



Jefferson County  
Public Utility District

# UTILITY DEEP-DIVE

Students explore the utilities that keep our community running

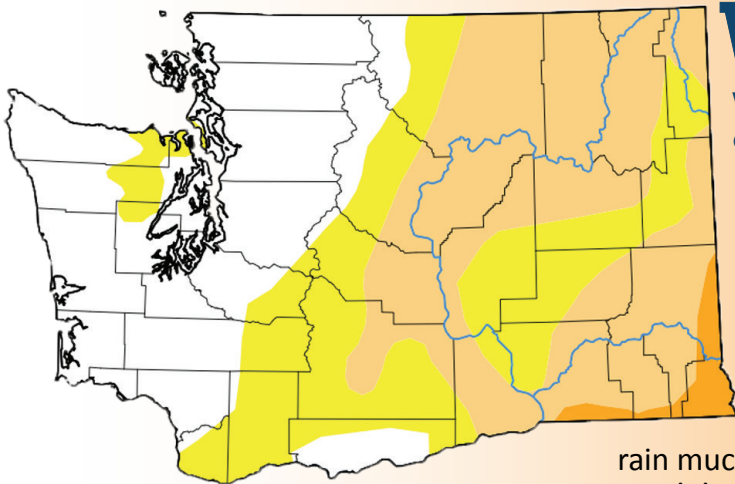
Students from Quilcene High School spent the day getting an up-close look at the essential services the PUD provides. The visit began at the new Hadlock wastewater facility, where students learned all about state-of-the-art wastewater treatment right here in our backyard. From there, they toured the PUD's Quimper water system, which serves more than 14,000 customers in the mid-county area to see firsthand how safe drinking water is produced. Students also explored the utility's broadband network, learning how fiber connectivity supports homes, schools, and businesses. The day wrapped up with an inside look at electric utility operations, including a live line demonstration focused on electrical safety, utility careers, and the skilled work involved in keeping power reliable for the community.

Interested in a group utility tour? Connect with us: [news@jeffpud.org](mailto:news@jeffpud.org)

PUD Line Apprentice Tyler Gale, shows the hazards of contacting a live utility line with 7,200 volts during a student tour.



This may not be the ideal place to be "fully-immersed" in your utility, but a unique experience none the less! Quilcene High School students received a firsthand look at the state-of-the-art Port Hadlock wastewater facility, including a peek inside the bio bug farm and membrane filtration (directly below) where ick-loving microscopic bugs dine on waste.



## 2026 Washington Drought Map

- Abnormally Dry
- Moderate Drought
- Severe Drought

## WATCHING THE WATER

WA State Dept of Ecology declares statewide drought and the data points to snowpack

In late-2025, several atmospheric rivers melted a lot of snow, causing widespread flooding, and ultimately a "snowpack drought". Lowland rains from those storms helped boost some areas to normal and even above normal levels for the water year, but not everywhere.

PUD source wells are almost entirely dependent upon seasonal lowland rains. The Olympic Mountain rainshadow prevented us from receiving the fire hose of rain much of Western Washington endured. The result is seasonal precipitation that travels down into aquifers—known as "recharge"—will likely be below normal in 2026. Well water levels fully recharge annually at different times, with most having not peaked yet. With summer fast approaching, water conservation should be top of mind for all residents regardless of water source. For water saving tips, visit: [www.jeffpud.org/water-wisely/](http://www.jeffpud.org/water-wisely/)

# Neighbors Helping Neighbors: Low-Income Program Updates

Did you know that JPUD currently serves more than 1,000 households countywide through its Rate Reduction Program?

Rate reduction funding helps trim the energy burden for some of our community's most at-risk residents.

Since its founding as a water utility, the PUD has offered a rate assistance program, which has expanded to include services like wastewater, electricity, and broadband while keeping pace with state and federal requirements.

In 2025, the total program costs for the electric division of the utility (including administrative overhead) reached approx \$813,000.

At the state legislative level, changes have been happening rapidly. RCW 19.405, The Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) set baseline targets for utilities to meet relating to greenhouse gas emissions and long-term funding requirements for assistance programs designed to reduce energy burden and create equitable access to the clean energy movement for low-income customers. You may not have heard of CETA, but it drives much of how utilities operate in our state with the goal of utilities offering carbon-neutral energy by 2030.

So, what does this mean for our utility? Previously, JPUD faced a \$1.9M annual assistance program funding target by 2030 with increasing milestones from there to address an estimated \$3.2M in excess energy burden for at-risk customers. That's a *heavy* lift for the customer-owners of a small utility to support.

Thankfully, the new legislation enacted in HB 1903 allows more flexibility, enabling JPUD to gradually increase efforts in program rollout to minimize the budget and rate impact.

So, we can phase-in our assistance program changes, but how to get it done? Through power saving measures like expanding energy efficiency and weatherization efforts, alongside transitioning homes to high-efficiency heat pump systems.

Our goal is to make energy efficiency funds available

for projects to help the most at-risk customers. This, in addition to transitioning to a percentage-based discount from our current flat rate bill credit structure, will more equitably reduce the energy burden-to-income ratio for our neighbors.



**Jean Pepper**  
PUD Services Director

How does the flat rate and percentage models compare? The PUD currently provides a set \$71.53 flat rate for each low-income qualified household for electric billing each month. The new model would base the support amount off of household *gross* income, with 30% discount at the top end. This helps us as a utility identify the homes with the highest energy burden (the highest amount of income that goes straight to paying a power bill) and ensure the household receives assistance levels that are meaningful to them and their circumstances. Our team can then work with those most at-risk households to identify energy-saving solutions for their home and funding availability. The goal: Help our neighbors save on monthly energy bills and help them find long-term relief, safety, and comfort, while reducing the overall assistance program cost all rate payers support.

There are a few steps we must go through to implement this new model, starting with a rate study to establish how changes will impact the budget. The next step involves commissioner input and a formal rollout of the updated program ideally in 2027.

Utility bill support for our neighbors is something that typically goes unseen but is something that impacts all rate payers. Our goal is to create a fair and equitable program that helps our customers lower their energy burden.

Please visit: [jeffpud.org/assistance](http://jeffpud.org/assistance) to learn more.

## RIVERS, RATES & RELIABILITY

In the energy world, decisions made far beyond Jefferson County can shape our local power.

A recent federal court ruling requires our primary power generator and energy supplier, the Bonneville Power Administration, to make changes to how water is stored along its hydroelectric projects. For communities like ours, that could make meeting peak demand for our region a challenge while increasing the cost of wholesale electricity.

At home, Jefferson PUD is facing important infrastructure needs to maintain safe and reliable service. PUD commissioners continue to navigate these challenges, with a focus on balancing affordability and reliability. Rate conversations will be presented in commission meetings and here in our monthly newsletter.

PUD Board meetings are available in-person and online and now hosted on Teams! A link is available on the event calendar on [jeffpud.org](http://jeffpud.org)

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