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Attorney for the Commission Staff

BEFORE THE IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION)	
OF AVISTA CORPORATION DBA AVISTA)	CASE NO. AVU-E-18-03
UTILITIES FOR AUTHORITY TO REVISE)	AVU-G-18-02
ITS ELECTRIC AND NATURAL GAS)	
DEPRECIATION RATES)	COMMENTS OF THE
)	COMMISSION STAFF
)	

The Staff of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission submits the following comments in the above captioned matter.

BACKGROUND

On February 23, 2018, Avista Corporation dba Avista Utilities (“Avista” or “the Company”) filed an Application requesting that the Commission approve changes to the Company’s depreciation rates for electric and natural gas property. The Company included a request for an effective date of January 1, 2019. Avista last changed its Idaho book depreciation rates in January and April 2013. Order No. 32769.

The Commission subsequently issued a Notice of Application and set an intervention deadline of April 23, 2018. Order No. 34014. Clearwater Paper, Idaho Conservation League (ICL), Idaho Forest Group, and the Sierra Club intervened as parties. Order Nos. 34016, 34049.

In Order No. 34116, the Commission issued a Notice of Schedule and Modified Procedure establishing a schedule for settlement conferences and a November 15, 2018, date for parties to file comments.

On August 23, 2018, Avista filed an Agreed-Upon Motion to Revise Schedule, which asked the Commission to revise the schedule in this case and to recognize that the Company is extending the proposed effective date for its new depreciation rates to April 1, 2019. In approving that motion, the Commission established a new schedule for settlement conferences and a comment deadline of February 15, 2019. Order No. 34133.

STAFF COMMENTS

Settlement conferences were held on December 11, 2018, and January 22, 2019, with the purpose of narrowing or resolving the contested issues within this proceeding. As a result of these meetings, and further discussion amongst the parties, the parties have reached an agreement in principle, resulting in a proposed Stipulation and Settlement.

On February 13, 2019, the Company circulated a final version of the Stipulation and Settlement for signatures, along with a copy of the Motion for Approval of Stipulation and Settlement to the parties. The Motion, which will be jointly signed by all parties, seeks to suspend the existing procedural schedule, and substitute in its place a date of March 1, 2019, for the filing of comments under Modified Procedure. No reply comments are envisioned as necessary.

Staff now files these comments because it is unsure whether the parties will be able to obtain a fully executed Stipulation and Settlement prior to the February 15, 2019, comment deadline previously established in Order No. 34133. Staff submits these comments to apprise the Commission of the current status of the case. Staff fully intends to file additional commentary in support of the Settlement and Stipulation on or before March 1, 2019, if the Commission approves the parties Motion for Approval of Stipulation and Settlement.

Respectfully submitted this 15th day of February 2019.



Sean Costello
Deputy Attorney General

Technical Staff: Donn English

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE THIS 15TH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2019, SERVED THE FOREGOING **COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION STAFF**, IN CASE NOS. AVU-E-18-03/AVU-G-18-02, BY MAILING A COPY THEREOF, POSTAGE PREPAID, TO THE FOLLOWING:

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