

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION  
OF OREGON**

UG 490

In the Matter of

NORTHWEST NATURAL GAS  
COMPANY, dba NW NATURAL,

Request for a General Rate Revision.

ORDER

**DISPOSITION: CASE FUND GRANT REQUEST APPROVED; 50 PERCENT  
PAYMENT ORDERED**

On March 14, 2024, Community Energy Project (CEP), Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) and Verde filed a joint notice of intent to request justice funding case fund grant, request for case certification, proposed budgets, and request for 50 percent payment consistent with Order Nos. 23-033, 23-180, 23-485, and OAR 860-001-0800 through OAR 860-001-0900. On January 26, 2024, CEP, CCC, and Verde filed a petition to intervene in this docket, which was granted on February 5, 2024. On May 20, 2024, CEP, CCC, and Verde updated the joint notice of intent and proposed budgets.

CEP, CCC, and Verde are intervenors in this docket. CEP and CCC were found to be eligible for Justice Funding in Order No. 22-043, and CEP, CCC, and Verde were found to be eligible for Justice Funding in Order Nos. 23-033, 23-180, and 23-485. CCC, CEP, and Verde note that this proceeding is an eligible proceeding per OAR 860-001-0830(1) and that this proceeding affects customers of Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural. No party objected to CEP, CCC, and Verde's notice of intent, proposed scope of work, proposed budget, or request for payment of 50 percent of the proposed budget up front.

CEP, CCC, and Verde intend to participate in the proceeding through reviewing and analyzing NW Natural's filings, filing testimony, and participating in hearings and in settlement discussions. CEP, CCC, and Verde note that they intend to consult an expert witness. CEP, CCC, and Verde further describe that they will focus engagement efforts in investigating NW Natural's proposed revenue increase, reflected in rate schedule changes that increase natural gas distribution rates, including review and analysis of the requested revenue requirement through the bill discount rate, Climate Protection Plan costs (or the

equivalent proxy), memberships and dues, advertising and lobbying expenses, fixed costs, return on equity, and line extension allowances. CEP, CCC, and Verde state that addressing the above issues will contribute to a more equitable solution that accounts for deficiencies and, in turn, benefit low-income NW Natural ratepayers and other environmental justice communities.

In their proposed budgets, CEP, CCC, and Verde describe expenses for meeting participation, research and analysis, testimony review and drafting, and hearings. CEP, CCC, and Verde request up-front payment of 50 percent of their grants in accordance with Article 7.2 of the Justice Funding Agreement.

I agree that CEP, CCC, and Verde qualify as eligible organizations under Order No. 23-033 and OAR 860-001-0840. I agree with CEP's, CCC's and Verde's application of Order No. 23-033 to use Case Funds for this docket.

Accordingly, the request for a case fund grant and a 50 percent up-front payment should be granted. CEP, CCC, and Verde provided proposed budgets containing descriptions of eligible expenses, identification of the utility account from which they request funds, and a statement of work.

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. 23-321.

CEP's, CCC's and Verde's proposed budgets include the requisite information and reflect the current schedule adopted in this docket. Considering the issues being addressed, the complexity of the issues and the significant policy decisions to be made, the Joint Coalition's proposed budgets are reasonable and should be approved.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. Community Energy Project's proposed budget is approved;
2. Coalition of Communities of Color's proposed budget is approved;
3. Verde's proposed budget is approved;
4. A Justice Funding Case Fund Grant is approved for Community Energy Project up to \$18,523 from the 2024 Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural Case Fund for activity in this docket;

5. Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural, pay \$9,261.50 from the 2024 NW Natural Case Fund to Community Energy Project within 30 days after receipt of this order, and the grant be assessed to NW Natural's residential customers;
6. A Justice Funding Case Fund Grant is approved for Coalition of Communities of Color up to \$13,478 from the 2024 Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural Case Fund for activity in this docket;
7. Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural, pay \$6,739 from the 2024 NW Natural Case Fund to Coalition of Communities of Color within 30 days after receipt of this order, and the grant be assessed to NW Natural's residential customers;
8. A Justice Funding Case Fund Grant is approved for Verde up to \$8,333 from the 2024 Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural Case Fund for activity in this docket; and
9. Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural, pay \$4,166.50 from the 2024 NW Natural Case Fund to Verde within 30 days after receipt of this order, and the grant be assessed to NW Natural's residential customers.

Made, entered, and effective Jul 26, 2024.



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Alison Lackey  
Chief Administrative Law Judge

