

March 17, 2021

OPUC Advice No. 21-02A

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Public Utility Commission of Oregon
Attn: Filing Center
201 High Street SE, Suite 100
P.O. Box 1088
Salem, OR 97308-1088

Re: Schedule R—Residential Arrearage Management Program—REVISED

On February 25, 2021, NW Natural filed revisions to its Tariff P.U.C. Or. 25, stated to become effective on May 3, 2021, to introduce Schedule R – residential Arrearage Management Program (AMP) as a result of discussions in docket UM 2114 – Investigation into the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Utility Customers.

Original Sheet R-1	Schedule R	Arrearage Management Program
Original Sheet R-2	Schedule R	Arrearage Management Program
Seventh Revision of Sheet iv	Index	Tariff Index

A Stipulated Agreement in UM 2114 (Public Utility Commission of Oregon (Commission) Order No. 20-401) states that an arrearage management program will be funded by at least one percent (1%) of each utility's Oregon retail revenues as a one-time funding amount.

Based on discussions with Commission Staff, NW Natural proposes three changes to its AMP proposal. First, the Company proposes to change the Instant Grant option from \$100 to \$300. Second, NW Natural proposes to change the amount of the 50/50 Matching Grant from \$300 to \$600. Third, NW Natural proposes to limit crisis grants described in Special Condition 2 to \$1,000 and those customers would be subject to the \$1,200 AMP limit. As discussed with Commission Staff, we believe these changes will provide more flexibility to help customers and provide reasonable parameters and conditions when addressing crisis cases.

NW Natural provides the enclosed tariff pages that include the changes described above and replace the February 25, 2021 tariff pages in their entirety.¹ The Company maintains its requested effective date for these tariff pages of May 3, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ *Natasha Siores*

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¹ Note that the tariff page Sheet iv (Index) did not change, but we are including it here for completeness.

**SCHEDULE R
ARREARAGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

(N)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this schedule is to implement the residential Arrearage Management Program (AMP) consistent with Commission Order No. 20-401. The Order directs Utilities to establish a program to identify and manage residential customer arrearages associated with the COVID-19 pandemic to proactively assist residential customers prior to resuming disconnections and prevent bad debt accumulating on utility accounts.

The Program may identify and waive residential arrearages at an initial total amount of \$6,167,000, not to be increased without prior Commission approval. This amount represents one percent (1%) of the Company's 2019 Oregon retail revenues.

APPLICABLE:

To all Residential Customers with a past due balance taking service under Rate Schedule 2 of this Tariff.

ENROLLMENT:

Eligible Residential Customers may enroll in an AMP option by calling the Customer Contact Center, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 800-422-4012 or 503-226-4211.

AMP OPTIONS:

The AMP is intended to address long-term arrearage reduction and prevent turn-off due to non-payment and also serves as an additional resource to supplement various sources of low-income energy assistance for qualified customers. The following options are available as part of this residential Arrearage Management Program:

1. Instant Grant Option

- a. An option that offers a one-time grant up to \$300 (but not to exceed the past due or full account balance) for the residential customer with a smaller past due or full account balance who expresses economic hardship.
- b. Grant will appear on the customer's next bill as "Instant Grant."

2. 50/50 Matching Grant Option

- a. A payment match option that offers up to a \$600 matching grant in the form of a credit applied to the account and eliminates a past due or full account balance.
- b. Grant will appear on the customer's next bill as "50/50 Grant."

3. Time Payment Arrangement (TPA) with Matching Grant Option

- a. An option that offers a TPA in which the residential customer makes a payment each month and receives a matching grant payment to reduce the balance at the time the customer's TPA payment posts.
- b. The customer's grant is equal to 50% of the total account balance with matching grant payments divided up in a number equal to the number of TPA payments required by the TPA term.
 - i. Grant not to exceed the \$1,200 Program limit or the balance of that limit still available to the customer under the AMP, whichever is less.
- c. Eliminates a past due balance and brings the full account balance current when the plan is completed.
- d. Grant payments will appear on the customer's bill as "Arrearage Management Plan Grant."

(continue to Sheet R-2)

(N)

**SCHEDULE R
ARREARAGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

(N)

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. Residential customers can participate in the AMP in any combination of options up to a maximum contribution from the Program limit of up to \$1,200.
2. Residential customers that express (1) no means to make payment(s) and (2) are suffering additional financial hardship due to crises above and beyond those commonly experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including, but not limited to death, chronic illness or major injury in the household; or ongoing medical complications from COVID-19, may receive Instant Grants up to \$1,000 without a matching payment. Such customers may not exceed the \$1,200 Program limit.
3. The Company will defer and seek recovery of all associated program costs not otherwise included in rates in accordance with Commission Order No. 20-401 and Order No. 20-380.
4. In addition to the reporting requirements outlined in Commission Order No. 20-401, the Company will provide quarterly reporting on the amount of assistance that has been provided and the number of customers enrolled in the Program, and any additional reporting may be provided as determined by the Commission.

TERM

This program shall continue through October 1, 2022, or until the Company reaches the spending limit, or until the Commission closes the program.

GENERAL TERMS:

This Schedule is governed by its terms, the General Rules and Regulations contained in this Tariff, any other Schedules that by their terms or by the terms of this Schedule apply to service under this Schedule, and by all rules and regulations prescribed by regulatory authorities, as amended from time to time.

(N)

NORTHWEST NATURAL GAS COMPANY

P.U.C. Or. 25

Seventh Revision of Sheet iv
Cancels Sixth Revision of Sheet iv

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(continued)

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Effective with service on
and after May 3, 2021