BEFORE THE IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF)

PACIFICORP DBA UTAH POWER & LIGHT)CASE NO. UPL-E-95-1

COMPANY FOR AUTHORITY TO AMEND)

ITS IDAHO TARIFF LANGUAGE REGARDING)

CONNECT AND DISCONNECT SERVICE)

TO IRRIGATION PUMPS.)

)ORDER NO.  25900

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On December 13(21), 1994  PacifiCorp dba Utah Power & Light Company (Utah Power; UP&L; Company) filed proposed changes to its irrigation and soil drainage pumping power service tariff sheets with the Idaho Public Utilities Commission (Commission).  Reference IPUC–No. 28 Electric Service Schedule No. 10—Connection and Disconnection Charges.  The Company requested a January 13, 1995 effective date.

UP&L currently disconnects customers at the end of the irrigation season and reconnects them each spring.  The company proposes to keep irrigation customers connected year round unless the customer requests disconnection in writing. The company will continue its policy of giving customers one free disconnection and reconnection each year. Customers will not be billed during the winter months, when usage will be non-existent or minimal. The initial spring bill will reflect any energy usage during the winter months.

The Company states the following reasons for making this change:

Historically, the Company has disconnected irrigation pumping service during the winter to reduce electrical losses associated with unloaded, energized transformers. However we have found a higher incidence of failure among transformers that are not energized during the post-season. The increased cost of transformer failure offset the savings resulting from reduced losses when the transformers are not energized. As the routine disconnection and reconnection of irrigation pumps once a year is very time consuming and costly, eliminating this practice will result in a net savings in operating expenses.

After reviewing the Company’s Application the Commission made the preliminary finding that the issues presented were appropriate for processing under Modified Procedure, i.e., by written submission rather than by hearing. Reference IDAPA 31.01.01.201 et seq.  Commission Notices of Application and Modified Procedure in Case No. UPL-E-95-1 issued on January 10, 1995.  The deadline for filing written comments or protests with respect to the Company’s Application and the use of Modified Procedure was January 31, 1995.  The Commission suspended the Company’s proposed effective date by Order No. 25854 pending further procedure and Order.

Commission Staff was the only party to submit written comments.  Staff’s comments address safety concerns related to the remoteness of meter, panel and pump motor installation sites, exposure to elements, animals and rodents, language barriers, and the need for periodic maintenance and cleaning.  Staff makes the following recommendations:

1.UP&L should implement a campaign to educate irrigation customers about the change.  This could include bill inserts, letters and media advertising.

2.Stickers should be attached to the front of pump panels (and also inside if possible) with a message stating that the panel is always energized.  The message should appear in both English and Spanish.

3.UP&L should periodically visually inspect irrigation services.  The inspection should include equipment between the Company's meter and the customer's pump, as well as equipment on the Company's side of the meter.  While the customer is ultimately responsible for the safety of their own equipment, it would be irresponsible for the Company to re-energize equipment with obvious safety problems.

4.UP&L should record and report any electrical accidents that occur during the non-irrigation season.  This would alert the Company if safety is actually a problem.

5.Customers should be able to request disconnection  for the entire non-irrigation season or for any part of it for purposes of making inspections or repairs.  There should be no charge for one disconnection and reconnection, and customers should be able to request disconnection either orally or in writing.

Utah Power filed a letter response to Staff’s comments on February 10, 1995.  The Company agrees with Staff Recommendations 1, 4, and 5.  Regarding Recommendation 2 Utah Power states that it is willing to supply safety warning stickers for panels but suggests that customers assume the responsibility for applying the stickers to the panels.  Regarding Recommendation 3 the Company states “in practice we do not energize a facility when there is an obvious safety problem on either our side or a customer’s side of the meter.  We feel, however, that the ultimate responsibility, and liability, for the condition of facilities on the customer’s side of the meter must remain with the customer.”

COMMISSION FINDINGS

The Commission has reviewed the filings of record and comments in Case No. UPL-E-95-1.  We continue to find that the issues presented are appropriate for processing under Modified Procedure.  We find the Company proposed changes to the seasonal disconnection policy for irrigation customers (Schedule 10) to be generally reasonable.  We find the safety concerns of Staff to be well placed and find it reasonable to approve and require the Company to comply with Staff Recommendations 1, 4, and 5.

We find the Company’s proposed modification to Staff Recommendation 2 to be reasonable.  The Company shall distribute dual language warning stickers to all irrigation customers, provide an accompanying explanation of the safety reasons for distribution and use, and advise the customers that replacement stickers are available upon request.  The Company should analyze whether this is something that should be done annually and make a recommendation to the Commission.

We also find the Company’s response to Staff Recommendation 3 to be a reasonable clarification of customer responsibility and liability for equipment on the customer’s side of the meter.  Periodic inspection, maintenance and cleaning of remote meter, panel and pump motor installation sites is important for safety and operation.  We also acknowledge that as to the equipment on the customer’s side of the meter it is and must remain the customer’s responsibility to inspect, clean and maintain such equipment.  We further expect the Company and the irrigation customer to recognize that safety problems on either side of the meter once identified are to be corrected.  If a safety problem on either side of the meter is identified by the Company during a visual inspection prior to energizing, the facility is not to be energized until after the safety problem is corrected.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has jurisdiction over PacifiCorp dba Utah Power & Light Company, an electric utility, pursuant to the authority and power granted it under Title 61 of the Idaho Code and pursuant to the Commission’s Rules of Procedure, IDAPA 31.01.01.000 et seq.

O R D E R

In consideration of the foregoing and as more particularly described and qualified above, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the changes to Utah Power electric service schedule No. 10 as proposed by the Company in Case No. UPL-E-95-1 be approved.  The Company is further ordered and directed to file amended tariff sheets and comply with the requirements outlined above.  The approved changes are effective with the Company’s filing of its amended tariff sheets.

THIS IS A FINAL ORDER.  Any person interested in this Order (or in issues finally decided by this Order) or in interlocutory Orders previously issued in this Case No. UPL-E-95-1 may petition for reconsideration within twenty-one (21) days of the service date of this Order with regard to any matter decided in this Order or in interlocutory Orders previously issued in this Case No. UPL-E-95-1.  Within seven (7) days after any person has petitioned for reconsideration, any other person may cross-petition for reconsideration.  See Idaho Code § 61-626.

DONE by Order of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission at Boise, Idaho this                  day of February 1995.

                                                                MARSHA H. SMITH, PRESIDENT

                                                                RALPH NELSON, COMMISSIONER

DENNIS S. HANSEN, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

Myrna J. Walters

Commission Secretary

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