

WAC 480-90-238 Integrated resource planning. (1) Purpose. Each natural gas utility regulated by the commission has the responsibility to meet system demand with the least cost mix of natural gas supply and conservation. In furtherance of that responsibility, each natural gas utility must develop an "integrated resource plan."

(2) Definitions.

(a) "Integrated resource plan" or "plan" means a plan describing the mix of natural gas supply and conservation designated to meet current and future needs at the lowest reasonable cost to the utility and its ratepayers.

(b) "Lowest reasonable cost" means the lowest cost mix of resources determined through a detailed and consistent analysis of a wide range of commercially available sources. At a minimum, this analysis must consider resource costs, market-volatility risks, demand-side resource uncertainties, the risks imposed on ratepayers, resource effect on system operations, public policies regarding resource preference adopted by Washington state or the federal government, the cost of risks associated with environmental effects including emissions of carbon dioxide, and the need for security of supply.

(c) "Conservation" means any reduction in natural gas consumption that results from increases in the efficiency of energy use or distribution.

(3) Content. At a minimum, integrated resource plans must include:

(a) A range of forecasts of future natural gas demand in firm and interruptible markets for each customer class that examine the effect of economic forces on the consumption of natural gas and that address changes in the number, type and efficiency of natural gas end-uses.

(b) An assessment of commercially available conservation, including load management, as well as an assessment of currently employed and new policies and programs needed to obtain the conservation improvements.

(c) An assessment of conventional and commercially available non-conventional gas supplies.

(d) An assessment of opportunities for using company-owned or contracted storage.

(e) An assessment of pipeline transmission capability and reliability and opportunities for additional pipeline transmission resources.

(f) A comparative evaluation of the cost of natural gas purchasing strategies, storage options, delivery resources, and improvements in conservation using a consistent method to calculate cost-effectiveness.

(g) The integration of the demand forecasts and resource evaluations into a long-range (e.g., at least ten years; longer if appropriate to the life of the resources considered) integrated resource plan describing the mix of resources that is designated to meet current and future needs at the lowest reasonable cost to the utility and its ratepayers.

(h) A short-term plan outlining the specific actions to be taken by the utility in implementing the long-range integrated resource plan during the two years following submission.

(i) A report on the utility's progress towards implementing the recommendations contained in its previously filed plan.

(4) Timing. Unless otherwise ordered by the commission, each natural gas utility must submit a plan within two years after the date on which the previous plan was filed with the commission. Not later than

twelve months prior to the due date of a plan, the utility must provide a work plan for informal commission review. The work plan must outline the content of the integrated resource plan to be developed by the utility and the method for assessing potential resources.

(5) Public participation. Consultations with commission staff and public participation are essential to the development of an effective plan. The work plan must outline the timing and extent of public participation. In addition, the commission will hear comment on the plan at a public hearing scheduled after the utility submits its plan for commission review.

(6) The commission will consider the information reported in the integrated resource plan, when it evaluates the performance of the utility in rate and other proceedings.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 80.01.040 and 80.04.160. WSR 06-03-001 (Docket Nos. UE-030311 and UG-030312, General Order No. R-526), § 480-90-238, filed 1/4/06, effective 2/4/06; WSR 01-11-003 (Docket No. UG-990294, General Order No. R-484), § 480-90-238, filed 5/3/01, effective 6/3/01.]