Date Filed: October 06, 2026

Witness: Brendan J. O'Brien and Garrett J. Murray
Request from: Office of Consumer Counsel

Question:

Payroll Expense. Refer to Schedule C-3.0, line 21, and Schedule C-3.5. Explain in detail the reason for the $15.138 million increase in payroll expense in the Rate Year over the 2025 level.

Response:

In Exhibit CLP-REVREQ-1, pages 70 through 75, the Company's proposed Rate Year Payroll Expense of $149.823 million, an increase of $15.138 million over the Test Year, accounts for (1) the annualization of actual employees that are active and positions filed as of December 31, 2025, for both CL&P and ESC, to normalize the Test Year amount resulting in a $2.778 million adjustment; (2) known and measurable compensation increases for both CL&P and ESC employees through the Rate Year totaling $9.122 million; and (3) originally filed 58 incremental FTEs in the cost of service in the amount of $3.238 million.

Note the Company has updated the proposed incremental FTEs to be included in the Rate Year cost of service to 41 FTEs in response to OCC-333.[i] The Company noted in that response that it will update the payroll expense and other affected SFRs to reflect the incremental addition of 41 FTEs in its next cost of service update.

Prior Referenced Response:

[i] OCC-333 Question:

Payroll. For each of the new positions that the Company is requesting recovery of in the Rate Year, state whether the hiring of the positions are conditioned on their approval in this case.

OCC-333 Response:

The Company is providing an update for the Full Time Equivalent ("FTE") counts included in the request for recovery in the Rate Year in this response as OCC-333, Attachment 1 (note that this is an update of Exhibit CLP-REVREQ-2, Work Paper C-3.5, page 3). The Company will update the payroll expense and other affected costs as part of its next cost of service update.

The number of FTEs included in the original filing was fifty-eight (58). This number was a preliminary number and included FTEs contemplated in the Advancing the Grid plan that is above and beyond the Targeted System Plan ("TSP") requested for review and approval in this application. The updated number of incremental FTEs to be included in the Rate Year of the Company's cost of service is forty-one (41).

Included in the forty-one (41) full-time positions are twenty-one (21) in Vegetation Management, five (5) Power Quality positions, two (2) in Distribution Planning & Forecasting and one (1) Asset Health, these are contingent on PURA's approval in this case. In addition, for Grid Modernization there are seven (7) for Control Room Operations, three (3) for Data Innovation, and two (2) for Field Communications that the Company will consider hiring based on business needs and changing requirements as necessary, but most likely not all requested.

The Vegetation Management positions allow the Company the opportunity to improve the system's reliability and improve cost-efficiency by transitioning more work in-house to restructure vegetation management performance for the benefit of our customers. While the twenty-one (21) Vegetation Management positions appear to be incremental, in reality there is only 1 incremental resource. Of the twenty-one (21), eight (8) of the FTEs are the result of 16 employees who currently split their time 50%/50% between O&M and capital work shifting to solely working on the proposed combined O&M program, if approved, results in the equivalent of 8 incremental employees working on the O&M program; twelve (12) resources would be converted from contracted resources to internal resources of which the Company's proposed vegetation management expenses in Exhibit CLP-REVREQ-2, Work Paper C-3.31 reflect the reduction in outside contractor services; and one (1) resource would be truly incremental.

The Grid Modernization positions are needed to support large-scale distributed energy resource ("DER") integration and clean-energy advancement; develop and deploy advanced tools and analytics for integrated distribution system planning and grid modernization; and drive increased innovation and application of GenAI, LLM and machine learning capabilities.

The Company is also providing as OCC-333, Attachment 2, which is a corrected Exhibit CLP-TSP-3, page 43 of 149, that has been updated with the corrected number of FTEs in the parenthesis in the text boxes on the right.