: Chair Decker, and members of the council, my name's Irene Gilbert, I reside at 2310 Adams Avenue in La Grande, Oregon, and I represent myself as an individual and also the public interest when it comes to issues with energy. As an individual, I'm impacted because I own rentals, and some are to the lower income folks, so energy is a big concern to them. Also, I have some farmland, and we carry a contract on a sporting goods business, so when utilities go up, the person who has that contract is paying more for his energy, and that affects his bottom line, and his bottom line affects our bottom line because of him needing to succeed for -- we continue having that contract affected. As far as the public interest, I've been involved with EFSAT (phonetic) for over 10 years, actually about a dozen years. I was legal research analyst for Friends of the Grand Ronde Valley roughly 10 years ago. I also have -- I'm co-chair of (inaudible) which is a non-profit looking out for the concerns of citizens. And part of the reason for (inaudible) part of our mission is to make sure that--that property owners and citizens are treated fairly when it comes to energy. And what

-- what sort of prompted the beginning of our organization was the fact that there are an awful lot of people in Eastern Oregon who are not comfortable with dealing with bureaucracy, who do not have the experience dealing with them, who are intimidated by you folks. As it happens, I've worked in Salem for many years within the bureaucracy and dealing with rules and regulations, and what they mean and how they actually impact people. So -- so, as co-chair, I do what I can to read the fine print and figure out what it really means in terms of the impact on people. When I read over the application for Idaho Power, what I found was that there's a lack of information identifying what the actual costs are and impacts to people within Oregon. They used a lot of data for their full customer base, which is over 600,000 people, but only about 20,000 of them reside in Malheur and Baker County, which is where you folks are -- are looking at the rate structure. I also found that in Idaho there's -- 600,000 people are being asked to assume -- I guess the final approval was like 5.9 million dollars of costs during this rate evaluation. It amounted to something under \$100 per person of (inaudible) costs. They're asking for 10 point whatever -- two million from the 20,000 Oregon customers, and that amounts to them assuming over \$500 each in the assumed cost of this -- this rate. And one thing that I'm very concerned with is the (inaudible) ruling says that -- that benefits are going to dictate basically what the expenses are to customers of utilities, and so I don't see in the application where Idaho Power has identified what are the benefits that are going to come to the Oregon people that are justifying the amount of increase that they're asking for. A lot of information (inaudible) a lot of information about their total costs. They talk about things like a 23% increase in their customer base, and in Oregon in Malheur and Baker Counties the -- actually, the population has gone down in the last couple of years. And so saying that a 23 increase in their customers is requiring this increase in rates doesn't -- doesn't cut mustard. The other thing about Oregon is -- and I'm sure you guys are aware of this -- the actual per customer use of this energy in Oregon has gone down. So, in the past, an increase in customers has not resulted in increasing energy use because of the reduction in -- in our effective use of (inaudible) energy and locally generated energy. And one of the people mentioned the fact that Idaho Power is not a supporter of locally generated energy, and I think you'd find that the bulk of our people that we represent, there's about 1,000 individuals and five nonprofits, they're a part of the (inaudible) nonprofit, and, um... I've lost my train of thought. I'm sorry. Anyway, we are not anti-energy. We recognize there's a need for energy. What we do believe is that for utilities to be justifying the cost of new developments, they need to be supporting in a very aggressive way locally generated energy. They need to be supporting (inaudible), they need to be supporting battery storage, and they've actually received a reduction in the

amount their paying customers who are putting together locally generated solar energy. Now, I -- don't quote me on this, because it's been awhile since I read the information, but at one point I read that in Idaho the -- fully a quarter of the energy needs in the state could be dealt with by aggressive use of rooftop solar. So, now you have people who are saying, "We can't afford to put it in because the rates are so low," and yet they're asking for new developments -- expensive developments (inaudible) infrastructure that are going to support having them be the sole source for energy that should be getting generated locally. So that's a concern. As far as wildfire costs go, most of my knowledge is based on a lot of study about the transmission infrastructures at Boardman-Hemingway. And interesting that someone said that they're saying that beet fields are now a high risk -- a wildfire risk, because in the Boardman to Hemingway transmission line, they found that there were no high risk areas during the entire route of the transmission line going through Oregon, and there are only two areas that they called yellow or, you know, sort of high wildfire risk. So, how they can say that this money for wildfire mitigation is going to be benefitting the people in Malheur and Baker County is kind of confusing to me. And so I really feel that this whole application -- Idaho Power needs to really tell you folks what is it that they're providing to these Oregon customers that's justifying the amount of money that they're asking for. Not what they're saying it costs for (inaudible), because if they're looking at an average, then Oregon customers right now are being asked, according to their request, to fund roughly just under 20% of their total stated increased value in the information that they provided. There's -- Oregon customers are only like 3.2 of their total customer base, that doesn't pan out in terms of what FERC requirements are, or equitable treatment of people just because they live in Oregon compared to those that live in Idaho. Let's see. I'm (inaudible) here. Anyway, we shouldn't be subsidizing -- subsidizing Idaho customers by Oregon. Okay. Another thing that I'm just kind of noting here -- I did provide two sets of fairly extensive written comments to you folks, so I hope you read that because there is a lot of detail in there that obviously I'm not going to be sharing right now. But one of the things in the budget that just irks many of us is that Idaho Power is saying they should be receiving a 10.4% annual -- annual return on investment for the equity, and a 7.8% return on their capital. Well, the people here are not receiving 10.8% (inaudible) or benefit from their farming operations. They're not receiving 7.8% annual return on anything that I'm aware of that is -- is being done in this area. And so to be equitable it seems to me that any (inaudible) for this company should be consistent with the rate of return that the customers in Oregon are getting on their own investments. And Idaho Power's touted oftentimes that for the last dozen years, (inaudible) stockholders have received (inaudible) their distribution of benefits. Now, they're projecting

that that increase will -- that will continue to happen, that they will continue to be operating their stock (inaudible) more return on their investment. How can they do that when these people who are going to be paying larger utility bills, those bills are coming right off the top of their costs. I mean, I've done farming, when you lose money, you're not losing it down the line, you're losing it right off the top of your net income, and so every dollar that they take is taking a dollar directly out of the profits of these people that are here concerned about this rate increase. Another -- another thing that kind of strikes me is -- and again, looking at the kinds of information that they provide to different agencies through different processes is not the same. Idaho Power has told the Energy Facility Siting Council that they are so financially stable that they should not have to carry a bond in case they were to default on restoring the site of the transmission line because there is no possibility of them having a financial problem due to wildfire, or, you know, other -- any kind of financial problem. At the same time, they're sending you folks an application that says they have all these risks that are happening. They're paying more interest. They're paying -- you know, their credit rating's gone down. They can't access funds. (inaudible). I mean, you read the same thing that I did. So, either they are so financially stable that they don't even have to have a bond to protect these Oregon citizens from having to restore a facility that they built, or they really are close to bankruptcy or -- or going to be if you folks don't give them a bunch of money. Doesn't make sense. I just -- I just covered that. I'm trying to do that. I think I did most of this. Oh, another thing that concerned me is Idaho Power compared their need for increased rates with PacifiCorp and Pacific Power rather than comparing their need for -- for income with Idaho Power in Idaho. Why they would be using energy companies that are - have a way different kind of customer base and area of influence, and everything about them is different than Idaho Power. And Idaho Power has a perfect group to compare with and that is their own customers in Idaho who just received, what, a 5.4% increase in their rate? There's -- there's more information in my written material. I hope you take careful note of it and know that I am here representing the public interest, I'm here representing myself as an individual, and I've done a whole lot of research. I spent a lot of time drafting this. I'm motivated by assuring that people are ethical in their dealing with the citizens, and that they're fair. And I haven't felt that oftentimes Idaho Power has been -- has met that maybe high standard that I set for myself in dealing with people.

5. KENNETH JANSEN: Good evening. I'm Kenneth Jansen. I live at 2436 11th Avenue East in Vale, Oregon. I'm a farmer, been doing it for the last 30 some years. I'm also a board member of the Oregon Irrigation Members Association, which got together back in 2011 to -- on the last rate increase, and it looks like we need to get fired up to deal with this one here as well. I farm with my wife. We

farm 1,000 acres, almost all deep well, we have over 700 horsepower, so I'm not going to give you the dollar amounts, you can just do (inaudible) math and you can multiply it by quite a bit. The 37% -- 36% rate increase in irrigation went way above the other large power I saw was under 10%. I don't quite understand why the big guys get a small rate increase, it should be all flat. I'm not going to say that I need less than the residential, I think it should be more flat. I know some of the data Idaho Power's used in the past shows that irrigators were the bad expensive people. I also want to make sure for the engineers and mathematicians who are looking at their data, they should not just use the year 2023 for the data analysis because that was a very wet year. We got three inch rain events that we've never seen. We irrigated two-thirds/three-fourths of what we normally do because that was a wet year, got a lot of rain in the summer, monsoons you guys all know what happened last year. So, that would make us not use so much power, so we look more like we're a bad person, with costs more expensive to service us. Go back, look at several years, take '22, take '21 that were dryer years, more average years. So, if you're trying to pinpoint why we're the bad guys and why we get 37%, it's going to be very difficult for us. You know, why, as an irrigator, just across the Snake River do I, in Oregon, have to pay way more per kilowatt-hour than the Idaho farmers do? I mean, we're at a disadvantage already because of the regulations that Oregon has, and this is going to make it even worse. So I'll be short, and thank you for your time, and please don't give us a 37% rate increase, or we're going to be looking for another occupation. Also, I do have a whole bunch of solar on my farm, and I know there's a solar docket, and (inaudible) put solar in, as Roger said, it's going to go way down with the new rules you guys are also dealing with. The letter I got, it was kind of interesting, they were going to grandfather everything after a date that you could not -- they didn't give us advanced notice of this date, because there's a lot of us that would like to put more solar in, but all of a sudden, no, the date happened last week. "Sorry, you're gonna get the new rules which are only half as good as the -- or less than half as good as the old rules were." So, that would kind of be punishing. And also, one other quick detail, they did not state what they're doing with the Oregon solar program. I took quite a bit of the Oregon solar program that came in 10/12 years ago, it doesn't appear that I'm going to get grandfathered in when those expire in three to four years, and I'd sure like to be grandfathered in under the old rules, because I'm going to get thrown out of the system and have to reapply for a new system in three/four years when those expire, and I would sure like to get those systems grandfathered that we went through the -- the pioneer years like Roger did. So, anyway, thank you very much.

6. BALBINA TORRES: My name is Balbina Torres and I live here in Ontario. I'm also a customer for Idaho Power. And I work with Community in Action, we did an energy assistance department (inaudible) program, and I -- and we have a really good communication, really good relationship with Idaho Power as well, they've been a lot of help. But regarding the residential increase, you know, speaking for myself, for my family, you know, we have a lot of seasonal workers in the area, which was mentioned earlier, which means a lot of the certain time of the period of the year they have no income at all. So, I know this increase will affect them, you know, a lot as well. And I know my mom, you know, she's a seasonal worker and she tries to save up for whenever she doesn't have income, and with this increase, you know, it will make a big dent on her finance. Then I also, with like the energy assistance (inaudible) program, you know, we've seen many large bills, and sometimes a standard payment, it may cover like the past due amount they have, but there's times when they have a really high past due, and just the standard payment alone sometimes can't cover an amount needed to reconnect services. So, you know, or -- and I was just thinking, you know, I know everything has to go up sometime, but maybe that \$30 -- or 27% increase all at once may be too high all at once. I don't know, you know, maybe a plan on doing that increase just a little slower, not all at once. Well, thank you so much for your time.
7. NANCY HAIDLE: I'm Nancy Haidle. My husband Ron Haidle, too, he's not able to be here, so I'm speaking for the both of us, Ron and Nancy Haidle in 488 Northwest 12th Street, Ontario. And I'm -- we're just residential customers. You know, we could say we're on a limited income because we're retired, but everybody in this room is on a limited income, and everybody in this room is from this county and they don't really spend more than they get in. We're kind of different than what goes on in Salem and in the government, I feel, because we don't have a balanced budget a lot of the time. So, anyway, you know what, it says that our rates will go up 23% as residential, and you look at the agriculture rates going up as 36%, that means our food goes up, too, right? I mean, we -- we have to say, it's not just 23% for our residential bill for power, but food is going up too, and farmers are going to go out of business. That's not just a maybe, that's a for sure. I grew up on a farm and I know how it works. And I just was thinking even today they had a (inaudible) which is a local store, the beans that I bought (inaudible) green beans and corn I bought last year for 69 cents a can were \$1.29 (inaudible) one year later almost doubled. And it's going to get worse if we have less food. And so I -- I just wanted to go on record to say that I think -- I agree that if -- that it's too high, and that if there are incremental -- that incremental increases it would work a lot better, and people could maybe somehow be more prepared, at least be aware. I appreciate you all coming over

to our side of the state, we really do appreciate your travel here. And I know there's others in the room here that are -- are all against the increase, but maybe aren't up here saying something, but they are interested. And thank you for coming.

8. DEB POWELL: Okay. Hi. My name is Deb Powell, I live at 237 Northwest 8th Street here in Ontario. I moved here seven years ago. Born in Nessa, lived my life pretty much in this area until I was probably in fifth grade, left, came back. I'm on fixed income, and (inaudible) everybody's on a fixed income, we all are on a fixed income. You're on fixed income. Every one of us are on fixed income. And ever since COVID hit we got \$30 here, \$20 here, \$20 there, \$50 there, \$60 there. So pretty soon our \$200 that we have left at the end of the month to live on -- to live on, to put food in our belly, to give our grandkids a little present once in a while, you're taking that away from common people. Just common people. Thirty dollars to me is a big frickin' deal. Thirty dollars is a lot of money to me. They just raised my mortgage because the property tax goes up, 60 bucks. I can't live like that. And then I go to Community Action. God bless you, and god bless whoever supports that system, because I don't know what I would do without them. For three years I've lived -- they've helped me through everything. I have lived in Portland, and I love Portland with all my heart, and I will never ever say I don't, and I don't have a lot of respect of government, but I do have respect for people and humans, and we're all suffering now, every one of us. And these people make money. Idaho Power makes money. They make money every year. They make a profit every year, a net profit every year. I don't make a profit every year, neither do these folks, they make a living. There's a big difference. And I don't mean to be mad, but I appreciate you coming in. I didn't know (inaudible) from Oregon up there in Salem. God bless Salem and all the little people up there that are crazy as hell. But we're here as a family, and we've gotta fight together and if we don't fight together, (inaudible) -- these little people that are (inaudible) now, just little people trying to live their life, the higher-ups, the people up there are going to take all of it away from us. And then you guys (inaudible) taking care of us. So, I just want them to stop and think about the little people. I'm just one of them, just one of them. And there's kids. They've got to have electricity, and mom that's trying to work two jobs trying to take care of her kid, this is unacceptable. And when I find out about these farmers and what they pay for their frickin' -- just so they can live? (inaudible) ridiculous and you're making a profit. It's not right. And I think that people should think about that just a little bit up there in those great high cities, and stop thinking about what they're (inaudible) doing to people down here in the below -- and underground, because it's not fair. It's not a fair thing. And that \$30 a month is gonna hurt me, because I'll just go to Community Action. Somebody will pay for it eventually, right? Around we go. So, take a note
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to the poor people out here in the world trying to live, can't -- can't (inaudible) if you continue to raise our rates and make our life harder because we don't make the big bucks. That's all I gotta say. Thank you for coming. I appreciate you coming out here to -- I mean, I go there all the time. I love that area. I love it. And I'll protect it 'til the day I die because I am an Oregonian, but this is unfair. This is unfair. So I'm done crying. Thank you.