ISSUED: August 27, 2024

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.	RULING

DISPOSITION: MOTION TO FILE OUT OF TIME GRANTED ON EXPEDITED BASIS; NW NATURAL REQUEST FOR EXTENSION DENIED.

On August 27, 2024, the Alliance of Western Energy Consumers (AWEC) filed a motion to file its closing brief one day out of time. AWEC states that counsel inadvertently filed the brief on the wrong day due to a calendar time zone issue that arose during international travel. AWEC states that it has conferred with the Staff of the Public Utility Commission, the Oregon Citizen's Utility Board, and Northwest Natural Gas Company, dba NW Natural and represents these parties do not object to its request to file one day out of time. NW Natural, however, requests an additional day to file its closing brief, which is currently due on September 3, 2024. AWEC does not object to NW Natural's request. AWEC states that it was unable to confer with the Coalition[1] before filing its motion. AWEC requests expedited consideration of its motion.

On August 27, 2024, the Coalition filed a response to AWEC's motion, stating that it did not oppose AWEC's request to file out of time but that it did oppose NW Natural's extension request. The Coalition argues that given the short amount of time between NW Natural's closing brief and oral arguments on September 12, 2024, any additional delay in filing NW Natural's closing brief will make it difficult to prepare for the argument. On the same day, NW Natural filed a response to AWEC's motion requesting the one-day extension, arguing that without the extension it will only have four-business days to review the brief. NW Natural argues that no party will be prejudiced by the extension because it only shortens the time between its brief from nine days to eight, and closing briefs in its last general rate case were due just three days prior to oral argument.

[1] The Coalition consists of the following entities: the Coalition of Communities of Color, Climate Solutions, Verde, Columbia Riverkeeper, Oregon Environmental Council, Community Energy Project, and Sierra Club.

NW Natural maintains the Coalition will have ample time to prepare if the company's extension is granted.

I grant AWEC's motion to file its closing brief one day out of time on an expedited basis. I deny NW Natural's request to extend the deadline to file its closing brief to September 4, 2024. AWEC's 8-page brief was filed one day out of time. Neither the length of the delay nor the length of the brief justifies further changes to the procedural schedule due to the proximity in time between the company's closing brief and oral argument.

Dated: August 27, 2024.

Sarah Spruce
Administrative Law Judge