

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION  
OF OREGON**

**UM 2032**

In the matter of  
  
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF  
OREGON,  
  
Investigation into the Treatment of Network  
Upgrade Costs for Qualifying Facilities

NORTHWEST AND  
INTERMOUNTAIN POWER  
PRODUCERS COALITION,  
RENEWABLE ENERGY COALITION,  
AND COMMUNITY RENEWABLE  
ENERGY ASSOCIATION’S MOTION  
TO STRIKE

EXPEDITED CONSIDERATION  
REQUESTED

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Pursuant to OAR 860-001-0420, the Northwest and Intermountain Power Producers Coalition, the Renewable Energy Coalition, and the Community Renewable Energy Association (together referred to as the “Interconnection Customer Coalition”) hereby move the Public Utility Commission of Oregon (the “Commission” or “OPUC”) for an order striking portions of the Joint Utilities’ Exhibit 100 (“Joint Utilities/100”) by Richard A. Vail, Kris Bremer, Shaun Foster, Sean Larson, and Jared Ellsworth, as well as portions of the Joint Utilities’ Exhibit 200 (“Joint Utilities/200”) (testimonies together referred to as “Joint Testimonies”), by Michael G. Wilding, Robert Macfarlane, and Alison Williams, both filed on August 24, 2020. As discussed below, the portions of the Joint Testimonies marked in the attached Exhibit A constitute improper legal argument offered by non-lawyer witnesses. Therefore, the Commission should strike them from the record.

The Interconnection Customer Coalition also requests expedited consideration of this Motion so that it may receive a ruling with sufficient time to prepare its response testimony

accordingly. Without expedited consideration, the Utilities' Response would be due by September 17, 2020, the Interconnection Customer Coalition's Reply by September 24, 2020, and assuming a one-week review, a ruling by the Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ") is expected around October 1, 2020. The Interconnection Customer Coalition's Response Testimony is due October 19, 2020. Expedited consideration will provide clarity as to whether the Interconnection Customer Coalition must decide whether to expend scarce resources conducting exhaustive discovery and preparing testimony responding to legal arguments. Therefore, expedited consideration of this motion is warranted. The Interconnection Customer Coalition proposes the following schedule:

- Utilities' Response: due by September 14, 2020 (7 business days),
- Interconnection Customer Coalition Reply: due by September 17, 2020 (3 business days),
- ALJ Ruling: preferably issued early in the week of September 21, 2020.

Pursuant to OAR 860-001-0420(6), the Interconnection Customer Coalition has conferred with PacifiCorp, d/b/a Pacific Power ("PacifiCorp"), Portland General Electric Company ("PGE"), and Idaho Power Company ("Idaho Power") (together referred to as the "Utilities") which opposes this expedited schedule.

## II. BACKGROUND

This docket was opened "to address the appropriate cost allocation of interconnection-related Network Upgrades for qualifying facilitates" ("QFs").<sup>1</sup> Several parties urged Commission Staff to consider expanding the scope of this investigation.<sup>2</sup> Staff ultimately recommended that this phase of the investigation only address

- 1) Who should be required to pay for Network Upgrades necessary to interconnect a QF to a host utility and

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<sup>1</sup> Ruling at 1 (May 22, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at 1-2.

- 2) Whether on-system QFs should either be required to interconnect to a host utility with Network Resource Interconnection (“NRIS”) or have the option to interconnect with Energy Resources Interconnection Service (“ERIS”) or an interconnection service similar to ERIS.<sup>3</sup>

If the outcome of the first issue determines that utility customers should primarily pay for Network Upgrades, then Staff recommended a third investigation into how to implement that payment structure (i.e., deciding whether the customers pay upfront, QFs pay upfront and receive reimbursement from customers, or a whether the Commission should implement a cost-sharing approach).<sup>4</sup>

On July 1, 2020, ALJ Kirkpatrick issued a Prehearing Conference Memorandum.<sup>5</sup> In that Memorandum, she reiterated that the investigation would address Staff’s issues described above and that the investigation would follow a contested case process.<sup>6</sup> The Interconnection Customer Coalition argued that the case should proceed as a non-contested case proceeding because the issues were primarily legal and policy, and because both the OPUC and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (“FERC”) established their rules and policies in non-contested case proceedings. The Utilities insisted upon a contested case process because they asserted there were key facts and other evidence warranting testimony.

The Memorandum also set the procedural schedule for the rest of the docket.<sup>7</sup> As part of that schedule, the Utilities filed their Joint Testimonies on August 24, 2020. The Interconnection Customer Coalition believes the Commission should have addressed these issues in a non-contested case proceeding, and the Utilities’ testimony has proven that point. The majority of

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<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Prehearing Conference Memorandum at 1 (July 1, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

the testimony includes witness qualifications, summary, policy recommendations, numerous lengthy citations to OPUC and FERC rules and orders, and legal analysis of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (“PURPA”), as well as analysis of state and federal rules and orders that interpret the law. The Utilities’ Joint Testimonies primarily summarize and apply the law to the facts, which a party should only do in legal briefings. The rest of the Joint Testimonies covers witness qualifications (about 10% of the total testimony). A very small portion of the testimony actually asserts facts, and even then, the Utilities could have easily included these facts in written comments or legal briefings.<sup>8</sup> The Utilities also submitted no exhibits with factual information, studies, or evidence.

The Interconnection Customer Coalition now moves to strike portions of the Utilities’ Joint Testimonies for the reasons articulated below.

### **III. MOTION TO STRIKE**

The Commission should strike portions of the Utilities’ Joint Testimonies for three reasons. First, the legal arguments and conclusions made in the Joint Testimonies are not admissible by law because testimony legally can only include factual evidence and because legal arguments belong in attorney briefings and oral arguments. Second, even though some of the

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<sup>8</sup> The following pages of Joint Utilities/100 are the main pages, charitably read in the Utilities’ perspective, with actual factual assertions (but are still of the type that parties often include in comments or legal pleadings): Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/13:6-11 (identifying where on a utility’s system-specific upgrades are occur (distribution vs. transmission system)), 16:1-18:13 (describing the interconnection process), 19:13-22:8 (describing the QF interconnection process and cost drivers), 32:8-33:23 (describing alleged cost-shifting), 35:11-36:7 (describing the difference between NR and ER and cost impacts.) Only *9 lines* of testimony could even arguably be considered factual evidence in the Joint Utilities/200, which is almost entirely legal and policy arguments: Joint Utilities/200, Wilding-Macfarlane-Williams/13:8-20, 13:22 (addressing whether certain policies would be a barrier to QF development). Joint Utilities/200 is an entirely unnecessary and superfluous filing the Utilities could have made in legal pleadings.

witnesses have an energy policy background, as non-lawyers, the witnesses should not have submitted legal policy analysis. Finally, if the Commission does not strike the highlighted portions of the Joint Testimonies, it will unnecessarily complicate the Interconnection Customer Coalition’s response testimony for this proceeding. If the Utilities’ testimony is not stricken, the Interconnection Customer Coalition will have to choose between leaving the testimony unrefuted, or conducting discovery, submitting responsive testimony, and cross-examining the witnesses about their views and interpretations of the law. The first option will prejudice the Interconnection Customer Coalition because there would be no responsive testimony to these core issues. The second option will significantly increase the cost and complexity of this proceeding.

For the reasons stated above and described in more detail below, the Commission should strike the highlighted portions of the Joint Testimonies attached in Exhibit A.

**A. The Legal Arguments and Conclusions Throughout the Utilities’ Joint Testimony Are, By Law, Inadmissible**

The highlighted testimony in Exhibit A is irrelevant because it is based on legal conclusions and analysis by non-lawyers. More importantly, these legal statements do not help develop any factual evidence for the proceeding, which is the purpose of submitting testimony. It is a “well-established principle that legal argument *per se*, belongs in briefs and not in the testimony of non-lawyer witnesses.”<sup>9</sup> Parties to a Commission proceeding may submit testimony to provide relevant evidence, which Oregon law defines as “evidence tending to make the existence of any *fact* at issue in the proceedings more or less probable than it would be

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<sup>9</sup> *In re Or. Pub. Util. Comm’n Staff Requesting the Comm’n Direct PacifiCorp to File Tariffs Establishing Automatic Adjustment Clauses Under the Terms of SB 408*, Docket No. UE 177, Order No. 08-176 at 3 (Mar. 20, 2008).

without the evidence.”<sup>10</sup> As ALJ Allan Arlow previously explained in a ruling on a similar motion to strike, “it is important to distinguish between the witness’ understanding of the law and the witness’ interpretation and application of the law to the facts... .”<sup>11</sup> The former relates to a witness’s “state of mind in developing testimony,” and the latter is considered legal analysis or a legal argument, both of which are inadmissible.<sup>12</sup> In that ruling, ALJ Arlow also made clear that any second-hand opinion of a witness’s counsel is also inadmissible testimony.<sup>13</sup> To be sure, a witness’s testimony can, and frequently does reference statutes and previous Commission proceedings, but a witness can only do so to establish factual evidence.<sup>14</sup> Other than that, “legal issues can and should be addressed in depth in the parties’ pre-hearing and post-hearing briefing, and at oral argument, if scheduled by the Commission. It is not appropriate, however, for the parties to present their legal arguments and conclusions through witness testimony.”<sup>15</sup>

In this case, there are many places within the Utilities’ Joint Testimonies where the witnesses answered a posed question with legal conclusions, arguments, or assumptions. For example, the witnesses made several legal conclusions throughout Joint Utilities/100, when they stated that certain Commission policies were consistent with PURPA’s standards.<sup>16</sup> They also

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<sup>10</sup> OAR 860-004-0450(1)(a) (emphasis added in italic); *See, e.g., Am. Can Co. v. Lobdell*, 55 Or App 451, 466 (1982) (upholding Commission’s exclusion of irrelevant evidence); *see also* OAR 860-001-0480(10) (“written testimony is subject to rules of admissibility”).

<sup>11</sup> *Blue Marmot v. PGE*, Docket Nos. UM 1829, Ruling at 3 (Dec. 13, 2017) [hereinafter *Blue Marmot*] (consolidated with Docket Nos. 1830, 1831, 1832, 1833).

<sup>12</sup> *Id.* (citing Federal Rule of Evidence 702 (which permits the use of expert testimony only if “scientific, technical, or other specialized knowledge will assist the trier of fact to understand the evidence or to determine a fact at issue.”); Thomas E. Baker, *The Impropriety of Expert Witness Testimony on the Law*, 40 U. Kan. L. Rev. 325 (1992)).

<sup>13</sup> *Blue Marmot*, Ruling at 5 (Dec. 13, 2017).

<sup>14</sup> OAR 860-004-0450(1)(a).

<sup>15</sup> *Blue Marmot*, PGE Motion to Strike at 3:3-6 (Oct. 25, 2017).

<sup>16</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/5:16-18 (“The Commission’s current policies, which allocate the costs of QF-driven Network Upgrades to the QFs that cause them, are consistent with PURPA’s customer indifference standard.”); 6:5-7

made legal conclusions, sometimes incorrectly, regarding which regulatory entities had jurisdiction over interconnection customers.<sup>17</sup>

Additionally, even though precedent on admissible testimony specifically explains that any application of the law to facts is inadmissible,<sup>18</sup> the witnesses answered several questions regarding: 1) which laws apply to who;<sup>19</sup> 2) who must pay for what upgrades under the law;<sup>20</sup> and 3) how the law defines certain terms.<sup>21</sup> The answers provided to these questions are all legal conclusions and interpretations that require applying the law to facts and are, thus, inadmissible.

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(Stating that the Commission’s current QF policies are consistent with “customer-indifference policies.”); Joint Utilities/200, Wilding-Macfarlane-Williams/3:17-18 (“Current Commission policy is consistent with PURPA, state regulatory policy, and Oregon law.”); Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/22:9-15 (answering the question “is the Commission’s QF-interconnection Network-Upgrade cost-allocation policy consistent with PURPA?”).

<sup>17</sup> Joint Utilities/100 Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/7:5-10; Joint Utilities/200, Wilding-Macfarlane-Williams/7:6-8. FERC retains appellate like jurisdiction over all PURPA interconnections.

<sup>18</sup> *Blue Marmot*, Ruling at 3 (Dec. 13, 2017).

<sup>19</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/9:17-18, 10:1-2 (“Do the Commission’s small generator interconnection rules apply only to QFs?”); 10:7-10 (“What interconnection rules apply to QFs with a nameplate capacity between 10 and 20 MW?”); 35:7-10 (answering a question by explaining that “FERC’s policies for FERC-jurisdictional generators are governed by the FPA and do not face the limitation of customer indifference and the avoided cost rate. In contrast, the appropriate policies for QFs turn on the requirements imposed by PURPA and state regulatory policy, not the FPA, as the Joint Utilities’ Regulatory Witnesses discuss.”).

<sup>20</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/8:15-20, 9:1 (“Under the Commission’s current policies, who is required to pay for the Network Upgrades necessary to interconnect a QF to the host utility?”); 9:9-12 (“Who is required to pay for Interconnection Facilities and Distribution Upgrades under the QF-LGIA?”); 11:6-11 (“who is required to pay for the various facilities and upgrades necessary to interconnect the generating resource to the utility’s system?”); 34:5-7 (answering a question by explaining how “shifting the costs caused by a QF’s interconnection from the QF to the utility would violate PURPA’s customer indifference principle”).

<sup>21</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/29:20-22-19 (explaining without citation that PURPA’s “interconnection costs” definition is so broad “it includes all types of facilities or upgrades that may be necessary for a QF’s interconnection, including Network Upgrades”).

Below are several examples of contested legal assertions that should be answered by the Utilities' lawyers in pleadings and not by their witnesses in testimony.

- Joint Utilities/100 makes a legal assertion answering the legal question “[u]nder the Commission’s small generator interconnection rules, who is required to pay for the various facilities and upgrades necessary to interconnection the generating resource to the utility’s system?”<sup>22</sup> The witnesses’ answer is overly simplistic and inconsistent with the Oregon Administrative Rules and the Commission’s Order adopting the administrative rules.<sup>23</sup>
- Joint Utilities/100 asserts that if the Commission adopted a specific policy (“shifting the costs caused by a QF’s interconnection from the QF to the utility”), then that policy would violate PURPA (“would violate PURPA’s customer indifference principle”).<sup>24</sup> The Interconnection Customer Coalition will answer this legal question differently.
- Joint Utilities/100 asserts that “FERC has made clear that a QF’s output must be delivered using firm transmission service, and that QF output cannot be curtailed except in system emergencies.”<sup>25</sup> The witnesses make this statement based on a legal analysis of certain FERC orders, including over one page of legal analysis

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<sup>22</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/11:6-11.

<sup>23</sup> For example, the interconnection customer is not required to pay for any interconnection upgrades that: 1) are not required to mitigate adverse system impacts; 2) are not necessitated by the interconnection; 3) the utility already planned to make; and 4) primarily benefit the utility. *In the Matter of a Rulemaking to Adopt Rules Related to Small Generator Interconnection*, Docket No. AR 521 at 4-5 (June 8, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/34:5-7 (answering a question by explaining how “shifting the costs caused by a QF’s interconnection from the QF to the utility would violate PURPA’s customer indifference principle”).

<sup>25</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/30:15-17.



for a single FERC case.<sup>26</sup> The witnesses’ legal interpretation of a recent Oregon case is not even caveated with the “we are not lawyers” phrase.<sup>27</sup> This statement of law is also incorrect because the QF and the utility can voluntarily agree to contractual arrangements that differ from the requirements of FERC’s PURPA rules, including contractual arrangements that would allow for curtailment rights tailored to other circumstances, as long as the QF has an option at the time of contracting to sell its net output without curtailment.<sup>28</sup>

- Joint Utilities/100 asserts that “PURPA’s unique operational requirements” means that “NR Network Upgrades are needed ....”<sup>29</sup>
- Joint Utilities/100 asserts that “requiring a QF to pay for the costs of Network Upgrades ... is mandated by PURPA ....”<sup>30</sup> and that passing through these costs to retail customers would also violate PURPA.<sup>31</sup> It would be more appropriate for the parties to address this legal assertion regarding PURPA’s mandates in legal briefing rather than in testimony.
- Without using the “we are not lawyers” caveat, Joint Utilities/200 asserts that current Commission policy is consistent with PURPA and Oregon law.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/31-32:7.

<sup>27</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/34:9-17.

<sup>28</sup> 18 CFR § 292.301(b).

<sup>29</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/19:9-12.

<sup>30</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/22:11-13.

<sup>31</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/33:23-34:1, 34:5-7.

<sup>32</sup> *E.g.*, Joint Utilities/200, Wilding-Macfarlane-Williams/3:17-18, 4:5-21.

Lastly, in several portions of the Joint Testimonies, the witnesses concluded that certain topics were “clearly within the scope of this docket.”<sup>33</sup> The witnesses are not legally qualified, nor procedurally allowed to make these statements under Oregon law, because these legal assumptions are not factual evidence, which is what testimony is supposed to consist of. The witnesses are free to state their understanding of the issues within the scope of this phase of the proceeding, but there is no reason for them to argue about the procedural scope of the docket in their testimony. The Interconnection Customer Coalition does not intend to, nor does it believe it is appropriate for their witnesses to debate with the Utilities’ witnesses in its testimony regarding the docket’s scope.

The Utilities may believe that their regulatory witnesses who contributed to Joint Utilities/200 were allowed to speak to legal issues, but that is not the case. While the regulatory witnesses to Joint Utilities/200 may have more policy credentials than the witnesses in Joint Utilities/100, none of them are lawyers for the Utilities. Therefore, any interpretation of previous legal cases or current laws is inadmissible according to existing precedent (which is discussed further in the next section).

However, the real crux of the issue with much of the regulatory witnesses’ Joint Utilities/200 (and also in the highlighted but undiscussed portions of Joint Utilities/100) is that it is clearly legal analysis, arguments, and interpretations. And as PGE has previously stated, “[i]t is not appropriate... for the parties to present their legal arguments and conclusions through witness testimony.”<sup>34</sup> According to PGE’s own attorneys, these legal issues should be addressed

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<sup>33</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/12:18-20 (“These Network Upgrades are defined by the Commission as ‘Network Upgrades’ and are clearly within the scope of this docket.”).

<sup>34</sup> *Blue Marmot*, PGE Motion to Strike at 3:3-6.

“in the parties’ pre-hearing and post-hearing briefing, and at oral argument, if scheduled by the Commission.”<sup>35</sup> As a result, the Commission should strike the portions of the testimony highlighted in Exhibit A to remain consistent with Oregon law, existing precedent, and the Utilities’ own previous position on the matter.

**B. The Witnesses Submitting the Joint Testimonies Are Non-Lawyers, And Therefore, Any Legal Policy Analysis is Inadmissible Testimony**

Under Oregon law, only those with specialized knowledge and skill can assist the trier of fact as an expert witness,<sup>36</sup> and Commission precedent has already outlined what types of witnesses are not allowed to discuss legal decisions.<sup>37</sup>

For example, in one proceeding, the ALJ determined that an engineer was not allowed to testify as to whether an independent power producer (“IPP”) had a right to deliver to a preferred point of delivery, whether PGE could require an IPP “to pay for system upgrades required to facilitate delivery, or whether PGE’s obligations to contract with QFs ‘supersede[d]’ its commitments to participate in the EIM.”<sup>38</sup> In that case, the engineer was familiar with the relevant transmission systems and the obligations of QFs regarding “transmission and interconnection, avoided cost pricing, and the types and nature of transmission service available under ... [PGE’s] ... Open Access Transmission Tariff.”<sup>39</sup> Still, the ALJ determined that these

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<sup>35</sup>

*Id.*

<sup>36</sup>

ORS 40.410 (“[i]f scientific, technical or other specialized knowledge will assist the trier of fact to understand the evidence or to determine a fact in issue, a witness qualified as an expert by knowledge, skill, experience, training or education may testify thereto in the form of an opinion or otherwise.”).

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*See generally Blue Marmot*, PGE Motion to Strike at 3; *see also Blue Marmot*, Ruling at 4-5 (Dec. 13, 2017).

<sup>38</sup>

*Blue Marmot*, PGE Motion to Strike at 3:9-11

<sup>39</sup>

*Id.* at Ex. A at 20:18-22.

topics were legal in nature and that the witnesses should not have submitted them within testimony.<sup>40</sup>

In the same proceeding, the ALJ determined that another witness could not discuss the Commission's orders and basic policies on the formation of a Legally Enforceable Obligation ("LEO") under PURPA, as the simple discussion of that order drew a conclusion on the proper application of the law to facts of the case.<sup>41</sup> That particular witness had personal knowledge of the factual issues, a bachelors' degree in economics, a Masters of Business Administration from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a Master of Public Administration from Harvard, and several years of experience as the lead solar developer in the West.<sup>42</sup> His professional responsibilities included "market analysis and prioritization based on commercial prospects, site identification, site acquisition, interconnection, permitting, power marketing and power purchase agreement ("PPA") negotiations."<sup>43</sup> Despite his experience, education credentials, and being a fact witness in a case, the subject matter was deemed inappropriate, so he was not qualified to discuss the legal outcomes of that energy regulatory case.<sup>44</sup>

In this proceeding, none of the witnesses taking part in the Utilities' Joint Testimony are attorneys.<sup>45</sup> At least two times in Joint Utilities/100, the witnesses, in fact, state that they are

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<sup>40</sup> See generally *Blue Marmot*, PGE Motion to Strike at 3; see also *Blue Marmot*, Ruling at 4-5 (Dec. 13, 2017).

<sup>41</sup> *Blue Marmot*, PGE Motion to Strike at 3:12-13.

<sup>42</sup> *Id.* at Ex. A at 2:7-15.

<sup>43</sup> *Id.*

<sup>44</sup> See generally *Blue Marmot*, PGE Motion to Strike at 3; see also *Blue Marmot*, Ruling at 4-5 (Dec. 13, 2017).

<sup>45</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/2-4; Joint Utilities/200, Wilding-Macfarlane-Williams/1-3.

“not lawyers” before going on to provide legal analysis, opinions, and conclusions as part of their testimony.<sup>46</sup>

The witnesses attempt to qualify their legal answers, basing their conclusions on their “understanding” of the law.<sup>47</sup> To be sure, a witness explaining their “understanding of the law” is generally admissible, as it is distinguishable from interpreting and applying the law to the facts at hand.<sup>48</sup> That said, a witness cannot simply stamp qualifying language on testimony primarily designed to assert legal opinion to ensure its admissibility. As was previously described in the *Blue Marmot* Ruling, the distinguishing line between admissible and inadmissible testimony is that admissible testimony only states the witness’s understanding of the law, whereas inadmissible testimony attempts to interpret or apply the law.<sup>49</sup> In the Joint Testimonies, the witnesses attempt to make qualifying statements *no less than 20 times* regarding their underlying “understanding of the law,” but this language immediately precedes their own legal analysis and conclusions.<sup>50</sup> As a result, these portions of the testimony in the whole attempt to interpret and apply the law. Therefore, the language regarding their “understanding of the law” cannot actually serve as qualifying language and the testimony is inadmissible. Moreover, this practice by the Utilities’ further shows just how much of this testimony is reminiscent of a legal brief as

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<sup>46</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/27:7; Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/31:21.

<sup>47</sup> *See n. 44.*

<sup>48</sup> *Blue Marmot*, Ruling at 3 (Dec. 13, 2017).

<sup>49</sup> *Id.*

<sup>50</sup> *E.g.*, Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/7:8-10, 9:18, 22:12, 23:21, 24:4, 24:8-23; 25:2-8, 25:18-24, 27:7-28, 28:5-22 (while the Utilities’ only quote the definition provided by the CFR as they “understand” it, this quote is followed by their own explanation of the broadness of this definition under PURPA, with no citations for their conclusion whatsoever); 31:2-22; Joint Utilities/200, Wilding-Macfarlane-Williams/5:7-12, 6:3-9, 7:6-12, 7:n.6, 10:17-21, 11:8-11, 11:13-16, 14:1-6.

opposed to factually relevant testimony. Accordingly, the Commission should strike these statements from the testimony.<sup>51</sup>

As an additional matter, the Utilities' decision to not identify which of their eight witnesses answer the questions makes it impossible to ascertain whether the particular testimony offered is admissible expert testimony. As was previously mentioned, witnesses with extensive engineering, economics, and business experience in relation to transmission and interconnection were not qualified to discuss the outcome of landmark energy regulatory precedent. In this case, all of the witnesses in Joint Utilities/100 have experience resembling that of prior witnesses who were not allowed to analyze energy policy or legal precedent. And yet, the witnesses have testified with legal discussions throughout their testimony.<sup>52</sup> Specifically, in Joint Utilities/100, the witnesses engage in a five-page, in-depth legal discussion, complete with legal citation as if it were a legal briefing.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, most, if not all, of the highlighted portions of Joint Utilities/200 consist of legal analysis written as if it were legal briefing. As has been repeatedly discussed throughout this response, legal briefings are simply not allowed in witness testimony. Moreover, because most of the witnesses do not have the expertise to provide legal analysis, and the answering witness cannot be identified, the Commission should strike the relevant highlighted portions of Exhibit A from the testimony.

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<sup>51</sup> This conclusion is also consistent with the similar Motion to Strike proceeding in *Blue Marmot*, where the complainants argued that their expert witness was simply giving their “understanding of the law, rather than their opinion,” but the ALJ found that their understanding of the law also included some legal analysis and conclusions. *Blue Marmot*, Ruling at 2, 4-5 (Dec. 13, 2017).

<sup>52</sup> See attached Ex. A.

<sup>53</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/23-28.

**C. Not Striking the Testimony Highlighted in Exhibit A Will Force the Interconnection Customer Coalition Into a Similarly Inappropriate and Inefficient Process of Developing Response Testimony**

The portions of the Utilities’ Joint Testimony marked in Exhibit A must be stricken because responding to these witnesses’ legal opinions would inappropriately require the Interconnection Customer Coalition to conduct discovery on legal argument and to provide expert legal opinions in its own testimony. Specifically, there are several places in the Joint Testimonies, where the witnesses offer a legal conclusion without explaining or citing to how they came to that conclusion.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, the Interconnection Customer Coalition will have to conduct discovery as to the basis of those conclusions.

For example, both pieces of the Utilities’ testimony state that the Commission’s policy regarding “quantifiable system-wide benefits” is “essentially ... a ‘but-for’ test under which a QF is responsible for the upgrades that would not have been required but-for its interconnection request.”<sup>55</sup> Neither testimony provides citations to prior comments, testimony, orders, or rules that support the witnesses’ legal opinion regarding a Commission “but-for” test. The Interconnection Customer Coalition has not yet completed its legal research on this issue, but it is not currently aware of the Commission using this term or ever establishing a “but-for” test. The Interconnection Customer Coalition will now need to conduct discovery regarding the basis for this legal opinion and decide whether its witnesses will need to provide their own legal opinions about whether a “but-for” test exists.

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<sup>54</sup> *E.g.*, Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/5:16-18, 6:5, 9:9-12, 18:15-17, 19:1-4, 23:21-24:1.

<sup>55</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/25:22-24; Joint Utilities/200, Wilding-Macfarlane-Williams/11:8-11.

Though the Interconnection Customer Coalition would regularly reserve such responses for legal briefs and oral argument, if the Commission does not strike the highlighted language from the Joint Testimonies, the Interconnection Customer Coalition will need to either respond in this manner or leave the Utilities' legal opinions included in their testimony un rebutted. Not only will such a response unnecessarily lengthen the testimony, but it will also add confusion to what is factually relevant versus what is legal argument, the latter of which is inadmissible within witness testimony. The Utilities should understand the complexities of this method of developing a response, as PGE has previously argued that this same exact "approach to presenting legal argument is awkward and inefficient and should be avoided."<sup>56</sup>

Further, the Joint Testimonies legal nature simply makes clear what the Interconnection Customer Coalition previously noted in this docket's scoping process, which is that "Staff's proposed Phase I issues . . . implicate more policy and legal questions about whether the [PURPA] requires that QFs be treated a particular way,"<sup>57</sup> in favor of a more streamlined process not involving testimony. The Joint Testimonies legal nature now just makes clear, that the utilities do not dispute that the phase one issues are primarily a legal question, but have succeeded in dragging out this process and any beneficial policy changes for QFs.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The Interconnection Customer Coalition respectfully requests that the Commission strike the portions of the Utilities' Joint Testimony marked in Exhibit A, ultimately because they contain legal arguments and conclusions, which are irrelevant and inadmissible. If the testimony is not stricken, the Interconnection Customer Coalition's response will require significant

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<sup>56</sup> *Blue Marmot*, PGE's Motion to Strike at 3:1-2.

<sup>57</sup> NIPPC, the Coalition and CREA Comments on Staff's Proposed Issues List at 10 (May 4, 2020).



discovery, some of which is likely to be controversial. A much cleaner and simpler approach to developing a record, in this case, would be to strike the legal argument from the Utilities' Joint Testimony and require the parties to present their legal arguments, with appropriate citations, in briefs.

Dated this 2nd day of September 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Sanger Law, PC



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**Exhibit A**

To

THE INTERCONNECTION CUSTOMER COALITION'S

MOTION TO STRIKE



ALISHA TILL  
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August 24, 2020

**VIA ELECTRONIC FILING**

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

**Re: Docket UM 2032 – Investigation into the Treatment of Network Upgrade Costs for Qualifying Facilities**

Attention Filing Center:

Attached for filing in the above-captioned docket is the Joint Utilities' Direct Testimony (Joint Utilities/100-200).

Please contact this office with any questions.

Sincerely,

Alisha Till  
Paralegal

Attachment

BEFORE THE  
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OREGON

**DOCKET NO. UM 2032**

Joint Utilities' Direct Testimony

Joint Utilities: PacifiCorp d/b/a Pacific Power, Portland General Electric  
Company, and Idaho Power Company

**JOINT UTILITIES EXHIBIT 100**

**Joint Testimony of Richard A. Vail, Kris Bremer, Shaun Foster,  
Sean Larson, and Jared Ellsworth**

August 24, 2020

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1 **Q. Please state your names, business addresses, and present positions.**

2 A. My name is Richard A. Vail. My business address is 825 NE Multnomah, Suite 1600,  
3 Portland, Oregon 97232. My present position is Vice President of Transmission at  
4 PacifiCorp d/b/a Pacific Power (PacifiCorp). I am responsible for the transmission system  
5 planning, customer generator interconnection requests and transmission service requests,  
6 regional transmission initiatives, asset management, capital budgeting for transmission,  
7 and administration of the Company's Open Access Transmission Tariff ("OATT").

8 My name is Kris Bremer. My business address is 825 NE Multnomah, Suite 1600,  
9 Portland, Oregon 97232. My present position is Director of Generation Interconnection  
10 and Transmission Project Management at PacifiCorp. I am responsible for customer  
11 generator interconnection requests and delivery of transmission capital projects.

12 My name is Shaun Foster. My business address is 121 SW Salmon Street, 3 World  
13 Trade Center, Mailstop 0409, Portland, OR 97204. My current position at Portland General  
14 Electric Company (PGE) is Senior Transmission and Market Services Analyst.

15 My name is Sean Larson. My business address is 121 SW Salmon Street, 3 World  
16 Trade Center, Mailstop 0503, Portland, OR 97204. My current position at PGE is Senior  
17 Transmission Planning Engineer.

18 My name is Jared Ellsworth. My business address is 1221 West Idaho Street, Boise,  
19 Idaho 83702. I am employed by Idaho Power Company (Idaho Power) as the  
20 Transmission, Distribution & Resource Planning Director for the Planning, Engineering  
21 and Construction Department.

## I. QUALIFICATIONS

1 **Q. Mr. Vail, please describe your educational background and professional experience.**

2 A. I have a Bachelor of Science Degree with Honors in Electrical Engineering with a focus in  
3 electric power systems from Portland State University. I have been Vice President of  
4 Transmission for PacifiCorp since December 2012. Prior to my current position in  
5 Transmission, I was director of asset management since 2007. Prior to that position I had  
6 management responsibility for a number of organizations in the Company's asset  
7 management group including capital planning, maintenance policy, maintenance planning,  
8 and investment planning since joining the company in 2001.

9 **Q. Mr. Bremer, please describe your educational background and professional**  
10 **experience.**

11 A. I have a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Warner Pacific College. I  
12 have had management responsibility of customer generator interconnection requests since  
13 2014. I have been employed by PacifiCorp since 2004.

14 **Q. Mr. Foster, please describe your educational background and professional experience.**

15 A. I joined PGE in 2007, working first as a Customer Service Representative before becoming  
16 an Interconnections Coordinator in the Customer Generation Interconnection Group in  
17 2009. In 2016, I joined PGE's Transmission and Reliability Services Group, where I work  
18 as a Senior Transmission and Market Services Analyst. I am responsible for ensuring  
19 compliance with PGE's OATT as it pertains to interconnection requests, transmission  
20 service requests, local and regional transmission planning, coordination with other regional  
21 transmission providers, and other analysis. I have also served as PGE's representative on  
22 the Energy Trust of Oregon's Renewable Energy Advisory Council. I continue to represent

1 PGE on the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) Reliability Assessment  
2 Committee, as well as on NorthernGrid's Enrolled Party and States Committee and  
3 Member Committee, which I co-chair.

4 **Q. Mr. Larson, please describe your educational background and professional**  
5 **experience.**

6 A. I received a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from Portland State University.  
7 I then worked for PacifiCorp for two years as an Associate Engineer responsible for  
8 Overhead Distribution Standards. I joined PGE in 2011, and worked first as an  
9 Underground Distribution Standards Engineer, before becoming a Transmission and  
10 Distribution Planning Engineer in 2013. As a Transmission and Distribution Planning  
11 Engineer, I have studied Large Generator Interconnection Requests, transmission service  
12 requests, and total transfer capability, and I have implemented transmission, substation,  
13 and distribution projects for PGE's customers.

14 **Q. Mr. Ellsworth, please describe your educational background and professional**  
15 **experience.**

16 A. In 2004, I was hired as a Distribution Planning engineer in Idaho Power's Delivery  
17 Planning department. In 2007, I moved into the System Planning department, where my  
18 principal responsibilities included planning for bulk high-voltage transmission and  
19 substation projects, generation interconnection projects, and NERC reliability compliance  
20 standards. I transitioned into the Transmission Policy & Development group with a similar  
21 role, and in 2013, I spent a year cross-training with Idaho Power's Load Serving Operations  
22 group. In 2014, I was promoted to Engineering Leader of the Transmission Policy &  
23 Development department and assumed leadership of the System Planning group in 2018.



1 In early 2020, I was promoted into my current role as the Transmission, Distribution and  
2 Resource Planning Director. I am currently responsible for the planning of Idaho Power's  
3 wires and resources to continue to provide customers with cost-effective and reliable  
4 electrical service.

## II. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

5 **Q. Please describe the issues list adopted by the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ).**

6 A. On May 22, 2020, the ALJ adopted the following issue list in this docket:

- 7 1. Who should be required to pay for Network Upgrades necessary to interconnect the  
8 QF to the host utility?
- 9 2. Should on-system QFs be required to interconnect to the host utility with Network  
10 Resource Interconnection (NRIS) or should QFs have the option to interconnect with  
11 Energy Resource Interconnection Service (ERIS) or an interconnection service  
12 similar to ERIS?

13 **Q. What is the purpose of your testimony?**

14 A. Our testimony describes the generation interconnection landscape in Oregon and defines  
15 Network Upgrades, the subject of this docket. We describe: (1) how transmission providers  
16 process requests for interconnection service differently under Oregon generator  
17 interconnection policies (with a foundation in the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of  
18 1978 (PURPA) and state law) than under Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)  
19 interconnection policies driven by the Federal Power Act (FPA); (2) the difference between  
20 ERIS and NRIS; and (3) how a Qualifying Facility's (QF) siting choice drives the costs of  
21 Network Upgrades associated with both types of interconnection service. We also explain  
22 why NRIS is the only appropriate interconnection service type for Qualifying Facilities  
23 directly interconnecting with the purchasing utility under PURPA, and how allocating costs  
24 of both ER- and NR-driven Network Upgrades to QFs is necessary to maintain customer

1 indifference to the purchase of QF power.

2 **Q. Are there other witnesses providing testimony in this docket?**

3 A. Yes. Mr. Michael G. Wilding, Mr. Robert MacFarlane, and Ms. Alison Williams (Joint  
4 Utilities' Regulatory Witnesses) will provide testimony explaining why the Commission's  
5 current QF interconnection policies are consistent with both PURPA's customer  
6 indifference standard and the Public Utility Commission of Oregon's (Commission) duty  
7 to oversee retail rates.

8 **Q. Please summarize your testimony.**

9 A. The primary issue raised in this docket is who should pay for Network Upgrades  
10 necessitated by a QF's interconnection. Interconnection-driven Network Upgrades are  
11 upgrades on the utility's transmission system at or beyond the QF's point of  
12 interconnection. They can be subdivided into two types: non-deliverability-related  
13 Network Upgrades associated primarily with ERIS and deliverability-related Network  
14 Upgrades associated primarily with NRIS.

15 The extent of Network Upgrades triggered by both NRIS and ERIS—and the  
16 associated costs—are driven by a QF's siting choice. The Commission's current policies,  
17 which allocate the costs of QF-driven Network Upgrades to the QFs that cause them, are  
18 consistent with PURPA's customer indifference standard. Moreover, these policies are  
19 critical to ensure the economically efficient development of QFs.

20 With respect to the question of whether QFs should be permitted to obtain ERIS  
21 rather than NRIS, PURPA's unique operational mandates—its must-take requirement,  
22 which includes a prohibition on the curtailment of QF power (outside of emergency  
23 conditions), and its mandate that 100 percent of a QF's output be delivered to load on firm

1 transmission—mean that NRIS is the only appropriate interconnection service type for  
2 QFs. Absent some additional action by the Commission, allowing a QF to obtain ERIS  
3 would remove the financial incentive for the economically efficient development of QF  
4 power and would shift costs to retail customers.<sup>1</sup> The Commission’s current QF policies  
5 are not only consistent with cost-causation and customer-indifference policies, they are  
6 also critical for ensuring the economically efficient development of QF generation in  
7 Oregon.

### III. OVERVIEW OF OREGON QF INTERCONNECTION LANDSCAPE AND THE SCOPE OF THIS DOCKET

8 **Q. What is the purpose of this section of your testimony?**

9 A. This section provides a brief overview of the Commission’s current interconnection rules  
10 and defines the terminology applicable to a discussion of generator interconnection policy.  
11 The Commission’s interconnection landscape is somewhat complicated, and  
12 interconnection terminology is often inconsistently used. This section is intended to clarify  
13 the terminology used throughout this testimony and to provide context for the discussion  
14 of QF Network Upgrade costs that follows.

#### A. OVERVIEW OF OREGON’S LARGE QF INTERCONNECTION POLICIES

15 **Q. Please describe the scope of Oregon’s large QF interconnection policies.**

16 A. Oregon’s large QF interconnection policies apply to QFs larger than 20 megawatts (MW)  
17 interconnecting with a utility’s transmission or distribution system. These policies are

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., *In the Matter of Pub. Util. Comm’n of Oregon Staff Investigation Relating to Elec. Util. Purchases from Qualifying Facilities*, Docket UM 1149, Order No. 05-584 at 1 (May 13, 2005) (“This Commission’s goal has been to encourage the economically efficient development of these qualifying facilities (QFs), while protecting ratepayers by ensuring that utilities pay rates equal to that which they would have incurred in lieu of purchasing QF power.”).

1 based on FERC’s Large Generator Interconnection Procedures (LGIP) and Large Generator  
2 Interconnection Agreements (LGIA), though the Commission has modified them to  
3 conform with PURPA requirements and Oregon law.<sup>2</sup> These conformed documents govern  
4 large QF interconnections and are referred to as the Oregon QF-LGIP and QF-LGIA.

5 **Q. Doesn’t FERC ordinarily have jurisdiction over a generator’s interconnection with a**  
6 **utility’s transmission system?**

7 **A. While FERC ordinarily has jurisdiction over a generator’s interconnection with a utility’s**  
8 **transmission system, we understand that PURPA gives state authorities jurisdiction over**  
9 **such interconnections so long as the QF is selling all of its output to the directly**  
10 **interconnected utility.<sup>3</sup>**

11 **Q. How does the QF-LGIP define “Network Upgrades,” the subject of this docket?**

12 A. The QF-LGIP defines Network Upgrades as,

13 [T]he additions, modifications, and upgrades to the Transmission Provider’s  
14 Transmission System required at or beyond the point at which the  
15 Interconnection Facilities connect to the Transmission Provider’s  
16 Transmission System to accommodate the interconnection of the Large  
17 Generating Facility to the Transmission Provider’s Transmission System.<sup>4</sup>

18 This definition and others in the QF-LGIP are based on the definitions in FERC’s pro forma  
19 LGIP.

20 **Q. The Commission and parties have used the term “deliverability-driven” Network**

---

<sup>2</sup> *In re Pub. Util. Comm’n of Oregon Investigation into Interconnection of PURPA Qualifying Facilities with Nameplate Capacity Larger than 20 Megawatts to a Pub. Utility’s Transmission or Distribution System*, Docket UM 1401, Order No. 10-132 (Apr. 7, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> 18 C.F.R. § 292.303; 18 C.F.R. § 292.306; *Standardization of Generator Interconnection Agreements and Procedures*, 104 FERC ¶ 61,103, at PP813-814 (July 24, 2003) (Order No. 2003).

<sup>4</sup> See Order No. 10-132, Appendix A (“QF-LGIP”) at 11.

1           **Upgrades.<sup>5</sup> What are deliverability-driven Network Upgrades?**

2    A.     The term “deliverability-driven Network Upgrades” is not a term used in the QF-LGIP, but  
3           is a descriptive term intended to identify a specific type of Network Upgrade. Network  
4           Upgrades can be divided into two general categories: First, there are Network Upgrades  
5           that are primarily needed to safely and reliably physically interconnect the generating  
6           resource to the utility’s transmission system. These are identified in an ERIS study.  
7           Second, there are Network Upgrades beyond those identified an ERIS study that are needed  
8           to ensure the aggregate of generation in the area where the generator proposes to  
9           interconnect can be reliably delivered to the aggregate of load on the transmission  
10          provider’s system during peak load conditions. These have been described as  
11          “deliverability-driven” Network Upgrades, or NR Network Upgrades. Later in our  
12          testimony, we will describe the differences between ERIS and NRIS and explain why it is  
13          important to conduct a NR interconnection study to identify the deliverability-driven  
14          Network Upgrades caused by a QF’s interconnection.

15   **Q.     Under the Commission’s current policies, who is required to pay for the Network**  
16   **Upgrades necessary to interconnect a QF to the host utility?**

17    A.     Under the QF-LGIA, a QF is required to pay for all Network Upgrades necessary to  
18          interconnect the QF to the host utility, unless the QF can demonstrate that its Network  
19          Upgrades provide “quantifiable system-wide benefits.”<sup>6</sup> If the QF makes such a  
20          demonstration, it is relieved of its responsibility to pay for Network Upgrades in the amount

---

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., *In the Matter of Pub. Util. Comm’n of Oregon, Community Solar Program Implementation*, Docket UM 1930, Order No. 20-122, Appendix A at 13.

<sup>6</sup> Order No. 10-132 at 3.

1 of the demonstrated benefit.<sup>7</sup>

2 **Q. How does the QF-LGIP define “Interconnection Facilities”?**

3 A. Interconnection Facilities are facilities and equipment located between the QF generator  
4 and the point of interconnection with a utility’s transmission system. The QF-LGIP’s  
5 definitions mirror the definitions in FERC’s LGIP.<sup>8</sup>

6 **Q. How does the QF-LGIP define “Distribution Upgrades”?**

7 A. Distribution Upgrades refer to upgrades to a utility’s *distribution* system at or beyond the  
8 point of interconnection.<sup>9</sup> Again, this definition mirrors the definition in FERC’s LGIP.

9 **Q. Who is required to pay for Interconnection Facilities and Distribution Upgrades**  
10 **under the QF-LGIA?**

11 A. QFs are required to pay for any Interconnection Facilities or Distribution Upgrades  
12 necessary to interconnect the QF to the host utility.

**B. OVERVIEW OF OREGON’S SMALL GENERATOR INTERCONNECTION POLICIES**

13 **Q. Please describe the scope of the Commission’s small generator interconnection rules.**

14 A. The Commission’s small generator interconnection rules, which are contained in OAR  
15 Chapter 860 Division 82, apply to interconnecting generators with a nameplate capacity of  
16 10 MW or less.

17 **Q. Do the Commission’s small generator interconnection rules apply only to QFs?**

18 A. No. Our understanding is that the Commission’s small generator interconnection rules

---

<sup>7</sup> Order No. 10-132 at 3.

<sup>8</sup> The QF-LGIP defines both “Interconnection Customer’s Interconnection Facilities” and “Transmission Provider’s Interconnection Facilities.” A Transmission Provider’s Interconnection Facilities connect to the Interconnection Customer’s Interconnection Facilities at the “Point of Change of Ownership.” QF-LGIP at 13. The costs of both types of Interconnection Facilities are assigned to the interconnecting generator.

<sup>9</sup> QF-LGIP at 6.

1 apply to any small generator interconnecting with a utility’s system, so long as the  
2 interconnection is not FERC-jurisdictional.<sup>10</sup>

3 **Q. As a practical matter, what does this mean?**

4 A. A generator interconnecting with a utility’s *distribution* system is generally processed  
5 under state rules and policies, whether it is a QF or not. A generator interconnecting with  
6 a utility’s *transmission* system, however, is processed under the Commission’s rules only  
7 if it is a QF selling all of its output directly to the interconnecting utility. Thus, the  
8 Commission’s small generator interconnection rules apply to all generators up to 10 MW  
9 interconnecting with the utility’s distribution system, and to all QFs up to 10 MW  
10 interconnecting with the utility’s transmission system.

11 **Q. How do the small generator interconnection rules define “Interconnection Facilities”  
12 and “System Upgrades?”<sup>11</sup>**

13 A. “Interconnection Facilities” are the facilities and equipment required by a public utility to  
14 accommodate the interconnection of a small generator facility to the public utility’s  
15 transmission or distribution system and used exclusively for that interconnection.<sup>12</sup>  
16 “System Upgrades” are additions or modifications to a public utility’s transmission or  
17 distribution system or to an affected system required to accommodate the interconnection  
18 of a small generator facility.<sup>13</sup> System Upgrades can include interconnection-driven  
19 upgrades to a utility’s transmission system, its distribution system, or both.

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<sup>10</sup> See OAR 860-082-0005(1).

<sup>11</sup> The Commission’s small generator interconnection rules do not capitalize these terms; however, because they are defined terms, and because similar terms in the QF-LGIP are capitalized, these terms have been capitalized throughout this testimony for consistency.

<sup>12</sup> OAR 860-082-0015(16).

<sup>13</sup> OAR 860-082-0015(34).

1 **Q. How does a transmission provider study a small interconnecting generator?**

2 A. The transmission provider performs small generator interconnection studies to identify  
3 System Upgrades and Interconnection Facilities needed for generator interconnection, as  
4 well as their costs. Depending (primarily) on the size of the generator, the studies are  
5 classified as Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4, per the small generator interconnection rules.

6 **Q. Under the Commission's small generator interconnection rules, who is required to**  
7 **pay for the various facilities and upgrades necessary to interconnect the generating**  
8 **resource to the utility's system?**

9 A. Small generators, including QFs, are required to pay for all interconnection costs caused  
10 by their interconnection, both up to and beyond the point of interconnection. This means  
11 that small QFs pay for the cost of Interconnection Facilities and System Upgrades.<sup>14</sup>

12 **Q. Are the Commission's small generator interconnection rules at issue in this docket?**

13 A. As a general matter, we do not believe so. Our understanding is that the Commission's  
14 small generator interconnection rules will be addressed in a separate docket, Docket UM  
15 2111, where all interested generators (QF and non-QF) will have an opportunity to  
16 participate.

17 **Q. What interconnection rules apply to QFs with a nameplate capacity between 10 and**  
18 **20 MW?**

19 A. At the moment, the Commission has not adopted generally applicable rules or policies that  
20 apply to QFs with a nameplate capacity between 10 and 20 MW. However, as part of  
21 PacifiCorp's recently approved interconnection queue reform docket, the Commission  
22 directed PacifiCorp to apply the small generator interconnection framework to all QFs that

---

<sup>14</sup> OAR 860-082-0035.



1 are 20 MW or less.<sup>15</sup>

2 **Q. Given the fragmented rules and policies applicable to generators of various sizes,**  
3 **what do you understand to be the scope of this docket?**

4 A. As we understand it, this docket is intended to address the cost allocation of Network  
5 Upgrades, as defined in the QF-LGIP—that is, upgrades to the transmission provider’s  
6 *transmission* system (as opposed to its distribution system) necessitated by a QF’s  
7 interconnection with the utility’s *transmission* system or *distribution* system.

8 The term “Network Upgrades” is found in the QF-LGIP, but is not used in the  
9 Commission’s small generator interconnection rules. That said, the *functional equivalent*  
10 of “Network Upgrades,” as they are defined in the QF-LGIP, can sometimes arise with  
11 respect to small generator interconnections. The Joint Utilities recognize that any policy  
12 decision made with respect to “Network Upgrades,” as defined in the QF-LGIP, might  
13 logically flow through to other interconnection-driven upgrades that are the functional  
14 equivalent of Network Upgrades. The types of interconnection-driven upgrades within the  
15 Commission’s various interconnection rules and policies that are either “Network  
16 Upgrades” or their functional equivalent are as follows:

- 17
- 18 • When a large QF interconnects with the utility’s system and that interconnection  
19 triggers Network Upgrades under the QF-LGIP. These Network Upgrades are  
20 defined by the Commission as “Network Upgrades” and are clearly within the  
21 scope of this docket.
  - When a small QF interconnects with the utility’s *transmission* system (as opposed

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<sup>15</sup> *In re PacifiCorp, dba Pacific Power, Application for an Order Approving Queue Reform Proposal*,  
Docket UM 2108, Order No. 20-268, Appendix A at 19 (Aug. 19, 2020).

1 to its distribution system), and that interconnection triggers upgrades at or beyond  
2 the point of interconnection.<sup>16</sup> Under the Commission’s small generator  
3 interconnection rules, these upgrades are generally referred to as “system  
4 upgrades”;<sup>17</sup> however, they are conceptually the same as Network Upgrades, and  
5 their ultimate policy treatment is presumably within the scope of this docket.

- 6 • Finally, when a small QF interconnects with a utility’s *distribution* system, and that  
7 interconnection triggers upgrades at or beyond the point of interconnection on both  
8 a utility’s *distribution* system and its *transmission* system. Only the latter—that is,  
9 upgrades to the utility’s *transmission* system triggered by a QF interconnection  
10 with the distribution system—are the functional equivalent of “Network Upgrades”  
11 and thus at issue, from a policy perspective, in this docket.

12 **Q. Are upgrades to a utility’s *distribution* system within the scope of this docket?**

13 **A.** No, it is our understanding that they are not.

14 **Q. How would you summarize the Commission’s overall policies related to generator  
15 interconnection?**

16 **A.** Under the Commission’s generator interconnection policies, all costs driven by a  
17 generator’s interconnection—whether those costs are associated with Interconnection  
18 Facilities, Distribution Upgrades, System Upgrades, or Network Upgrades—are uniformly

---

<sup>16</sup> Under the Commission’s small generator interconnection rules, any small generator interconnecting with the utility’s system at the *transmission* level must use the Tier 4 interconnection process. See OAR 860-082-0045, 0050, 0055 (excluding from Tiers 1-3 any generator interconnecting with a utility’s transmission line); OAR 860-082-0060 (noting that Tier 4 allows interconnections to a utility’s transmission line).

<sup>17</sup> All upgrades associated with a small generator interconnection that are not “interconnection facilities” are referred to in the small generator interconnection rules as “system upgrades.” The subset of “system upgrades” described here are directly analogous to “Network Upgrades” defined in the QF-LGIP.

1 assigned to the generator that caused them. This is true for QFs and non-QFs. There is  
2 only one exception: if a large QF can demonstrate that some part of the Network Upgrades  
3 caused by its interconnection provides “quantifiable system-wide benefits,” a portion of  
4 the QF’s Network Upgrades may be assigned to retail customers in the amount of the  
5 demonstrated benefit.

#### IV. ISSUE I: COST ALLOCATION FOR NETWORK UPGRADES

##### A. THE QF INTERCONNECTION PROCESS: IDENTIFICATION OF NETWORK UPGRADES NECESSARY FOR INTERCONNECTION

6 **Q. This docket is about interconnection-driven Network Upgrades caused by a QF’s**  
7 **request for interconnection service. What is interconnection service?**

8 A. Interconnection service is the service provided by a transmission provider associated with  
9 interconnecting an interconnection customer’s generating facility to the transmission  
10 provider’s system and enabling it to receive electric energy and capacity from the  
11 generating facility at the point of interconnection.<sup>18</sup>

12 **Q. How is interconnection service different from transmission service?**

13 A. Interconnection service simply allows a generator to connect its generating facility to the  
14 transmission provider’s system so that the generator is eligible to deliver the generating  
15 facility’s output.<sup>19</sup> As we will explain, there are different types of interconnection service  
16 that provide different levels of delivery eligibility, and the proper choice of interconnection  
17 service depends on the intended operational characteristics of the generator.  
18 Interconnection service in and of itself does not convey transmission service.

19 Transmission service, on the other hand, provides for the actual delivery of the

---

<sup>18</sup> See QF-LGIP at 9.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

1 generator's power. There are various types of transmission service, as well, that can vary  
2 based on the intended use of the generation.

3 **Q. A generator arranges for its own interconnection service. Who arranges for**  
4 **transmission service?**

5 A. Again, it depends on the nature of the transaction. In the non-PURPA context, generators  
6 often arrange for both their own interconnection and transmission service. In other  
7 instances, a generator arranges for interconnection service and a buyer arranges for  
8 transmission service, and the costs associated with the services are addressed in the  
9 agreement between the parties. PURPA mandates a very specific arrangement: Under  
10 PURPA, a directly interconnected QF arranges for its interconnection with the utility's  
11 system; the utility is then required by PURPA to make transmission service arrangements  
12 to deliver the power from the QF's point of delivery to the utility's load using firm  
13 transmission service.<sup>20</sup>

14 **Q. Please explain how Network Upgrades are triggered by a generator's request for**  
15 **interconnection service.**

16 A. When any generator seeks to interconnect with a utility's transmission or distribution  
17 system, the transmission provider cannot grant that interconnection service until it first  
18 evaluates the interconnecting generator's impact on the utility's system (and other Affected  
19 Systems) to determine what physical facilities and upgrades are necessary to permit the  
20 generator to safely and reliably interconnect with the larger grid and to allow the generator  
21 to operate as intended. Upgrades at or beyond the point of interconnection on the utility's  
22 transmission system are referred to as Network Upgrades, as discussed above.

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<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., *Pioneer Wind Park I, LLC*, 145 FERC ¶ 61,215 at n. 73 (Dec. 16, 2013).

1 **Q. What types of Network Upgrades might be necessitated by a QF's interconnection?**

2 A. New interconnecting generators might require any number of new facilities or upgrades to  
3 existing facilities before a request for interconnection service can be granted. This can  
4 include, for example, the reconductoring of an existing line or the installation of a new line,  
5 breakers, switches, or even substations. As part of the interconnection process, the  
6 transmission provider will conduct interconnection studies to identify the facilities and  
7 upgrades—including Network Upgrades— necessary to grant the type of interconnection  
8 service requested by the generator.

9 FERC has developed two types of generator interconnection service: ERIS and  
10 NRIS. The scope of a transmission provider's interconnection studies, and thus the scope  
11 of the Network Upgrades potentially identified in those studies, depends on the type of  
12 interconnection service requested by the generator.

13 **Q. Please describe the different types of interconnection service.**

14 A. ERIS is a basic interconnection service, which allows the interconnection customer to  
15 connect its generator to the transmission provider's transmission system and be eligible to  
16 deliver the generating facility's electric output using the existing firm or non-firm capacity  
17 of the transmission system on an as-available basis.<sup>21</sup> An ER interconnection study  
18 identifies only those facilities and upgrades—including Network Upgrades—necessary to  
19 safely and reliably interconnect the generating resource to the system. We will refer to  
20 these types of Network Upgrades as ER Network Upgrades. ER studies are not intended  
21 to identify Network Upgrades that may be required to ensure the deliverability of the  
22 generator's output.

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<sup>21</sup> See Order No. 2003, Appendix C at 4 (*pro forma* LGIP) (“Energy Resource Interconnection Service”).

1 NRIS is a more comprehensive interconnection service intended to make an  
2 interconnecting generator eligible to deliver its output to load on a *firm* basis.<sup>22</sup> An NR  
3 interconnection study starts with the same analysis as an ER study, but also includes a  
4 deliverability analysis that identifies the facilities and upgrades—including Network  
5 Upgrades—necessary to allow the aggregate of generation in the area where the  
6 interconnecting generator sited its project to be reliably delivered to the aggregate of load  
7 during peak conditions.<sup>23</sup> We will refer to the incremental additional Network Upgrades  
8 identified in an NR study as NR, or “deliverability-driven,” Network Upgrades. NRIS  
9 ensures that the interconnecting generator and other generators in the area can be operated  
10 simultaneously at peak load, and that any output produced above peak load requirements  
11 can be transmitted to another part of the system. Essentially, it ensures the interconnecting  
12 generator’s power can flow during peak load conditions rather than being bottled up.  
13 Securing NRIS thus operates as a prerequisite to allowing a generator to qualify for firm  
14 network transmission service.

15 **Q. What is “firm network transmission service”?**

16 A. Firm network transmission service (or firm network service) is a type of firm transmission  
17 service used by utilities to integrate, economically dispatch, and regulate current and  
18 planned resources to serve load. Firm network transmission service ensures that power can  
19 be delivered where it is needed to reliably serve retail customers. We describe the firm  
20 transmission service required for QF power delivery in more detail in Section V of our

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<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., Order No. 2003 at P768, P784 (“[T]he study for Network Resource Interconnection Service identifies the Network Upgrades that are needed to allow the Generating Facility to contribute to meeting the overall capacity needs of the Control Area or planning region whereas the study for Energy Resource Interconnection Service does not.”).

<sup>23</sup> Order No. 2003, Appendix C at 16 (*pro forma* LGIP) (3.2.2.2).

1 testimony, in which we address Issue 2.

2 **Q. The term “deliverability analysis” sounds like a transmission term, rather than an**  
3 **interconnection term. Is it?**

4 A. No. The presence of a deliverability analysis in an NR interconnection study simply  
5 reflects the fact that the principal purpose of NRIS is to allow a new generator’s power to  
6 be capable of delivery to the purchasing utility’s load using firm network service on the  
7 transmission provider’s transmission system.<sup>24</sup> Importantly, NRIS does not ensure  
8 physical delivery to specific loads or locations, and it does not provide delivery service  
9 rights to specific loads or locations.<sup>25</sup> Rather, under FERC’s pro forma OATT,  
10 transmission service requests must be submitted and studied separately from  
11 interconnection service requests, and additional facilities or upgrades (beyond those  
12 identified in the interconnection studies and agreements) could be required for transmission  
13 service to be granted.

14 **Q. What type of interconnection service must an Oregon QF obtain?**

15 A. The Commission’s QF-LGIP requires a QF to obtain NRIS. A QF’s interconnection studies  
16 will therefore identify both ER and NR Network Upgrades triggered by the QF’s  
17 interconnection.

18 **Q. Is it appropriate to require a QF to obtain NRIS?**

19 A. Yes. As we will explain in the second part of our testimony, NRIS is the appropriate

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<sup>24</sup> See *Standardization of Generator Interconnection Agreements and Procedures*, 109 FERC ¶ 61,287, P69 (Dec. 20, 2004) (Order No. 2003-B) (“The name [Network Resource Interconnection Service] is suitable given that the principal purpose of the service is to allow the Generating Facility to qualify for designation as a Network Resource by a Network Customer.”).

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., QF-LGIP at 16, Section 3.2.1.2 (“Network Resource Interconnection Service in and of itself does not convey any right to deliver electricity to any specific customer or point of delivery.”).

1 interconnection service for a QF. FERC has held that a purchasing utility must deliver a  
2 QF's power on firm transmission without curtailment (except in emergency conditions),  
3 meaning that a QF's interconnection can trigger the need for deliverability-related (NR)  
4 Network Upgrades needed to effectuate that firm delivery.

5 **Q. Are the ER and NR Network Upgrades identified in QF interconnection studies**  
6 **“necessitated by” a QF’s interconnection?**

7 A. Yes. ER Network Upgrades needed to safely and reliably accommodate a QF’s physical  
8 interconnection with the utility’s system are obviously upgrades necessitated by the QF’s  
9 interconnection. As we will explain later in our testimony, given PURPA’s unique  
10 operational requirements, NR Network Upgrades needed to ensure that a QF’s power can  
11 be delivered to load using firm network service are also upgrades necessitated by the QF’s  
12 interconnection.

**B. THE QF INTERCONNECTION PROCESS: COST DRIVERS FOR NETWORK UPGRADES**

13 **Q. What factors affect the level of Network Upgrades that will be needed to**  
14 **accommodate a QF’s request for interconnection service?**

15 A. The cost of a generator’s interconnection can vary dramatically depending on siting, load,  
16 existing transmission system facilities, and existing generation. In some locations on a  
17 utility’s transmission system, the cost of Network Upgrades needed to interconnect a  
18 generating facility can be relatively low; in other locations, the costs of Network Upgrades  
19 needed to interconnect can be significantly higher—tens of millions of dollars or more.

20 The level of ER Network Upgrades needed to grant a QF’s request for  
21 interconnection service depends on the state of the facilities near the location of the QF’s



1 point of interconnection and what system modifications are needed to facilitate a safe and  
2 reliable interconnection of the QF to the transmission system. In PacifiCorp's Oregon  
3 service territory, for example, interconnection studies for various 40 MW solar generating  
4 resources have identified the need for ER Network Upgrades that range from \$138,000 for  
5 some generators to as high as \$10,200,000 for others.

6 The level of NR Network Upgrades needed to grant a QF's request for  
7 interconnection service depends on the amount of existing generation, planned generation,  
8 load, existing transmission system facilities, and transmission constraint level in the area  
9 of the transmission system in which the request for interconnection service is being made.  
10 In areas with sufficient load to sink additional generation and/or no transmission  
11 constraints to load, the study results may indicate very similar, or *exactly the same*,  
12 requirements for either type of interconnection service (ER or NR). In other words, in  
13 certain areas, the Network Upgrades needed for NRIS may include very few that are  
14 incremental to those identified for ER. However, in constrained areas that cannot sink  
15 more generation, NRIS may require additional deliverability-related Network Upgrades  
16 beyond the ER Network Upgrades. In some areas of PacifiCorp's system, NR Network  
17 Upgrades for an interconnecting generator are zero; in other areas, they can be hundreds of  
18 millions of dollars.<sup>26</sup>

19 Other factors, such as project size, can play a role in driving the magnitude of  
20 interconnection costs, but the biggest factor affecting the cost of Network Upgrades is the

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<sup>26</sup> Similarly, PGE has transmission and generation facilities that are geographically distant from PGE's retail load, and any interconnection request to these distant portions of PGE's system will likely result in significant deliverability-related Network Upgrades. For its part, Idaho Power has seen a similar range of NR Network Upgrades depending on where an interconnecting generator sites its project.

1 QF's siting decision.

2 **Q. If QFs were not required to pay for the Network Upgrades necessitated by their**  
3 **interconnection, what impact would that have on QFs' siting decisions?**

4 A. If the Commission were to relieve QFs of the obligation to pay for interconnection-driven  
5 Network Upgrades, QFs would have no financial incentive to site in a location where  
6 Network Upgrade costs are minimized. As a result, we would likely see more QFs seeking  
7 to site and develop projects in areas that require significant Network Upgrades to safely  
8 physically interconnect the new generator, or to deliver QF power from areas that may be  
9 significantly constrained. Removing QFs' incentives to make economical siting decisions  
10 would likely increase—perhaps dramatically—the overall cost of transmission system  
11 upgrades needed to interconnect and deliver QF power, and also would shift the cost of  
12 such upgrades from QFs to other utility customers, with significant impacts to retail  
13 customers.

14 **Q. What if a QF were permitted to obtain ERIS instead of NRIS? What impact would**  
15 **that have on retail customers?**

16 A. As we explain in more detail in Section V of our testimony, which addresses Issue 2, if a  
17 QF is not required to pay for interconnection-driven NR Network Upgrades, the need for  
18 those upgrades will not go away. The utility will still be required to build the Network  
19 Upgrades needed to ensure the QF power can be reliably delivered to retail customers.  
20 Those costs would be rolled into the utility's transmission rate base and shared by all users  
21 of the utility's transmission system through increased transmission rates.

22 For each of the Joint Utilities, the primary user of the transmission system is the

1 utility's merchant or load service function,<sup>27</sup> whose transmission rates are paid by its  
2 customers. Over 81 percent of PacifiCorp Transmission's annual transmission revenue  
3 comes from providing load service to PacifiCorp's retail customers. Similarly, PGE  
4 Merchant is the primary customer of PGE Transmission, holding approximately 87 percent  
5 of the long-term transmission rights. For Idaho Power, retail customer load service  
6 accounted for 70 percent of long-term transmission rights in 2018. Thus, any Network  
7 Upgrade costs that are not paid by QFs would be paid primarily by the utilities' retail  
8 customers.

9 **Q. In your view, is the Commission's QF-interconnection Network-Upgrade cost-**  
10 **allocation policy consistent with PURPA?**

11 **A. Joint Utilities' Regulatory Witnesses discuss this issue in more detail, but our**  
12 **understanding is that requiring a QF to pay for the costs of Network Upgrades necessitated**  
13 **by its interconnection is mandated by PURPA's customer indifference standard.**

14 **Moreover, the Commission's current policy incentivizes the economically efficient**  
15 **development of QFs.** If Commission policy makes a QF indifferent to the cost of  
16 accommodating its project, there would be no financial incentive for economically efficient  
17 QF development. As a result, the overall level of Network Upgrade costs caused by QFs  
18 and imposed on retail customers might be expected to increase in magnitude—perhaps  
19 significantly.

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<sup>27</sup> Idaho Power's functional separation is different than PacifiCorp's and PGE's in that Idaho Power has a transmission, merchant, and load service function. For purposes of this testimony, Idaho Power's load service function is comparable to PacifiCorp's and PGE's merchant functions.

**C. TREATMENT OF NETWORK UPGRADE COSTS UNDER FERC AND PURPA**

1 **Q. Some parties have urged the Commission to adopt FERC’s standard interconnection**  
2 **policies for QFs’ interconnections. How are FERC-jurisdictional interconnections**  
3 **processed differently from Oregon QF interconnections?**

4 A. We are aware of two key differences related to this docket between the processing of  
5 FERC-jurisdictional interconnections and QF interconnections. The first relates to a  
6 generating facility’s choice of interconnection service. When a FERC-jurisdictional  
7 generator seeks interconnection service, that customer is entitled to select either ERIS or  
8 NRIS.

9 The second relates to cost-allocation for Network Upgrades. For FERC-  
10 jurisdictional interconnections, the cost of Network Upgrades (ER, NR, or both) are  
11 initially funded by the generator (often called “up-front funding”), but the generator is then  
12 paid back for the cost of Network Upgrades over time once the generator achieves  
13 commercial operation. Specifically, Section 11.4.1 of FERC’s pro forma LGIA states that  
14 once a generating facility is operational, the utility will reimburse the generator for the cost  
15 of its Network Upgrades, ordinarily through receipt of transmission credits. If the  
16 generating facility fails to achieve commercial operation, the generator is not entitled to  
17 refunds for its Network Upgrades unless another generating facility is later constructed that  
18 makes use of those Network Upgrades.

19 **Q. Why does FERC allow FERC-jurisdictional generators to recover the costs of**  
20 **Network Upgrades needed to interconnect their generating resources?**

21 A. We are not legal experts, but our understanding is that FERC has adopted a presumption  
22 that Network Upgrades provide “system benefits” to other interconnection or transmission

1 customers.

2 **Q. Does FERC review Network Upgrades to ensure they actually provide system benefits**  
3 **to other interconnection or transmission customers?**

4 A. Not to our knowledge. Our understanding is that FERC has simply adopted this  
5 presumption under the Federal Power Act.

6 **Q. In your view, should the Commission apply FERC's generator interconnection**  
7 **policies to QF interconnections?**

8 A. No. Our understanding is that the Commission previously considered and rejected the idea  
9 that FERC's non-PURPA interconnection policies should apply to QFs.

10 **Q. Please explain.**

11 A. In 2010, in Docket UM 1401, the Commission ordered Oregon transmission providers to  
12 create an Oregon QF LGIP and LGIA using modified versions of FERC's LGIP and LGIA  
13 for use in processing Oregon QF interconnections. Utilities were ordered to remove certain  
14 FERC-mandated provisions from the QF-LGIP and QF-LGIA, including the obligation for  
15 utilities to reimburse interconnecting QFs for their Network Upgrade costs.

16 **Q. Specifically, what changes did the Commission order Oregon transmission providers**  
17 **to make to FERC's LGIA and LGIP for purposes of processing QF interconnections?**

18 A. First, the Oregon Commission directed transmission providers to eliminate Section 11.4.1  
19 of FERC's pro forma LGIA from the Oregon QF-LGIA. Section 11.4.1 is the provision  
20 that entitles an interconnection customer to be reimbursed for the cost of its Network  
21 Upgrades through payment of transmission credits over time. Eliminating Section 11.4.1  
22 made QFs presumptively responsible for the cost of their Network Upgrades under the QF-  
23 LGIA.

1 **Q. Why do you say “presumptively” responsible?**

2 A. We understand the Commission added the following qualifier to its ruling on QF cost  
3 responsibility for Network Upgrades:

4 Interconnection Customers are responsible for all costs associated with  
5 network upgrades unless they can establish quantifiable system-wide  
6 benefits, at which point the Interconnection Customer would be eligible for  
7 direct payments from the Transmission Provider in the amount of the  
8 benefit.<sup>28</sup>

9  
10 **Q. What was the Commission’s rationale for rejecting FERC’s interconnection cost-  
11 allocation policy?**

12 A. The Commission’s order rejecting FERC’s interconnection cost-allocation policy stated as  
13 follows:

14 [The] argument that FERC has long held that Network Upgrades provide  
15 system wide benefits is not persuasive to this point. None of the authorities  
16 cited [by proponents of FERC’s policy] are related to facilities governed by  
17 PURPA and thus none faced the limitation of the avoided cost rate.<sup>29</sup>

18 Again, we are not legal experts, but we understand that the Commission was expressing its  
19 concern that FERC’s policy is not consistent with PURPA’s avoided cost framework.

20 **Q. Under what circumstances would a particular Network Upgrade be deemed to  
21 provide a “quantifiable system-wide benefit” to retail customers?**

22 A. This issue is addressed by the Joint Utilities’ Regulatory Witnesses, but we understand this  
23 to essentially be a “but-for” test under which a QF is responsible for those upgrades that  
24 would not have been required but-for its interconnection request.

25 **Q. What other changes did the Commission order Oregon transmission providers to  
26 make to FERC’s pro forma LGIP and LGIA?**

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<sup>28</sup> Order No. 10-132 at 3.

<sup>29</sup> Order No. 10-132 at 3-4.

1 A. Oregon transmission providers were also directed to remove the option for an  
2 interconnecting generator (here, a QF) to elect ERIS. The removal of the ERIS option  
3 means that a QF seeking interconnection service under the QF-LGIP is required to obtain  
4 NRIS.

5 **Q. Why did the Commission remove a QF's option to elect ERIS?**

6 A. We cannot speak to the Commission's rationale for this change, but we understand that it  
7 was proposed by the Joint Utilities on the ground that NRIS is the only interconnection  
8 service consistent with the utility's obligation to take a QF's power and deliver it on firm  
9 transmission service. PGE noted that "Network Resource Interconnection Service will  
10 ensure that the QF is integrated in a manner comparable to that in which the Transmission  
11 Provider integrates its generating facilities to serve native load customers."<sup>30</sup> In addition,  
12 the Joint Utilities explained in that docket that:

13 If a QF interconnection request were to be processed as a request for ERIS,  
14 the purchasing utility might be put in the position of subsequently having to  
15 pay for transmission upgrades needed to get the QF's output to load, but  
16 that utility would not be allowed to reduce the price it is obligated to pay  
17 for the QF power, in order to reflect this additional cost it incurred (see  
18 OPUC Order No. 07-360 at p. 26-27), and the purchasing utility would,  
19 therefore, end up paying more than its avoided cost for the QF output in  
20 violation of PURPA (16 U.S.C. § 824a-3(b)&(d); 18 C.F.R. § 292.304).  
21 Given that the purchasing utility is required to take all of the energy  
22 generated by a PURPA project, it is appropriate and necessary that the  
23 PURPA project ensure, as part of its interconnection request, that such  
24 transmission facilities/capacity is available for the delivery of its output.  
25 Unfortunately, that goal cannot be achieved through an ERIS request.  
26 Therefore, requests for interconnections by PURPA projects should always  
27 be regarded as NRIS requests.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Docket UM 1401, Portland General Electric's Draft Interconnection Procedures & Agreement for Qualifying Facilities at 6 (March 9, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Docket UM 1401, Joint Response of Portland General Electric Company, PacifiCorp and Idaho Power Company to Bench Request at 2-3 (Dec. 29, 2009).

1 **Q. Do you agree that QFs should be required to take NRIS?**

2 A. Yes. In Section V of our testimony, which addresses Issue 2, we explain in detail why  
3 NRIS is the only appropriate interconnection service for a QF.

4 **Q. You referred to FERC’s generator interconnection policies as FERC’s “non-PURPA”**  
5 **generator interconnection policies. Does FERC have a PURPA-specific**  
6 **interconnection policy?**

7 A. Again, we are not lawyers, but our understanding is that FERC’s standard generation  
8 interconnection policies do not apply to QFs. We understand that FERC has promulgated  
9 a regulation specific to QF interconnections. That regulation states as follows:

10 (a) Obligation to pay. Each qualifying facility shall be obligated to pay any  
11 interconnection costs which the State regulatory authority (with respect to  
12 any electric utility over which it has ratemaking authority) or nonregulated  
13 electric utility may assess against the qualifying facility on a  
14 nondiscriminatory basis with respect to other customers with similar load  
15 characteristics.

16  
17 (b) Reimbursement of interconnection costs. Each State regulatory  
18 authority (with respect to any electric utility over which it has ratemaking  
19 authority) and nonregulated utility shall determine the manner for payments  
20 of interconnection costs, which may include reimbursement over a  
21 reasonable period of time.<sup>32</sup>

22  
23 **Q. Does this regulation’s section on “reimbursement of interconnection costs” refer to**  
24 **the same kind of reimbursement mechanism used in FERC’s standard generator**  
25 **interconnection policies? That is, does it presume generators will upfront fund the**  
26 **cost of their interconnection-driven Network Upgrades and the utility will later**  
27 **reimburse them?**

28 A. No. FERC’s PURPA-specific interconnection regulations contemplate a framework

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<sup>32</sup> 18 C.F.R. § 292.306.



1 whereby the QF would reimburse the utility (and by extension retail customers) for the  
2 costs of interconnection-driven Network Upgrades, not the other way around.<sup>33</sup>

3 **Q. How does PURPA define the scope of interconnection costs subject to state**  
4 **jurisdiction?**

5 A. We understand that FERC’s regulations define “interconnection costs” subject to state  
6 authority as follows:

7 [T]he reasonable costs of connection, switching, metering, transmission,  
8 distribution, safety provisions and administrative costs incurred by the  
9 electric utility directly related to the installation and maintenance of the  
10 physical facilities necessary to permit interconnected operations with a  
11 qualifying facility, to the extent such costs are in excess of the  
12 corresponding costs which the electric utility would have incurred if it had  
13 not engaged in interconnected operations, but instead generated an  
14 equivalent amount of electric energy itself or purchased an equivalent  
15 amount of electric energy or capacity from other sources. Interconnection  
16 costs do not include any costs included in the calculation of avoided costs.<sup>34</sup>

17  
18 **Q. Is PURPA’s definition of “interconnection costs” broad enough to encompass the**  
19 **allocation of Network Upgrades, the subject of this docket?**

20 A. Yes. PURPA’s definition of interconnection costs is very broad, and it includes all types of  
21 facilities or upgrades that may be necessary for a QF’s interconnection, including Network  
22 Upgrades.

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<sup>33</sup> 18 C.F.R. § 292.306(b) describes the reimbursement mechanism for Network Upgrades as running from the QF to the utility (to the extent the utility pays for the costs upfront), not the other way around, as in the case of a FERC-jurisdictional interconnection agreement where the generator pays its interconnection costs upfront, subject to later reimbursement by the utility. *See, e.g., Small Power Production and Cogeneration Facilities; Regulations Implementing Section 210 of the Pub. Util. Regulatory Policies Act of 1978*, Order No. 69, 45 Fed.Reg. 12,214, 12,230 (Feb. 25, 1980) (responding to comments seeking clarification on “the manner in which electric utilities would be reimbursed” by explaining that it is best left to the states to decide whether a QF should pay for its interconnection in an upfront lump sum or amortized over some period of time).

<sup>34</sup> 18 C.F.R. § 292.101(b)(7).

**V. ISSUE 2: NRIS IS THE ONLY APPROPRIATE INTERCONNECTION SERVICE FOR QFS**

1 **Q. Why should a directly-interconnected QF be required to interconnect to the host**  
2 **utility with NRIS?**

3 A. There are several reasons why a directly interconnected QF should be required to  
4 interconnect with NRIS. First, NRIS is the appropriate interconnection service for QFs  
5 given FERC’s articulation of the requirements for the delivery of a QF’s output under  
6 PURPA. Second, allowing a QF to obtain ERIS, rather than NRIS, would shift costs caused  
7 by the QF to retail customers in violation of PURPA’s customer indifference principle.  
8 Third, there are differences between QFs and FERC-jurisdictional interconnection  
9 customers that bear on the question of why FERC-jurisdictional interconnection customers  
10 should get a choice between ERIS and NRIS, while QFs should not. Finally, there is no  
11 straightforward regulatory alternative to requiring NRIS that will ensure customers remain  
12 unharmed by a QF’s interconnection in all instances.

13 **Q. You stated that NRIS is the appropriate interconnection service for QFs. Please**  
14 **explain in more detail the purpose of NRIS and why it should be required for QFs.**

15 A. FERC’s different interconnection service types—ER and NR—were designed to provide  
16 interconnection service to different kinds of interconnection customers. As explained  
17 previously, ERIS is intended to make a generator “eligible to deliver the generating  
18 facility’s output using the existing firm *or non-firm* capacity of the transmission system on  
19 an as-available basis,”<sup>35</sup> meaning, the generator’s interconnection evaluation will turn a  
20 blind eye to whether potential deliverability issues exist in the area of the generator’s

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<sup>35</sup> Order No. 2003, Appendix C at 4 (*pro forma* LGIP) (“Energy Resource Interconnection Service”).

1 chosen interconnection site. The availability of transmission capacity—or the lack  
2 thereof—may not be critical to some generators for any number of reasons, whether  
3 operational, financial, or contractual.<sup>36</sup>

4 NRIS, on the other hand, is an interconnection service that allows the generating  
5 facility to be integrated with the transmission provider’s system “in a manner comparable  
6 to that in which the Transmission Provider integrates its generating facilities to serve native  
7 load customers.”<sup>37</sup> A utility integrates its own generation resources to serve retail  
8 customers using firm network transmission service, a type of firm transmission service that  
9 is specifically designed to allow the utility to integrate, economically dispatch, and regulate  
10 its current and planned resources to serve load. Thus, NRIS was intended for generating  
11 facilities like QFs, which are intended for retail load service, and NRIS studies are tailored  
12 to this purpose.

13 **Q. Why does a QF need to be eligible for firm network transmission service?**

14 A. Aside from the practical fact that QFs are used to serve retail load, which counsels for  
15 obtaining firm network transmission service to manage delivery to that load, FERC has  
16 made clear that a QF’s output must be delivered using firm transmission service, and that  
17 QF output cannot be curtailed except in system emergencies.

**A. FIRM TRANSMISSION AND INTERCONNECTION SERVICE MUST BE USED TO DELIVER QF POWER**

18 **Q. What do you understand about what FERC has said about transmission**  
19 **arrangements for QF power?**

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<sup>36</sup> See, e.g., Order No. 2003 at P767.

<sup>37</sup> Order No. 2003, Appendix C at 9 (*pro forma* LGIP) (“Network Resource Interconnection Service”).

1 A. In 2013, FERC issued an order in *Pioneer Wind Park I, L.L.C.*, (“*Pioneer*”), that we  
2 understand clarified that PURPA requires a utility to deliver QF power on firm  
3 transmission, no matter where a QF sites it project.<sup>38</sup> As we will discuss below, this affects  
4 the obligations of two different customers of each utility’s transmission provider: (1) the  
5 utility’s merchant or load-service function, as the transmission customer who must obtain  
6 firm transmission service to deliver the directly-interconnected QF’s power to load; and  
7 (2) the QF, as the interconnection customer who must obtain a level of interconnection  
8 service that was designed with the principal purpose of enabling that firm transmission  
9 service, i.e., NRIS.

10 **Q. What do you know about the facts of the *Pioneer* case?**

11 A. We understand the case involved a QF, Pioneer Wind Park I, L.L.C, (Pioneer), siting its  
12 project in a constrained area of PacifiCorp’s Wyoming system. PacifiCorp’s merchant  
13 function proposed to address this issue with a power purchase agreement (PPA) provision  
14 that stated that Pioneer would be curtailed ahead of other existing generators to the extent  
15 necessary to remain within PacifiCorp’s merchant function’s existing transmission rights  
16 until additional transfer capability was created through construction of additional  
17 transmission. Another way to describe it would be that PacifiCorp’s merchant function  
18 proposed to use a “last-in, first-cut” approach when there was not enough firm transmission  
19 to deliver all of the existing generators plus the new QF.

20 **Q. Did FERC agree with this approach?**

21 A. No. While we are not lawyers, we understand that FERC found the PPA provision violated  
22 PURPA by proposing to curtail the QF as if it were a non-firm transmission service

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<sup>38</sup> *Pioneer Wind Park I, LLC*, 145 FERC ¶ 61,215 (2013).

1 customer. FERC made it clear that, even under transmission-constrained circumstances, a  
2 utility's merchant or load-service function must make firm transmission service  
3 arrangements for QF power and only curtail the QF power if there are system emergency  
4 conditions.

5 **Q. In other words, the delivery obligations associated with a QF's output are the type of**  
6 **delivery obligations for which NRIS was designed?**

7 **A. Yes.**

8 **Q. If a QF is permitted to obtain ERIS, how will that shift costs to retail customers?**

9 A. If a QF has sited its project in an area where there is sufficient transmission capacity to  
10 deliver the QF's output to retail load, there may be little to no difference between the level  
11 of Network Upgrades that would be identified in an ER interconnection study and the  
12 incremental additional Network Upgrades that would otherwise have been identified in an  
13 NR interconnection study. In such instances, cost shifting would not be an issue.

14 If, on the other hand, a QF has sited its project in an area where there is little or no  
15 load available to sink additional generation,<sup>39</sup> or in an area where there are transmission  
16 constraints, ER interconnection studies would not identify the deliverability-driven  
17 Network Upgrades needed to allow the directly-interconnected QF's output to be delivered  
18 to load using firm transmission on the transmission provider's transmission system.  
19 Turning a blind eye to deliverability issues in the interconnection process, however, does  
20 not magically render the QF's power capable of firm delivery to load without the need for  
21 upgrades. It simply makes the deliverability issues caused by the QF's siting choice  
22 invisible until they are later identified in the utility's transmission service studies.

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<sup>39</sup> For example, PacifiCorp's load pockets or PGE's Central Oregon transmission system.

1 **Q. Please explain.**

2 A. Separate from the interconnection process, the utility's merchant or load-service function  
3 will request firm transmission service from the transmission provider to allow the utility's  
4 merchant or load-service function to deliver the QF's output to retail load. In connection  
5 with that transmission service request, the transmission provider will conduct *transmission*  
6 *service studies* under the OATT to determine whether there is sufficient transmission  
7 capacity to grant the request. If the QF has sited its project in an area where deliverability  
8 issues prevent the QF's output from being delivered to load, those deliverability issues will  
9 *not* have been identified or addressed in the QF's interconnection studies or in its  
10 interconnection service agreement if the QF has been permitted to obtain ERIS. Instead,  
11 they will be identified in the utility's transmission service studies, at which point the utility  
12 and its retail customers will become responsible for resolving them.

13 **Q. If the upgrades needed to enable firm delivery of QF power are identified in the**  
14 **utility's transmission service agreement rather than a QF's interconnection**  
15 **agreement, won't they simply be passed on to all transmission customers consistent**  
16 **with FERC policy?**

17 A. Yes. Any transmission-driven Network Upgrades needed to accommodate a utility's  
18 request for firm transmission service would be rolled into the utility's transmission rate  
19 base and allocated to all transmission customers on the transmission provider's system.  
20 But we would reiterate two observations about this point: First, because the utility's  
21 merchant or load-service function is the primary user of the transmission system, these  
22 costs would primarily be borne by the utility's retail customers. Second, these costs would  
23 be caused by the QF and the QF's siting choice, and their pass-through to customers would

1 be inconsistent with PURPA’s customer indifference mandate.<sup>40</sup>

2 **Q. The directly interconnected utility has an obligation under PURPA to make**

3 **transmission arrangements from the point of delivery to retail load. Why isn’t this**

4 **the cost responsibility of the utility?**

5 **A.** Again, shifting the costs caused by a QF’s interconnection from the QF to the utility would

6 violate PURPA’s customer indifference principle and undermine the Commission’s policy

7 of encouraging the “economically efficient” development of QFs. Moreover, the assertion

8 that Network Upgrade costs caused by the QF’s interconnection can simply be shifted to

9 utility customers through the transmission service request study process is unfounded. The

10 Commission recently issued a decision making clear that a QF cannot unilaterally choose

11 to inject its power at a constrained point on the utility’s system in a manner that creates

12 *transmission* driven costs for the utility and its customers. In the *Blue Marmot* case,<sup>41</sup> the

13 Commission held that an off-system QF delivering its power from another utility’s

14 transmission system to a point of delivery on the purchasing utility’s system cannot

15 unilaterally choose to deliver its output to a constrained point of delivery where the utility

16 will need to either upgrade its system or modify its use of its transmission system to

17 accommodate the QF power. In this case, we are talking about *directly interconnected* QFs

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<sup>40</sup> In instances where a QF sites in a PacifiCorp load pocket where there is insufficient load available to sink additional generation, the Commission has adopted a tool that can in some instances help mitigate QF-created deliverability costs by requiring a QF to purchase a firm, point-to-point transmission wheel on a third-party’s system to move certain of its generation to load. *See In the Matter of Pub. Util. Comm’n of Oregon, Staff Investigation into Qualifying Facility Contracting and Pricing*, Docket UM 1610, Order No. 20-064 (March 3, 2020). This load-pocket-specific tool does not work in all circumstances, however, and post-interconnection tools that may be created to solve for deliverability issues are cumbersome, complex, and often ineffective. Thus, such tools provide no clear substitute for requiring a QF to obtain NRIS as a policy matter.

<sup>41</sup> *Blue Marmot V LLC v. Portland General Electric Co.*, Docket UM 1829, Order No. 19-322 (Sept. 30, 2019).

1 who are responsible for the costs of their *direct interconnection*. But if a directly  
2 interconnected QF were to site a project in a constrained area and force a utility to address  
3 the resulting transmission constraints on the *transmission* side, those transmission-driven  
4 Network Upgrades would be analogous to those at issue in *Blue Marmot*.

5 **Q. FERC-jurisdictional generators (including utilities) are allowed to choose between**  
6 **ER and NR interconnection. Why should QFs be denied that choice?**

7 **A.** FERC's policies for FERC-jurisdictional generators are governed by the FPA and do not  
8 face the limitation of customer indifference and the avoided cost rate. In contrast, the  
9 appropriate policies for QFs turn on the requirements imposed by PURPA and state  
10 regulatory policy, not the FPA, as the Joint Utilities' Regulatory Witnesses discuss.

11 Even aside from that foundational issue, there are some practical differences  
12 between FERC-jurisdictional generators and QFs that may also bear on this issue. First,  
13 as has already been discussed, FERC-jurisdictional generators do not necessarily operate  
14 like QFs. FERC-jurisdictional generators may need firm delivery, or they may not; they  
15 may be used for load service, or they may not; they may be economically curtailable, or  
16 they may not. This operational and financial flexibility does not exist for QF power,  
17 because of the nature of the obligations QFs place on utilities. Consequently, the studies  
18 associated with ERIS may be appropriately scoped for some FERC-jurisdictional  
19 generators.

20 Second, FERC-jurisdictional generators are often *both* the interconnection  
21 customer *and* the transmission customer with respect to the generator's output. Thus, if a  
22 FERC-jurisdictional generator intends to deliver its output on firm transmission, it can  
23 address the deliverability issues associated with the generator's location in one of two



1           ways: by seeking NRIS, whereby deliverability issues are examined in the interconnection  
2           process; or by seeking ERIS and then examining deliverability issues in the transmission  
3           service study process. This unity of identity does not exist for directly interconnected QFs,  
4           where the QF makes its interconnection arrangements but passes the burden of making  
5           transmission arrangements onto the utility and its customers.

6   **Q.    Does this conclude your testimony?**

7   A.    Yes.

BEFORE THE  
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OREGON

**DOCKET NO. UM 2032**

Joint Utilities' Direct Testimony

Joint Utilities: PacifiCorp d/b/a Pacific Power, Portland General Electric  
Company, and Idaho Power Company

**JOINT UTILITIES EXHIBIT 200**

**Joint Testimony of Michael G. Wilding, Robert Macfarlane, and  
Alison Williams**

August 24, 2020

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1 **Q. Please state your name, business address, and present position.**

2 A. My name is Michael G. Wilding. My business address is 825 NE Multnomah Street, Suite  
3 2000, Portland, Oregon 97232. My title is Director, Net Power Costs and Regulatory  
4 Policy at PacifiCorp d/b/a Pacific Power (PacifiCorp).

5 My name is Robert Macfarlane. My business address is 121 SW Salmon Street, 1  
6 World Trade Center, Mailstop 1WTC0306, Portland, OR 97204. My title is Manager,  
7 Pricing and Tariffs at Portland General Electric Company (PGE).

8 My name is Alison Williams. My business address is 1221 West Idaho Street,  
9 Boise, Idaho. I am employed by Idaho Power Company (Idaho Power) as the Regulatory  
10 Policy and Strategy Advisor in the Regulatory Affairs Department.

11 **I. QUALIFICATIONS**

12 **Q. Mr. Wilding, briefly describe your education and business experience.**

13 A. I received a Master of Accounting from Weber State University and a Bachelor of Science  
14 degree in accounting from Utah State University and am a Certified Public Accountant  
15 licensed in the state of Utah. During my tenure at PacifiCorp, I have worked on various  
16 regulatory projects including general rate cases, the multi-state protocol, and net power  
17 cost filings. I have been employed by PacifiCorp since 2014.

18 **Q. Have you testified in previous regulatory proceedings?**

19 A. Yes. I have filed testimony in proceedings before the Public Utility Commission of Oregon  
20 (Commission), and the public utility commissions in California, Idaho, Utah, Washington,  
21 and Wyoming.

22 **Q. Mr. Macfarlane, please describe your education and business experience.**

23 A. I received a Bachelor of Arts degree in business from Portland State University with a focus

1 in Finance. From 2004 to 2008, I was a consultant with Bates Private Capital in Lake  
2 Oswego, Oregon, where I developed, prepared, and reviewed financial analyses used in  
3 securities litigation. I joined PGE in 2008 and worked as an analyst and regulatory  
4 consultant in the Rates and Regulatory Affairs Department. In January 2018, I became  
5 Interim Manager, Pricing and Tariffs, and in September 2019, I assumed my current  
6 position as Manager, Pricing and Tariffs. My duties at PGE have included pricing, revenue  
7 requirement, and regulatory issues. I have been responsible for Public Utility Regulatory  
8 Policies Act of 1978 pricing and policy matters since 2010.

9 **Q. Have you testified in previous regulatory proceedings?**

10 A. Yes. I have filed testimony in numerous proceedings before the Commission, including  
11 UE 262, UE 283, UE 294, UE 319, UE 335, UM 1566, UM 1610, UM 1708, UM 1719,  
12 UM 1854, and UM 1931.

13 **Q. Ms. Williams, please describe your education and business experience.**

14 A. In June 2003, I received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science at the University of  
15 California at Davis. In May 2009, I earned a Master of Public Policy degree with a  
16 concentration in energy and natural resource economics from the American University's  
17 School of Public Affairs in Washington, DC. In addition, I have attended the electric  
18 ratemaking courses The Basics: Practical Regulatory Training for the Electric Industry,  
19 offered through New Mexico State University's Center for Public Utilities, and the Edison  
20 Electric Institute's Electric Rates Advanced Course, hosted by the University of Wisconsin-  
21 Madison's Wisconsin Public Utility Institute.

22 I joined Idaho Power in December 2019. As the Regulatory Policy and Strategy  
23 Advisor, my primary responsibilities include providing regulatory support and strategic

1 guidance to business units on a variety of topics, including integrated resource planning,  
2 distribution system planning, large customer pricing, green offerings, and energy and utility  
3 policy and legislation. Prior to joining Idaho Power, I served as the Senior Director of  
4 State Energy and Regulatory Policy at the Edison Electric Institute (EEI), the trade  
5 association for the nation's investor-owned electric utilities. Prior to EEI, I was the Vice  
6 President of the energy practice at Garten Rothkopf consulting, where I provided strategic  
7 and economic consulting to electric utilities and companies in energy-intensive industries.  
8 Additionally, I served as analyst at the U.S. Department of Energy, conducting energy  
9 system modeling to advise on Department policy and budget decisions.

## 10 II. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

11 **Q. What is the purpose of your testimony?**

12 **A.** Our testimony explains that the interconnection costs associated with a Qualifying Facility  
13 (QF) directly interconnecting with a utility's system in connection with a mandatory  
14 purchase obligation imposed by PURPA should be governed by the standards established  
15 by PURPA and state regulatory policy, and thus should be allocated to QFs. This includes  
16 the cost of Network Upgrades caused by the QF's interconnection, which are simply  
17 another component of interconnection costs. Current Commission policy is consistent with  
18 PURPA, state regulatory policy, and Oregon law.

19 **Q. Are there other witnesses providing testimony in this docket?**

20 **A.** Yes. Richard A. Vail, Kris Bremer, Shaun Foster, Sean Larson, and Jared Ellsworth (Joint  
21 Utilities' Transmission Witnesses) provide testimony explaining the Oregon  
22 interconnection landscape, the Commission's current cost-allocation policies for Network  
23 Upgrades, and the reason Network Resource Interconnection Service (NRIS) is the

1 appropriate interconnection service for QFs.

2 **Q. Please summarize your testimony.**

3 A. As explained by the Joint Utilities' Transmission Witnesses, the Commission's current  
4 generator interconnection policies allocate to interconnecting generators the costs caused  
5 by their interconnection, including the costs of Network Upgrades.<sup>1</sup> The Commission's  
6 current policies are consistent with PURPA's requirement that a utility's retail customers  
7 should be indifferent to whether a utility purchases power from a QF or from some other  
8 source. Customer indifference requires a QF to pay for the interconnection costs caused  
9 by its interconnection, including Network Upgrades, to ensure retail customers pay no  
10 more than the avoided cost for QF power.

11 Even if PURPA did not impose on this Commission the obligation to ensure  
12 customers are held indifferent to the purchase of QF power, sound state regulatory policy  
13 and the discharge of the Commission's statutory duties would themselves require the  
14 allocation of interconnection-driven Network Upgrades to the interconnecting generators  
15 that cause them. The Commission has consistently allocated interconnection costs to  
16 interconnecting generators under Oregon state regulatory principles, and the Commission  
17 should apply the same rationale to QFs. Moreover, the Commission's current generator  
18 interconnection policies provide a critical financial incentive for QFs and other generators  
19 to site their projects in economically efficient locations, and thus are a critical element of  
20 customer protection. Finally, allocating QFs' interconnection-driven Network Upgrade  
21 costs to QFs, rather than utility customers, is consistent with the Commission's statutory

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<sup>1</sup> As Joint Utilities' Transmission Witnesses explain, the Commission's QF Large Generator Interconnection Procedures (QF-LGIP) defines Network Upgrades as upgrades at or beyond the point of interconnection with a transmission provider's transmission system.

1 duty to ensure customer rates are just and reasonable.

2 **III. CUSTOMER INDIFFERENCE UNDER PURPA**

3 **Q. Please describe the basic structure of PURPA.**

4 A. PURPA directs the Federal Energy Regulation Commission (FERC) to promulgate  
5 regulations to promote energy purchases from cogeneration and certain small power  
6 production facilities, or QFs. States are tasked with implementing PURPA consistent with  
7 FERC’s PURPA regulations. Our understanding is that states have discretion to implement  
8 various elements of PURPA consistent with state law and state regulatory policy, so long  
9 as the states exercise that discretion within boundaries established by FERC’s PURPA  
10 regulations. PURPA and FERC’s implementing regulations establish three major  
11 obligations for electric utilities: (1) to sell electric energy to QFs; (2) to purchase electric  
12 energy from QFs; and (3) to interconnect with QFs.<sup>2</sup>

13 **Q. What is PURPA’s customer indifference standard?**

14 A. Although PURPA requires a utility to purchase QF power, a utility is not required to pay  
15 more than its avoided cost for that power; rather, PURPA requires that customers remain  
16 economically indifferent to the source of power the utility purchases by ensuring the cost  
17 to the utility associated with purchasing energy and capacity from a QF does not exceed  
18 the cost it would incur if it were purchasing from some other source. This “customer  
19 indifference” standard has been explicitly recognized by the Commission.<sup>3</sup>

20 **Q. How does PURPA’s customer indifference principle relate to a QF’s interconnection**

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<sup>2</sup> See 18 C.F.R. § 292.301-314.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., *Portland Gen. Elec. (PGE) vs Pacific Nw. Solar LLC*, Docket UM 1894, Order No. 18-025 at 7 (Jan 25, 2018) (“As we have stated, one critical feature of our implementation of PURPA, including (but not limited to) the terms and conditions of our regulated PURPA contracts, is the need to ensure that ratepayers remain financially indifferent to QF development.”).



1 **costs?**

2 A. As Joint Utilities' Transmission Witnesses explain, the costs of interconnecting a QF  
3 generator can be extremely high. We understand that the Commission directs a purchasing  
4 utility to address the costs of QF interconnection as part of the generator interconnection  
5 process, rather than as an adjustment to the avoided cost rates the utility must pay for the  
6 QF's output.<sup>4</sup> In other words, to maintain customer indifference to the purchase of QF  
7 power, the QF is paid for energy and capacity through a QF power purchase agreement  
8 with the purchasing utility, but the QF pays for its interconnection costs separately, as part  
9 of the interconnection agreement with the utility's transmission provider. Assessing QF  
10 interconnection costs separately through the interconnection process allows for site-  
11 specific evaluation of interconnection costs and allows the transmission provider to give  
12 the QF detailed information about any cost barriers to development at that site.

13 As the Joint Utilities' Transmission Witnesses explain, the Commission's current  
14 policy requires QFs to interconnect with a level of interconnection service that accurately  
15 reflects their demands on the system, and to pay the costs caused by that interconnection.  
16 Under the Commission's current policy, a QF is required to pay the actual cost of its site-  
17 specific interconnection, thus ensuring that the utility's purchase of QF power is consistent  
18 with PURPA's customer indifference standard. This policy also encourages the  
19 economically efficient development of QFs.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *In the Matter of Pub. Util. Comm'n of Oregon Staff's Investigation Relating to Elec. Util. Purchases from Qualifying Facilities*, Docket UM 1129, Order No. 07-360 at 26-27, Appendix A at 4 (Aug. 20, 2007) ("The utility should not adjust avoided cost rates for any distribution or transmission system upgrades needed to accept QF power. Such costs should be separately charged [to the generator] as part of the interconnection process.").

<sup>5</sup> Order No. 18-025 at 4 ("In implementing PURPA, we have, on a number of occasions, reaffirmed our intention 'to encourage the economically efficient development' of QFs, 'while protecting ratepayers by ensuring that utilities pay rates equal to that which they would have incurred in lieu of purchasing QF



1 whether the utility needs (or wants) the power or not. No competitive IPP generator enjoys  
2 this benefit. Under PURPA, a QF can obtain the right to a state-established price for its  
3 power before a contract is executed, a benefit no competitive IPP generator enjoys.  
4 Moreover, a directly interconnected QF can site its project at any location within a utility's  
5 service territory and insist that a utility purchase its full output, something a competitive  
6 IPP generator cannot. In short, QFs and competitive IPP generators are not similarly  
7 situated.

8 **Q. What do FERC's PURPA regulations say about QF interconnection costs?**

9 A. As Joint Utilities' Transmission Witnesses explain, FERC has promulgated PURPA-  
10 specific interconnection regulations applicable to directly interconnected QFs. These  
11 regulations would seem to be the FERC authority relevant to the Commission's policy  
12 decisions in this docket. FERC's PURPA interconnection regulations make clear that state  
13 commissions have jurisdiction to address the interconnection costs of directly  
14 interconnected QFs, including the cost of Network Upgrades, and presume those  
15 interconnection costs will be allocated to QFs—not to retail customers.<sup>7</sup>

16 **Q. You have explained that PURPA's customer indifference standard requires a QF to**  
17 **bear its own interconnection costs. Are there other reasons a QF should be required**  
18 **to bear its own interconnection costs?**

19 A. Yes. Even without PURPA's customer indifference mandate, Oregon state regulatory  
20 policy would require QFs to pay for their own interconnection costs, including their  
21 interconnection-driven Network Upgrade costs.

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<sup>7</sup> For example, those regulations presume that the QF will repay a *utility* for any costs of Network Upgrades, not the other way around. 18 C.F.R. § 292.306. *See also* Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/27-28.

1 **Q. Please explain.**

2 **A.** Division 82 of the Commission’s administrative rules reflects the Commission’s state  
3 regulatory policies for interconnecting small QF and non-QF generators alike.<sup>8</sup> These rules  
4 were promulgated with state regulatory policy in mind and have no PURPA-specific carve  
5 outs for QF generators. These rules uniformly allocate all interconnection costs to the  
6 generator that causes them.<sup>9</sup>

7 Indeed, state regulatory policy consistently favors allocating cost responsibility  
8 based on cost-causation. This policy is especially critical for generator interconnection  
9 because, as Joint Utilities’ Transmission Witnesses explain, the interconnection costs  
10 driven by an interconnecting generator depend largely on where the generator sites its  
11 project. Requiring a generator to pay for its interconnection costs thus serves two purposes:  
12 (1) it ensures that costs are allocated consistent with principles of cost-causation, and (2) it  
13 disincentivizes generators from siting projects in locations where interconnection costs are  
14 particularly expensive or inefficient.

15 **Q. Is there a reason to treat QFs differently from state-jurisdictional generators with**  
16 **respect to generator interconnection costs?**

17 **A.** No. As we noted, Division 82 of the Commission’s administrative rules addresses all small  
18 generator interconnections subject to state jurisdiction and—appropriately—treats them

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<sup>8</sup> OAR 860-082-0005 *et. seq.*

<sup>9</sup> This includes allocation of upgrades that are the functional equivalent of “Network Upgrades” to QFs. While Division 82 interconnection rules do not explicitly use the term “Network Upgrades” but instead use the term “System Upgrades,” as the Joint Utilities’ Transmission Witnesses explain, the Commission’s Division 82 interconnection rules nevertheless allocate all interconnection-driven costs to the generator that causes them, including the functional equivalent of Network Upgrades (that is, upgrades to the utility’s transmission system at or beyond the point of interconnection). The issue of whether a small QF should be required to obtain ER or NR interconnection service was not explicitly litigated in AR 521, the docket adopting the Commission’s Division 82 interconnection rules.

1 similarly, whether the generator is a QF or not. Specifically, under Division 82, all costs  
2 caused by generator interconnections are allocated to the generator that causes them. The  
3 same policy is carried over into the Commission’s QF-specific large generator  
4 interconnection policies, as reflected in the Commission’s QF Large Generator  
5 Interconnection Procedures (QF-LGIP) and QF Large Generator Interconnection  
6 Agreements (QF-LGIA), with only minor differences.<sup>10</sup>

7 This uniform allocation of interconnection costs to the generator is appropriate. We  
8 are aware of no policy rationale—under either state law or PURPA—that would support  
9 allocating *QF* interconnection costs to *retail customers*, while requiring a non-QF to pay  
10 for its own interconnection costs. To the contrary, special treatment of QFs vis-à-vis other  
11 state-jurisdictional generators would not only be inconsistent with state regulatory cost-  
12 allocation policy, but also would run afoul of PURPA’s customer indifference standard, as  
13 noted above.

14 **Q. You noted that the QF-LGIP and QF-LGIA reflect the same interconnection cost-**  
15 **allocation policies as the Commission’s small generator rules, with only minor**  
16 **differences. What are those differences?**

17 **A.** Our understanding is that the Commission’s cost-allocation policies for large QFs, like the  
18 Commission’s policies for small generators, allocate interconnection costs to the generator  
19 that causes them. The Commission has nevertheless held that a large QF may be  
20 reimbursed for some portion of its Network Upgrade costs if the QF can demonstrate that  
21 the Network Upgrades caused by its interconnection provide “quantifiable system-wide

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<sup>10</sup> See *In the Matter of Pub. Util. Comm’n of Oregon Investigation into Interconnection of PURPA Qualifying Facilities with Nameplate Capacity Larger than 20 Megawatts to a Pub. Util.’s Transmission or Distribution System*, Docket UM 1401, Order No. 10-132 (Apr. 7, 2010).

1 benefits.”<sup>11</sup>

2 **Q. What are “system benefits,” as used in this context?**

3 A. To our knowledge, the Commission has not provided explicit guidance on this term.

4 However, because PURPA prohibits customers from paying for Network Upgrades that

5 would make the overall cost of QF power exceed avoided cost, any state regulatory

6 definition of “system-wide benefits” that provides for QF reimbursement must ensure that

7 the overall cost of QF power does not exceed avoided cost, even with that reimbursement.

8 Thus, we understand the Commission to have established essentially a “but-for” standard,

9 consistent with PURPA’s customer indifference principle. That is, the QF would be

10 responsible for the costs associated with all system upgrades that would not have been

11 incurred by the utility and its customers “but-for” the QF’s interconnection request.

12 **Q. Why shouldn’t the Commission adopt FERC’s definition of “system benefits”?**

13 A. Our understanding is that FERC’s definition of “system benefits” turns on its interpretation

14 of the FPA, which is concerned with wholesale markets, rather than retail customers. As

15 we explained previously, this Commission’s duty in implementing state PURPA policy is

16 to effectuate the goals of PURPA and state law, not the goals of the FPA.

17 **Q. Are there other state regulatory principles applicable to the appropriate allocation of**

18 **QF interconnection costs?**

19 A. Yes. The Commission has a statutory obligation to ensure appropriate utility planning and

20 investment, and to review the costs of utility service within the sphere of its regulatory

21 authority to ensure that customer rates are just and reasonable.<sup>12</sup> If the Commission

22 exempts a QF from the responsibility to pay for its interconnection-driven Network

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<sup>11</sup> Order No. 10-132 at 3.

<sup>12</sup> ORS 757.210.

1 Upgrades, the Commission will not be discharging this duty. As we have explained, under  
2 PURPA, interconnection costs for directly interconnected QFs fall squarely within the  
3 scope of utility costs this Commission is required to scrutinize to ensure they comply with  
4 the law and that customer rates remain just and reasonable. They are the Commission's  
5 responsibility, not FERC's.

6 As the Joint Utilities' Transmission Witnesses explain, if QFs are simply exempted  
7 from the requirement to pay for the Network Upgrade costs caused by their  
8 interconnection, those costs will be passed through to retail customer rates. Those costs  
9 would then be deemed eligible for retail rate recovery—as they must be<sup>13</sup>—and ultimately  
10 passed through to customers. For multi-state utilities, like PacifiCorp and Idaho Power, a  
11 change in Oregon state policy that shifts potentially significant costs onto retail customers  
12 could also result in the situs assignment of those shifted costs, which could create a  
13 significant adverse rate impact for Oregon customers.

14 The interconnection-driven Network Upgrades caused by a single QF can cost tens  
15 of millions of dollars or more.<sup>14</sup> Given the potential significance of these costs, along with  
16 the ever-changing state of the transmission grid, the ultimate rate impact of policies  
17 exempting QFs from interconnection cost responsibility is unknown, but almost certainly  
18 significant. If the Commission were to adopt QF interconnection policies that pass QF  
19 interconnection costs—the magnitude of which turn on the QF's siting decision—through  
20 to retail customers, the Commission would not be discharging its duty to ensure customer

---

<sup>13</sup> The Commission noted in Order No. 05-584, that a utility's lack of discretion in signing PURPA QF contracts favors the likelihood of the contracts being deemed prudent. Similarly, if utilities were to be required by Commission policies to bear the costs of QF interconnection, such cost would also presumably be found prudent. Order No. 05-584 at 56.

<sup>14</sup> Joint Utilities/100, Vail-Bremer-Foster-Larson-Ellsworth/19.

1 rates remain just and reasonable (especially if the pass-through occurs sight-unseen).

2 Ultimately, a utility's obligations under PURPA should not be understood to upend  
3 the utility's responsibility to prudently plan for and invest in cost-effective transmission  
4 and distribution system upgrades, or the Commission's responsibility to ensure that the  
5 rates customers pay are fair, just, and reasonable. Allowing QFs to drive potentially  
6 massive amounts of Network Upgrade costs into customer rates without limitation or  
7 review is inconsistent with the Commission's statutory duties.

8 **Q. How do you respond to allegations that the Commission's interconnection cost**  
9 **allocation policies create a barrier to QF development?**

10 A. To the extent there is a barrier to generator interconnections, that barrier is the actual cost  
11 of interconnection in a given location. As Joint Utilities' Transmission Witnesses explain,  
12 the actual cost of upgrading a utility's system to accommodate a new generator  
13 interconnection can be very expensive in some geographic areas, particularly when 100  
14 percent of that generator's output must be taken and delivered to retail load, as is the case  
15 for QFs. The actual barrier to interconnection would appear to be the cost of engineering  
16 and safety measures needed to interconnect such a generator at a particular location on the  
17 utility's system—not the utilities' actions, and not the Commission's policies. Thus, the  
18 size of that barrier turns largely on the QF's siting decision.

19 Fundamentally, the fact that interconnection costs can be incredibly expensive in a  
20 given location does not justify throwing out the Commission's interconnection cost-  
21 allocation policies, which are firmly grounded in PURPA and state policy. It counsels for  
22 careful siting by generators and robust retail customer protections by the Commission.

23 **Q. But doesn't PURPA require state commissions to "encourage" QF development?**



1 A. Our understanding is that PURPA requires state commissions to encourage QF  
2 development within the bounds of customer indifference and the avoided cost rate. The  
3 Commission's existing policies achieve these goals. Removing a QF's responsibility for  
4 its own interconnection costs would encourage QF development at the expense of customer  
5 indifference, encourage inefficient utility system investment, and undermine the goal of  
6 the economically efficient development of QFs.

7 Ultimately, it is illogical to suggest that the Commission should adopt policies that  
8 contravene both PURPA and state law in order to drive QF development.

9 Q Does this conclude your testimony?

10 A. Yes.