

May 24, 2013

Public Service Commission of Utah
Heber M. Wells Building, 4th Floor
160 East 300 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Attn: Gary Widerburg
Commission Secretary

RE: Rule 746-200-7 Comments

Rocky Mountain Power (“RMP” or the “Company”) thanks the Commission for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed amendments to Rule 746-200-7. The Company appreciates the work the Public Service Commission of Utah (“Commission”) has done in amending the rules regarding restrictions on termination of service for medical reasons. RMP believes the amended rules provide further clarity for the parties involved and generally is supportive of those amendments. The Company offers the following specific comments for the Commission’s consideration regarding the amended rules.

General Comments

RMP respectfully requests the Commission extend the effective date of the rule changes to allow the Company time bring its forms and procedures into compliance with the amended rule. Medical and Life-Supporting Equipment Statement document is a form generated through our customer service system. Any revisions to the document or creation of additional documents will have to go through a technical process to implement the changes. Although we will give the changes a high priority in the work stream, it will take several months to make the necessary system changes to implement the rules as amended. Simple wording changes can be completed in three weeks. Additionally, the rules as amended would require procedural changes. RMP will need time to develop and document the new procedures, and train the applicable customer representatives.

RMP also proposes an amendment to R746-200-7(G)(1) of this rule to allow for electronic delivery of 10-day past due notices to customers who have selected the paperless billing option offered by the Company. Detailed information regarding this proposal is provided below as part of the specific comments.

Specific Comments

1. Amended Rule 746-200-7(A)(2)(b):

Rule 746-200-7(A)(2)(b) as amended reads as follows:

2. "Life-supporting equipment" means life-supporting medical equipment:
 - a. with normal operation that requires continuation of public utility service; and
 - b. used by an individual who would require assistance from medical personnel to sustain life if the life supporting equipment ceased normal operations.

Rocky Mountain Power suggests the word "immediate" should be inserted in paragraph b to read as follows:

b. used by an individual who would require immediate assistance from medical personnel to sustain life if the life supporting equipment ceased normal operations.

Depending on the nature of the life supporting equipment designated by the licensed medical professional, the time period before intervention by medical personnel is necessary could be minutes, hours, days, weeks, or even months. RMP believes this definition should be more description of the critical nature of the situation to reflect the intent of this rule.

2. Amended Rule 746-200-7(A)(3)

Rule 746-200-7(A)(3) as amended reads as follows:

3. "Life-Supporting equipment" statement means a written statement:
 - a. signed by the account holder or resident who utilizes life-support equipment; and
 - b. including:
 - i. a description of the medical need of the account holder or resident who utilizes life-supporting equipment;
 - ii. the account holder's name and address; and
 - iii. the name and contact information of the licensed medical provider for the resident who utilizes life-supporting;

The Company's experience is that oftentimes customers do not establish medical or life supporting equipment certificates until their account is in jeopardy of service termination within a day or two. Because of the urgency of the need, the Company generally is asked by the customer to send the certificate form via facsimile to their doctor. RMP has concerns the proposed requirement for this Life-Supporting Equipment Statement to be a written statement and signed by the account holder or resident who may not have access to a facsimile, will be viewed by its customers as inconvenient and will not be timely. The information required to be provided in (3)(b)(i) and (3)(b)(ii) is information currently provided by the licensed medical provider and could continue to be provided by the licensed medical provider.

The Company proposes this amended paragraph R746-200-7(A)(3) be revised to require a written statement signed by the licensed medical provider, and including the required information previously identified in R746-200-7(A)(2), R746-200-7(A)(3) and R746-200-7(D)(2) as follows:

3. “Life-Supporting equipment” statement means a written statement:

- a. signed by the licensed medical provider for the account holder or resident who utilizes life-support equipment; and
- b. including:
 - i. a description of the medical need of the account holder or resident who utilizes life-supporting equipment;
 - ii. the account holder’s name and address; ~~and~~
 - iii. name of resident using life-supporting equipment and relationship to account holder, if different than account holder;
 - iv. the health infirmity and expected duration;
 - v. identification of the life-support equipment that requires the utility’s service;
 - vi. a determination by the licensed medical provider that immediate assistance from medical personnel to sustain life would be required if the life supporting equipment ceased normal operations; and
 - vi. ~~iii~~. the name and contact information of the licensed medical provider for the resident who utilizes life-supporting;

3. Amended Rule 746-200-7(D)

Rule 746-200-7(D)(2)(a) as amended reads as follows:

2. Life-Supporting Equipment.

- a. Within two business days after receiving a life-supporting equipment statement, a public utility shall submit to the licensed medical provider identified in the life-supporting equipment statement a request for information indicating:
 - i. the health infirmity and expected duration;
 - ii. identification of the life-support equipment that requires the utility's service; and
 - iii. an explanation of how termination of utility service will injure the person's health or aggravate the person's illness.

RMP proposes that R746-200-7(D)(2)(a) be stricken from this portion of the rules based on the Company’s proposed changes to R746-200-7(A)(3) and that paragraph R746-200-7(D)(2)(b) to R746-200-7(D)(2)(h) be renumbered accordingly.

4. Rule 746-200-7(G)

Rule 746-200-7(G)(1) reads in pertinent part as follows:

G. Notice of Proposed Termination of Service --

1. At least 10 calendar days before a proposed termination of residential utility service, a public utility shall give written notice of disconnection for nonpayment to the account holder. The 10-day time period is computed from the date the bill is postmarked. The notice shall be given by first class mail or delivery to the premises and shall contain a summary of the following information:

R746-200-7(G)(1) addresses the requirement for an energy utility to provide a 10 calendar day notice of disconnection to a customer either in person or by first-class mail. Over the past decade, advances in computer and telephone technology have created new and convenient ways for companies and customers to communicate with one another. Receiving bill notifications through electronic mail (email) is becoming mainstream and customers now expect online services and paperless communications to be readily available through their utilities. Demographic changes and the increased reliance on mobile technology will further increase customers' desire to receive electronic bills and notifications. Companies are progressively moving away from communicating with customers through the U.S. Postal Service ("US Mail") and incorporating newer technology methods to keep up with new generations of customers.

Rocky Mountain Power began offering "paperless billing" in 2001. PacifiCorp has seen a 75 percent increase in paperless billing customers since 2008. In Utah, Rocky Mountain Power currently has 236,513 paperless billing customers, representing approximately 29% of Rocky Mountain Power customers in the state.

Customers choose paperless billing by activating their Rocky Mountain Power accounts through the Company's website (or "online") and authorizing paperless billing.¹ To complete enrollment in paperless billing, customers must agree to the terms of paperless billing, acknowledging they will receive electronic bill notifications rather than paper bills through US Mail. With paperless billing, customers receive an email each billing cycle notifying them their bill is available for viewing online. Customers then log into their secure online account to view their bill, with the option to also pay through the online account.

If a paperless billing customer becomes past due, the Company currently sends an email notifying him or her that the bill is available for viewing online and sends a paper bill that includes a 10-day notice via US Mail as required by R746-200-7(G)(1). Five days prior to disconnection of service, the Company issues a final notice of disconnection via US Mail. In addition to the ten- and five-day notices, Rocky Mountain Power provides an outbound phone call and a 48-hour door hanger notice delivered by a Company representative to the premise to remind customers to pay past due balances.

¹ Rocky Mountain Power offers a variety of customer service features on its website, such as online payment. This comment focuses on paperless billing.

The Company also makes customer bill information, including copies of the current billing statement and up to 24 months of past billing statements, readily available for viewing on Rocky Mountain Power's website 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For customers who have selected paperless communications, Rocky Mountain Power is proposing to electronically deliver notification to customers their 10-day past due notice is available for viewing online, rather than sending them both electronic delivery and a paper notice through US Mail or through personal delivery. Sending a paper copy of the bill and 10-day notice to customers choosing paperless communications is both redundant and negates the benefits of providing paperless bills.

Allowing the Company to deliver 10-day notices by electronic delivery to customers preferring electronic communications without sending a paper notice through the US Mail will be more efficient, less costly and accomplish the objective of notifying customers of past due balances in a format desired by the customer. Electronic delivery provides for almost immediate delivery and can easily highlight the urgency needed for customers to take action. The Company will continue to deliver five-day notices through US Mail and personally deliver notices 48 hours prior to disconnection.

As a way of highlighting the importance of the past due notice, the electronic communication to the customer will include a subject line notifying the customer immediate attention is needed. The notification to the customer will also contain language reminding the customer of the past due balance and due date, and the need to view and pay the bill and/or contact the Company. Electronic delivery of a past due notice will also allow the customer to access the notice in various forms and in various different locations, such as through mobile electronic devices like laptops, tablets and smart phones.

Additionally, the Company conducted surveys to learn customers' preferences for communications. In response to suggestions from customers, the Company is exploring further cost-effective communications channels to add to the notifications discussed above, such as additional emailed due date reminders, outbound telephone messaging, text messaging and development of a smart phone application. The Company also recognizes the need to fashion messages and notices so they are user friendly and easily viewable for smart phone users. An amendment of the requirement to deliver 10-day notices using first-class mail would make the potential of use of all of these communication methods more robust and continue to improve customer service by offering communications in formats preferred by customers.

In April 2010, Javelin Strategy and Research conducted a survey of paperless billing customers to assess such customers' perceptions of paperless programs and their overall effectiveness. The simplicity of the paperless bills and environmental concerns were the driving forces behind customers switching to paperless billing. Reasons for switching included a reduction in clutter, helping the environment by reducing paper waste and ease of receiving historical records online. While there is potential for customers to not receive electronic communications, such as emails "bouncing back" (or undelivered) or getting caught in a spam filter, no delivery method is perfect. Paper delivery also has its drawbacks. Paper notices can be lost, thrown away, misplaced

and even forgotten. The likelihood of a customer not receiving a past due notice through either method is very low. With electronic communications, at the very least customer bills will remain available online 24 hours per day, seven days per week for viewing.

The Company issued 293,398 past due notices to Utah paperless customers in 2012. The cost of sending out a paper past due notice to a customer costs approximately \$0.48 per notice. The Company would have nominal start up expense but the cost to send email notices will be \$0. Electronic past due notices would achieve costs savings of approximately \$140,831.

The Company will continue to deliver 10-day notices to customers not choosing paperless communications either by US Mail or in-person delivery in accordance with R746-200-7(G)(1). Additionally, the Company will continue to deliver 48-hour disconnect notices to all customers either by US Mail or in-person delivery in accordance with R746-200-7(G)(2).

RMP proposes the following amendments to R746-200-7(G)(1) to allow customers selecting the paperless billing option to receive 10 calendar day notice of disconnection (commonly referred to as past due notices) electronically:

G. Notice of Proposed Termination of Service --

1. At least 10 calendar days before a proposed termination of residential utility service, a public utility shall give written notice of disconnection for nonpayment to the account holder. The 10-day time period is computed from the date the bill is electronically transmitted or postmarked. The notice shall be given by first class mail or delivery to the premises. For customers choosing electronic delivery of the bill, the utility may use electronic delivery of the notice. The notice ~~and~~ shall contain a summary of the following information:

Overall, Rocky Mountain Power believes that the Commission's proposed rule provides reasonable and necessary policy guidance and will lead to increased efficiencies for the Commission and all parties. The Company supports the adoption of the revised rule in its entirety, with the exceptions noted above.

Informal inquiries regarding these comments may be directed to Dave Taylor at (801) 220-2923 or Barb Coughlin at (503) 331-4306.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey K. Larsen
Vice President, Regulation
and Government Affairs

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 24th day of May 2013, a true and correct copy of the foregoing was served by email on the following:

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