

ORDER NO. 11 442

ENTERED NOV 09 2011

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION  
OF OREGON**

UM 1218(7)

In the Matter of

NORTHWEST NATURAL GAS  
COMPANY, dba NW NATURAL

Request for B-1 Service Quality Measure  
Exclusion.

ORDER

**DISPOSITION: REQUEST APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS**

On October 6, 2011, Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural, requested approval for exclusion from B-1 Service Quality Measure for Billing Accuracy (B-1 SQM) for the bill message redesign project, scheduled to begin November 5, 2011. A description of the filing and its procedural history is contained in the Staff Report, attached as Appendix A, and incorporated by reference.


At its Public Meeting on November 1, 2011, the Commission adopted Staff's recommendation.

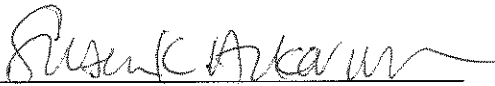
**ORDER**

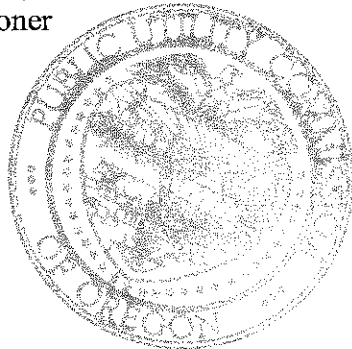
IT IS ORDERED that Northwest Natural Gas Company's request for exclusion is approved with the following conditions:

1. A billing error that does not meet the definition of B-1 Service Quality Measure will be subject to the C-1 Service Quality Measure requirements that currently apply to NW Natural.
2. To be eligible for the exclusion from the B-1 Service Quality Measure requirement, a billing error must have directly resulted from the bill message redesign project.

Made, entered, and effective NOV 09 2011

  
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**John Savage**  
 Commissioner

  
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**Susan K. Ackerman**  
 Commissioner



A party may request rehearing or reconsideration of this order under ORS 756.561. A request for rehearing or reconsideration must be filed with the Commission within 60 days of the date of service of this order. The request must comply with the requirements in OAR 860-001-0720. A copy of the request must also be served on each party to the proceedings as provided in OAR 860-001-0180(2). A party may appeal this order by filing a petition for review with the Court of Appeals in compliance with ORS 183.480 through 183.484.

ITEM NO. CA1

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OREGON  
 STAFF REPORT  
 PUBLIC MEETING DATE: November 1, 2011

REGULAR \_\_\_\_\_ CONSENT X EFFECTIVE DATE November 2, 2011

DATE: October 25, 2011

TO: Public Utility Commission

FROM: *LG*  
 Lisa Gorsuch

THROUGH: *LS* Lee Sparling, *MG* Maury Galbraith, and *LK* Lori Koho

SUBJECT: NORTHWEST NATURAL: (Docket UM 1218(7)) Request for exclusion from the B1 Service Quality Measure for Billing Accuracy for Bill Message Redesign Project.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that Northwest Natural's (NWN or Company) request for exclusion be approved with the following conditions:

1. A billing error that does not meet the definition of B-1 Service Quality Measure will be subject to the C-1 Service Quality Measure requirements that currently apply to NWN.
2. To be eligible for exclusion from the B-1 SQM requirement, a billing error must have directly resulted from the bill message redesign project.

**DISCUSSION:**

NWN requests approval for exclusion from the B1 Service Quality Measure for Billing Accuracy (B1 SQM) for the bill message redesign project, scheduled to begin on November 5, 2011. In the Company's original filing, the exclusion period requested was from October 31, 2011, through February 1, 2012. This request could not go before the Commission until, November 1, 2011. For this reason, NWN delayed the launch of its project until November 5, 2011. The exclusion period will now be November 5, 2011, through February 4, 2012.

NWN states, that the bill message redesign project will simplify the bill message programming code to add more flexibility and efficiency to the bill message process.

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Currently, bill messages are generated with hard code programming in the bill select, bill calculation and bill print programs. This project involves replacing the hard code process with a control file process. The use of control files will allow bill messages to be generated more efficiently, and changes or additions to the bill message library to occur more quickly.

NWN has identified a thirteen month transition period, with regard to viewing historical bill statements online in HTML format, as a result of this bill message redesign project. A customer who wants to view a historical bill including the correct bill messages will be able to do so if they choose the "pdf" view. The Company retains thirteen months of historical bills on its website. During this period, the Company will display a message<sup>1</sup> on such historical bills until all historical bills issued under the old code have cycled through.

Exclusions were previously granted during implementation of both phases of NWN's Automated Meter Installation Project and for its On-the-Bill Repayment Service. Staff believes the ninety day exclusion from the B-1 SQM requirements for the bill message redesign project is reasonable.

#### **PROPOSED COMMISSION MOTION:**

NWNs filing to request an exclusion period from the B1 SQM requirements be approved subject to the following conditions:

1. A billing error that does not meet the definition of B-1 Service Quality Measure will be subject to the C-1 Service Quality Measure requirements that currently apply to NWN.
2. To be eligible for exclusion from the B-1 SQM requirement, a billing error must have directly resulted from the bill message redesign project.

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<sup>1</sup> "The messages intended for this space may not display correctly in this view. To see the actual bill messages, please view your bill as a pdf by clicking the link at the top of the page."