

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
OF OREGON**

UG 520

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 April 14, 2025, Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) and Verde filed a joint notice of intent to request a 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 March 11, 2025, together with Climate Solutions, Sierra Club, and Oregon Environmental Council, CCC, and Verde filed a petition to intervene in this docket, which was granted on March 19, 2025.

CCC, and Verde are intervenors in this docket. CCC was found to be eligible for Justice Funding in Order No. 22-043, and CCC, and Verde were found to be eligible for Justice Funding in Order Nos. 23-033, 23-180, and 23-485. CCC 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 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.

CCC and Verde intend to participate in the proceeding through reviewing and analyzing NW Natural's filings, filing testimony and/or briefs, and participating in discovery and hearings. CCC and Verde explain that they will focus engagement efforts on investigating NW Natural's proposed revenue increase, including review and analysis of the requested revenue requirement through the bill discount rate, Climate Protection Plan costs, memberships and dues, advertising expenses, return on equity, discounts afforded to home builders, and research and development expenses. CCC and Verde state that addressing the above issues will contribute to a more equitable solution that accounts for

deficiencies and, in turn, benefits low-income NW Natural ratepayers and other environmental justice communities.

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

I agree that CCC and Verde qualify as eligible organizations under Order No. 23-033 and OAR 860-001-0840. I agree with 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. 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.

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, CCC's and Verde's proposed budgets are reasonable and should be approved.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. Coalition of Communities of Color's proposed budget is approved;
2. Verde's proposed budget is approved;
3. A Justice Funding Case Fund Grant is approved for Coalition of Communities of Color up to \$2,887 from the 2025 Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural Case Fund for activity in this docket;

4. Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural, pay \$1,443.5 from the 2025 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;
5. A Justice Funding Case Fund Grant is approved for Verde up to \$1,500 from the 2025 Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural Case Fund for activity in this docket;
6. Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural, pay \$750 from the 2025 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 April 29, 2025.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alison Lackey", is written over a horizontal line.

Alison Lackey
Chief Administrative Law Judge