

October 2, 2018

Aaron Gutierrez
Senior Policy Analyst
Select Committee on Pension Policy
Sent by email: aaron.gutierrez@leg.wa.gov

RE: Public Utility District Early Retirement Exemption to Return to Work

Dear Mr. Gutierrez,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you last week regarding the ability for early-retired Public Utility District (PUD) employees to return to work at the PUD for a limited number of hours; similar to the provision granted to substitute teachers. I appreciate your advice on the best way to raise this subject to your board and would like to request for board consideration possible actions that would enable PUDs to utilize the expertise and knowledge of retired personnel on a limited basis.

The Washington Public Utility Districts Association (WPUDA) represents 27 PUDs and one joint action agency in the State of Washington. Our members are not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that provide electricity, water, wastewater and wholesale telecommunications services to citizens throughout the state. PUDs are governed by locally-elected officials who are responsible for delivering utility services that are safe, reliable and affordable.

Many of our PUDs are located in parts of the state where it is difficult to recruit and retain employees in mission-critical positions such as power and water supply, engineering, operations, telecommunications and maintenance. These positions require specific training and experience which makes recruiting difficult, especially in rural areas of the state where many of our PUDs are located.

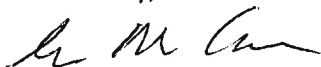
We are seeking an exemption or permission that would allow the PUDs to hire back, on a temporary basis, an employee who took early retirement without the retired employee losing their benefits. This would allow PUDs to bring employees back to complete work that would assist with job training or provide valuable work while new employees learn the full scope of the wide areas of responsibility or even vacation coverage at critical times.

We would appreciate your thoughtful consideration of our request. We would be happy to work with you on either a specific exemption for PUDs or a more general provision that would allow these workers to return to work at the PUD.

Please let me know the best way that we can move this idea forward.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



George M. Caan, Executive Director
Washington PUD Association

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