

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON, AMENDING BELLINGHAM MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 15.04.070 RELATING TO THE REDUCED UTILITY RATES FOR LOW INCOME SENIOR AND DISABLED CITIZENS.

WHEREAS, Bellingham Municipal Code ("BMC") Section 15.04.070 sets forth a reduced utility rate for qualified low income senior and disabled citizens; and,

WHEREAS, the criteria for qualifying for the discount includes an income component; and,

WHEREAS, the definition of "income" should be clarified; and,

WHEREAS, the reduced rates are currently limited to owners of single family residences who meet the other qualifying criteria; and,

WHEREAS, with the increased use of meters, many duplex and condominiums now have a separate water service; and,

WHEREAS, these changes will assist City staff and the citizens in appropriately implementing the discount to qualified low income senior and disabled citizens; and,

WHEREAS, this Ordinance is in the best interests of the City of Bellingham and its utility customers;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM DOES ORDAIN:

Section 1: Bellingham Municipal Code Section 15.04.070 is hereby amended as follows:

15.04.070 - Reduced Rates For Low Income Senior And Disabled Citizens

- A. Any low income senior or disabled citizen who satisfies the reduced rate criteria in this section and who lives in a residence receiving a separate City of Bellingham water or sewer service and water or sewer bill, is entitled to a rate reduction for water, sewer and storm and surface water utilities.
- B. A senior aged 62 or older or a disabled person with a household gross income of \$23,000 or less in 2003 (adjusted annually thereafter for inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers for Seattle, Tacoma, Bremerton) is entitled to have their rates reduced by the following amounts:

Household Income	Percent Reduction
0-50% of the qualifying income	75%
51%-75% of the qualifying income	50%
76%-100% of the qualifying income	25%

For purposes of this Section 15.04.070, "gross income" shall have the same definition as provided in 26 United States Code Section 61, as currently enacted or hereafter amended.

C. A non-resident property owner may also obtain the reduction if the premises are rented to a qualified low income senior or disabled person and the owner certifies the savings are passed to the senior or disabled renter.


D. All persons claiming the discount provided for in this section shall first be required to file an application with the City requesting the reduction. The application shall provide information sufficient for the City to verify the applicant's eligibility to participate in this reduced rate program. Customers receiving the rate reduction must renew their application annually in accordance with administrative procedures promulgated by the Finance Director.

PASSED by the Council this 11th day of July, 2005.



Council President

APPROVED by me this 14th day of July, 2005.



Mayor

Attest: 

Finance Director

Approved as to form:



Office of the City Attorney

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