

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Case No. 19-1270-TF

Investigation into Washington Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s, tariff filing for rate design changes and a change in rate schedules to be effective on services rendered beginning June 17, 2019	
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Order entered: 06/13/2019

**ORDER OPENING INVESTIGATION, SUSPENDING PROPOSED RATE DESIGN CHANGES, AND
NOTICE OF SCHEDULING CONFERENCE**

I. INTRODUCTION

On May 1, 2019, Washington Electric Cooperative, Inc. (“WEC”) filed revised tariffs with the Vermont Public Utility Commission (“Commission”) reflecting proposed rate design changes. WEC seeks to increase the residential customer charge from \$14.19 to \$25.00 per month, to reduce the low block of its inclining-block rate structure for residential customers from 200 kWh to 100 kWh, and to reduce the kWh rates for the low block from \$0.1135 to \$0.0800 and for the tail block from \$0.25341 to \$0.19961. The proposal also includes reductions to the kWh rates and increases to the customer charges for the commercial and large-power rate classes. WEC states that it has formulated its proposed rate design to “encourage WEC members to displace fossil fuel energy uses with electricity from renewable sources while still emphasizing the current design goals of energy efficiency and conservation.”¹ The tariff changes are proposed to take effect on June 17, 2019. In its petition, WEC states that it will suspend the proposed rate design changes “pending the [Commission’s] approval if an investigation is opened.”²

The Vermont Department of Public Service (“Department”) was notified of this tariff filing via the Commission’s electronic case management system, ePUC, at the time of the filing. Pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 225, the Department must investigate the justness and reasonableness of a proposed change to a rate schedule immediately upon receipt of notice of the change. If the

¹ WEC petition at 1.

² WEC petition at 3.

Department opposes the proposed rate change, the Commission must hear evidence on the matter.³

II. DISCUSSION

On June 3, 2019, the Department recommended that the Commission open an investigation into WEC's tariff filing. The Department states that it would be appropriate to open an investigation, in part, to determine whether WEC has achieved an appropriate balance between increasing monthly charges and decreasing kWh rates in light of current anticipated market conditions and WEC's statutory and regulatory obligations. The Department maintains that it would be appropriate for the proposed changes to remain suspended pending the completion of an investigation before the Commission.

Based on the Department's recommendation, we open an investigation into the justness and reasonableness of WEC's rate design proposal and suspend the proposed changes until the final determination in these proceedings.

III. ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED by the Public Utility Commission ("Commission") of the State of Vermont that:

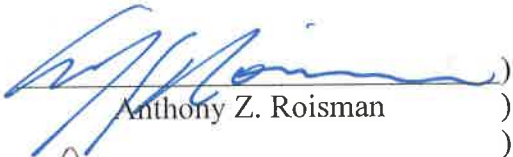
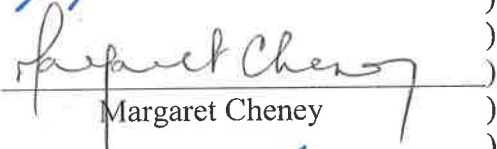
1. Pursuant to 30 V.S.A. §§ 225 and 227(a), the Commission accepts the Department of Public Service's recommendation and opens an investigation into the justness and reasonableness of Washington Electric Cooperative Inc.'s proposed tariff revisions as filed with the Commission on May 1, 2019.

2. The tariff filing is suspended and shall not become effective until final determination of these proceedings.

3. Pursuant to 30 V.S.A. §§ 10 and 11(a)(2), a scheduling conference will be held before the Public Utility Commission on June 28, 2019, commencing at 9:30 AM, in the Susan M. Hudson Hearing Room, Third Floor, People's United Bank Building, Montpelier, Vermont.

³ 30 V.S.A. § 225(b).

Dated at Montpelier, Vermont, this 13th day of June, 2019.

 Anthony Z. Roisman	)	PUBLIC UTILITY
 Margaret Cheney	)	COMMISSION
 Sarah Hofmann	)	OF VERMONT

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Filed: **June 13, 2019**

Attest: 
Clerk of the Commission

Notice to Readers: This decision is subject to revision of technical errors. Readers are requested to notify the Clerk of the Commission (by e-mail, telephone, or in writing) of any apparent errors, in order that any necessary corrections may be made. (E-mail address: puc.clerk@vermont.gov)

PUC Case No. 19-1270-TF - SERVICE LIST

Parties:

Daniel C. Burke, Esq.
Vermont Department of Public Service
112 State Street
Third Floor
Montpelier, VT 05620-2601
dan.burke@vermont.gov

(for Vermont Department of Public Service)

Ronald A. Shems, Esq.
Tarrant Gillies & Richardson
P.O. Box 1440
Montpelier, VT 05601-1440
rshems@tgrvt.com

(for Washington Electric Cooperative Inc.)