ORDER NUMBER
G-88-20

IN THE MATTER OF
the *Utilities Commission Act*, RSBC 1996, Chapter 473

and

Pacific Northern Gas Ltd.
COVID-19 Deferral Account Application

BEFORE:
D. M. Morton, Panel Chair
A. K. Fung, QC Commissioner
R. I. Mason, Commissioner
T. A. Loski, Commissioner

on April 17, 2020

ORDER

WHEREAS:

A. On April 9, 2020 Pacific Northern Gas Ltd. (PNG-West) and Pacific Northern Gas (N.E.) Ltd. (PNG[NE]) (collectively, PNG) filed an application with the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) for approval to establish a new interest bearing deferral account, the COVID-19 Deferral Account, for each of PNG-West and PNG(NE) (Application). The Application is made pursuant to sections 59 to 61 and 91 of the *Utilities Commission Act*;

B. PNG-West proposes to include the following in the COVID-19 Deferral Account: (1) any bad debt resulting from customers in any rate class who do not pay their bills due to the impacts of COVID-19 on their financial circumstances; and (2) any unplanned expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic that PNG-West has incurred related to continuing operations;

C. PNG-West also plans to implement a bill payment deferral program that will allow for up to a three month deferral of energy bill payments for residential customers served under Rate Schedule (RS) 1 and small commercial customers served under either RS 2 (Small Commercial) or RS 22 (Small Commercial Transportation) that are unable to pay their energy bills due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic;

D. On April 14, 2020 the BCUC issued information requests to PNG regarding the Application and PNG filed its responses on April 16, 2020;

E. On April 17, 2020 the BCUC held a web-based oral hearing regarding the Application; and

F. The BCUC has reviewed the Application, evidence and submissions of PNG and finds that interim approval is warranted. The BCUC considers that the establishment of a public hearing process and regulatory timetable is also warranted.

NOW THEREFORE pursuant to sections 59 to 61 and 91 of the *Utilities Commission* Act, the BCUC orders as follows:

1. PNG-West is granted approval on an interim basis, effective the date of this Order, to:

    (i)   Offer a bill payment deferral program between the date of this Order and June 30, 2020 to residential customers served under RS 1 and small commercial customers served under either RS 2 or RS 22 that are unable to pay their energy bills due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic; and

    (ii) Establish a new interest-bearing COVID-19 Deferral Account at PNG-West's weighted average cost of debt to record the following:

        a. Any unrecoverable revenues resulting from customers in any rate class who do not pay their bills due to the impacts of COVID-19 on their financial circumstances, tracked by rate class; and

        b. any incremental, unplanned expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic that PNG-West has incurred related to continuing operations, tracked by expense category.

2. PNG-West must provide notice of the Application and a copy of this Order, electronically where possible, to all registered interveners in the PNG-West 2020-2021 Revenue Requirements Application.

3. PNG-West must publish notice of this Application on its Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms, as soon as reasonably possible but no later than Friday, April 24, 2020.

4. A public hearing process is established, as set out in the regulatory timetable attached as Appendix A to this Order.

DATED at the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, this   17th day of April 2020.

BY ORDER

Original signed by:

D. M. Morton
Commissioner

Attachment

Pacific Northern Gas Ltd.
COVID-19 Deferral Account Application

REGULATORY TIMETABLE

Action	Date (2020)
Intervener Registration	Friday May 1
Interveners to advise the BCUC of their intent, if any, to submit written Information Requests on this Application to PNG-West	Friday May 1
Further process	To be determined