

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OREGON
STAFF REPORT
PUBLIC MEETING DATE: October 6, 2015

REGULAR _____ CONSENT X EFFECTIVE DATE November 1, 2015

DATE: September 24, 2014

TO: Public Utility Commission

FROM: Mitchell Moore *mm*
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THROUGH: Jason Eisdorfer and Marc Hellman *A*

SUBJECT: AVISTA UTILITIES: (Docket No. UM 1356(8)) Requests reauthorization to defer costs related to Intervenor Funding Grants.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

I recommend the Commission approve Avista Utilities' (Avista or Company) request for reauthorization to defer costs related to intervenor funding grants effective November 1, 2015.

ISSUE:

Avista requests reauthorization to record and defer for a 12-month period beginning November 1, 2015, the cost of intervenor funding grants as allowed under ORS 757.072.

Deferral of these costs was originally granted by the Commission in Order No. 08-015 and has been annually reauthorized, most recently by Order No. 14-319.

RULE:

This request is made pursuant to ORS 757.259 and OAR 860-027-0300, which allows a deferral of expenses provided as financial assistance under an agreement entered into under ORS 757.072 for later incorporation in rates.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

In its Order No. 03-388, the Commission approved an Intervenor Funding Agreement (IFA) between various utilities, and intervenors including the Citizens' Utility Board of Oregon (CUB), Northwest Industrial Gas Users (NWIGU), and Industrial Customers of Northwest Utilities (ICNU). The IFA sets forth the funding amount to be contributed by the utility, the procedures for budget submittals by intervenors, Commission approval of budgets, and the payment of grants by utilities. It authorizes three funds with different qualification requirements for each. They are the CUB Fund, the Preauthorized Matching Fund (Matching Fund), and the Issue Fund.

The IFA also requires the costs of each fund to be allocated to the appropriate customer class. The CUB fund is generated from residential rates, and industrial customers' rates include an increment to support the Matching Fund. The Commission allocates amounts related to the Issue Fund to align the costs of advocacy with the intended beneficiaries of the advocacy.

In Order No. 07-564, the Commission approved an amended and restated IFA that extends intervenor funding until December 31, 2012.

Most recently, by Order No. 12-452, the Commission approved a second amended and restated IFA that extends intervenor funding until December 31, 2017. This IFA also provides authority for intervenors to request an increase in annual funding.

Reason for Deferral

In accordance with OAR 860-027-0300(4)(b), the Company requests continuation of deferred accounting to recover amounts approved pursuant to Order No. 12-452.

Proposed Accounting

Amounts are to be debited to deferred accounts only as the utility disburses funding to a qualifying intervenor. The proposed deferrals would be recorded in separate subaccounts of FERC Account 191. Absent the Commission's authorization of deferred accounting, the Company would incur the cost of an intervenor funding grant.

Current Deferral Activity

In accordance with OAR 860-027-0300(4)(a), Avista provided the following information regarding the deferral activity to the date of this application. Avista will seek recovery of these deferred amounts concurrent with its upcoming purchased gas cost adjustment filing.

Order No.	CUB Fund	Preauthorized Matching Fund	Issues Fund
15-001	\$34,500.00		
15-031		\$2,998.02	
15-170			\$31,686.81
15-171			\$20,245.20
15-186			\$5,225.30
Total	\$34,500.00	\$2,998.02	\$57,337.31

Estimated Deferrals in Authorization Period

At the time of its application, Avista estimated that the maximum deferred amounts during the 12-month period beginning November 1, 2015, will be as shown in the table below. Depending on the Commission's decision regarding the Third Amended and Restated IFA, these estimated amounts may change.

Fund	Amount
CUB Fund	34,500
Preauthorized Matching Fund	34,500
Issues Fund	70,000
Total	\$139,000

CONCLUSION:

As Avista's filing meets the requirements of the IFA, ORS 757.259 and OAR 860-027-0300, I recommend the Commission approve the application.

PROPOSED COMMISSION MOTION:

Avista's application to defer the costs associated with intervenor funding grants for the 12-month period beginning November 1, 2015, be approved.