

WSR 23-24-027
PREPROPOSAL STATEMENT OF INQUIRY
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

[Filed November 29, 2023, 8:26 a.m.]

Subject of Possible Rule Making: Dockets TV-210535 and TV-210812. The purpose of this rule making is to consider revisions to chapter 480-15 WAC concerning the regulation of household goods carriers operating in Washington state. Specifically, this rule making is targeted at reviewing and considering revisions to WAC 480-15-490 which describes tariffs and rates in general and the requirement that the utilities and transportation commission (UTC) set minimum and maximum rates carriers may charge. WAC 480-15-020, specifically the definition of "supplemental estimate," is also a possible subject of this rule making.

Statutes Authorizing the Agency to Adopt Rules on this Subject: RCW 80.01.040 and 81.80.130. RCW 81.80.130 provides that UTC "make, fix, alter, and amend, just, fair, reasonable, minimum, maximum, or minimum and maximum, rates, charges, classifications, rules, and regulations for all common carriers."

Reasons Why Rules on this Subject may be Needed and What They Might Accomplish: UTC seeks to consider whether it should revise WAC 480-15-490 given changes in the household goods carrier industry that impacts the current state of economic regulation of intrastate household goods carriers in Washington state.

UTC currently regulates approximately 270 household goods carriers in Washington state. Given the reports of increased competitiveness of the household goods carrier industry, UTC aims to investigate and determine the degree of competitiveness of this industry in Washington state and whether that degree of competitiveness justifies alternative economic regulation than what the current rules permit. Regulated entities indicate that the current economic regulation has made reacting to and meeting rapidly changing fuel, labor, and supplies costs difficult while still providing widespread service to the public. This rule making seeks to investigate these concerns to determine whether the current economic regulation structure is inhibiting household goods carriers from adequately serving the public in light of changing costs of operation.

This rule making seeks to determine if the industry is at a competitive point where less stringent economic regulation is appropriate and plausible. This rule making seeks to explore alternative economic regulatory frameworks that may be more appropriate in regulating this industry.

In commission Order 06/04, in Dockets TV-210535 and TV-210812, at page 9, paragraph 41, UTC waived "the application of the definition of 'supplemental estimate' contained in WAC 480-15-020 until that rule can be amended to mirror the definition of 'supplemental estimate' contained in WAC 480-15-630." This rule making seeks to address that order and consider changes accordingly.

Other Federal and State Agencies that Regulate this Subject and the Process Coordinating the Rule with These Agencies: Not applicable.

Process for Developing New Rule: UTC utilizes a collaborative rule-making process that includes stakeholder workshops, formal comments, and draft rules.

Interested parties can participate in the decision to adopt the new rule and formulation of the proposed rule before publication by

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