

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
OF OREGON**

UG 435

In the Matter of

NORTHWEST NATURAL GAS
COMPANY, dba NW NATURAL,

Request for a General Rate Revision.

ORDER

**DISPOSITION: MOTION TO DESIGNATE PROCEEDING AS ELIGIBLE FOR
HB 2475 FUNDS GRANTED, PROPOSED BUDGET FOR HB 2475
GRANT APPROVED**

On July 27, 2022, Community Energy Project (CEP) filed a notice of participation and request for House Bill (HB) 2475 funding and a proposed budget in docket UG 435. No response to the filing was made. CEP’s proposed budget shows eligible expenses of \$5,800, and it seeks an HB 2475 Funding Grant of \$5,800. I grant the request of CEP, and its proposed budget is approved.

The Commission Approved Form of Interim Funding Agreement in Order No. 22-043 defines “Eligible Dockets” as a proceeding before the Commission to review:

1. Non-complaint contested cases, rulemakings, and non-contested dockets that affect the applicable utility and its low-income residential customers and environmental justice communities,
2. Named, non-docketed Commission led processes addressing issues that affect the applicable utility and its low-income residential customers and environmental justice communities, or
3. An Integrated Resource Plan.

Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural is directly affected by docket UG 435. This docket involves a general rate revision to consider increased gas rates for NW Natural customers. CEP claims this proceeding will likely have a substantial impact on NW Natural customers because of increased rates for ratepayers, some of whom are CEP clients. CEP serves low-income residential customers and environmental justice

communities, including seniors, people with disabilities, women, people of color, and other historically marginalized groups. CEP asserts their clients will benefit from their participation in this proceeding because their clients face disproportionately high energy burdens.

CEP claims that it is eligible for funding because it is a pre-certified eligible organization pursuant to Commission Order No. 22-043. CEP argues that it primarily serves Portland and Multnomah County utility customers that are disproportionately energy burdened, including low-income residential customers and environmental justice communities, through safety repairs and efficiency upgrades, among other things, directly to clients' homes.

I agree that CEP qualifies as an eligible organization under Order No. 22-043. I find that docket UG 435 qualifies as an eligible proceeding because the proceeding is anticipated to impact NW Natural's low-income residential customers and environmental justice communities by increasing rates, which in turn may exacerbate CEP's clients' disproportionately high energy burdens. Accordingly, the motion should be granted, and this docket certified as an eligible proceeding.

The Interim Agreements for HB 2475 Intervenor Funding, approved by the Commission in Order No. 22-043, provides that pre-certified intervenors must submit a proposed HB 2475 Grant Funds budget to the Commission that contains, at a minimum, the following information:

1. A statement of work to be performed by the Recipient for which the Recipient is seeking funding;
2. A description of the areas to be investigated and addressed by Recipient;
3. A budget showing estimated attorney fees, which may include the cost for appropriate support staff and operational support; and
4. A budget showing estimated consultant fees and expert witness fees, which may include the cost for appropriate support staff and operational support.

Once a proposed budget is received, the Commission decides whether HB 2475 Grant Funds are available for use based on factors identified in the Interim Agreements for HB 2475 Intervenor Funding. The Commission has the authority to accept, deny, or partially deny the request, and may place reasonable conditions on the grant, and may delegate this responsibility to the Chief Administrative Law Judge, consistent with Order No. 21-213.

CEP's proposed budget includes the requisite information and reflects the current schedule adopted in this docket.

In light of the issues being addressed, the complexity of the issues and the significant policy decisions to be made, CEP's proposed budget is reasonable and should be approved.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. This proceeding is designated as a proceeding eligible for HB 2475 Funds.
2. Community Energy Project is certified to receive funds in this docket.
3. Community Energy Project's proposed budget for an HB 2475 Funding Grant is approved.
4. An HB 2475 Funding Grant is approved up to \$5,800 for activity in docket UG 435.

Made, entered, and effective Oct 10, 2022



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nolan Moser".

Nolan Moser
Chief Administrative Law Judge

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.