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A Message from Chief Financial Officer, Trent Martin

Hello Community Members,

Last month, the Board of Commissioners approved a staff-recommended rate increase (average 4% for residential and 1.2% for businesses), effective October 1, 2025 (approximately \$5 per month for the average residential customer). Increasing rates is a difficult decision as we know family and business budgets are being challenged with rising costs on many fronts. In addition to the Board, we appreciate the feedback we received from the customer volunteer Electric Rates Advisory Committee (ERAC).


Prior to the rate action last year, we had not increased rates since October 2017. The 2024 rate action addressed our expanded capital program, prioritizing reliability, safety, and capacity for growth and inflation, with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) up about 28% since 2017.

The 2025 rate action is now focused on our net power costs. Our net power costs are increasing primarily due to wholesale market price changes and the July 2025 Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) rate increases (4.2% Power and 12.4% Transmission), effective October 1st. As a reminder, we source approximately 90% of our power to serve customers from BPA.

Although we are anticipating increases across most of our costs, the decision was made to increase rates to cover only the BPA cost impact, as this is a known, recurring, fixed cost to the District. Reserves will be used to cover the remaining shortfall.

We will continue to monitor actual operating results and costs, balancing the use of reserves and adjusting future rates as needed. As a customer-owned utility, Cowlitz PUD doesn't make a profit—rates are set to cover costs. Any extra or shortfall in revenue compared to costs is factored into future rate decisions.

We value the trust you place in us. Our goal remains the same: to provide safe, reliable electricity while being fiscally responsible stewards of this community-owned electric system asset.



Volunteer Opportunity

Help Older Adults in Your Community With Taxes

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is looking for volunteers for Cowlitz County. Volunteer in-person or virtually. Go to aarpfoundation.org/TaxaideVolunteer

COWLITZ PUD APPROVES RATE ADJUSTMENT TO SUPPORT RELIABLE ENERGY FUTURE

Effective October 1, 2025, Cowlitz PUD will implement a rate increase to ensure continued delivery of safe, reliable, and affordable energy to our community.

The Cowlitz PUD Board of Commissioners has approved a rate adjustment that will take effect October 1, 2025. This decision comes after careful consideration and planning in response to rising power and transmission costs from the Bonneville Power Administration.

For residential customers, the average increase will be approximately **4%**. Commercial and industrial customers will see a smaller adjustment of **1.2%**. These changes reflect our commitment to minimizing the impact on customers while maintaining the integrity of our energy infrastructure.

"We're committed to engaging with our community and equipping our neighbors with the tools they need to navigate these changes together," said **Board Chair, Commissioner Dave Quinn**.

As a nonprofit, publicly owned utility, Cowlitz PUD remains focused on fiscal responsibility and community service. We will continue to support essential infrastructure upgrades that improve safety, reduce outages, and strengthen grid resilience.

To help customers manage energy costs, Cowlitz PUD offers a range of support programs, including:

- **Free home energy audits**
- **Rebates for energy-efficient upgrades**
- **Online tools and tips to reduce energy use**



We understand that affordability matters, and we're here to help. For more information about assistance programs and energy-saving resources, please visit cowlitzpud.org or contact our Customer Service team.

Together, we're building a stronger, more sustainable future for Cowlitz County.

CYBERSECURITY TIP



Captcha and MFA awareness

Captcha pages (the small check boxes or puzzles that prove you are human) and MFA (Multi-Factor Authentication or 2FA) are key for account security. Malicious actors now impersonate these tools to trick you into sharing information you'd usually keep private.

These fake pages usually appear when you click a link in a phishing email or text telling you to act fast to avoid trouble. The pages may ask you to enter unfamiliar commands or use shortcuts like Windows-R, Ctrl-C, and Ctrl-V.

Here are three simple steps to stay safe from these hoaxes:

1. Never click links urging quick action to avoid something bad.
2. Always manually type in the website address for your account, service provider, or financial institution into your browser or use their official app, instead of following links from messages.
3. If the link appears shortened or is improperly spelled, don't click or visit.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY:

Fall Energy Efficiency Tips

Save energy and money during cooler temperatures in the fall by taking control of your energy use. The following actions help to reduce your energy use:



- Add or repair weatherstripping on windows and doors to reduce heat loss and drafts.
- Reverse the direction of your ceiling fan in colder weather. Running the fan in reverse pulls the warm air off the ceiling and disperses it throughout the room.
- Check your air filters every month to improve air quality, reduce heating costs, and improve the efficiency of your heating system. Be sure to change the filters regularly to keep the system running properly.
- If you have a programmable thermostat, program it to automatically change the temperature at set times for each day. Temperature is a personal/household decision, but the U.S. Department of Energy suggests setting your thermostat to 68 while you are awake and at home and lower it while you're asleep or away from home.
- Take advantage of sunlight by opening your shades, allowing for natural light and capturing the warmth from the sun.
- Keep furniture, drapes, carpets, and other objects from blocking the vents or registers. Blocked wall/baseboard heaters or register vents prevent heated air from circulating freely around the room and may cause your heating system to work harder and prevents rooms from warming up to the set temperature on the thermostat.

Call energy efficiency for more ideas: 360.501.9514 or 800.631.1131

CUSTOMER SERVICE :

Our Customer Service Representatives are available to assist you with all of your electric needs.

- Start, stop, or transfer service
- Billing questions
- Usage information
- Assistance programs
- Payment options
- Account services
- Update account information



To contact us call **360.423.2210** Monday thru Thursday 7am – 5:30pm, excluding holidays or email us at customerservice@cowlitzpud.org.

Connected is published by Cowlitz PUD

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Board of Commissioners meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 2pm.

To attend contact mpetterson@cowlitzpud.org