

**From:** [Harold Hoem](#)  
**To:** [UTC DL Records Center](#); [Harold Hoem](#)  
**Subject:** Letter in favor of early closure of Colstrip power plant  
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I'm Harold Hoem from Missoula, Montana. I'm concerned that Colstrip's power plant is aggravating climate change, wildfires and extreme weather.

Unfortunately, please don't think that you can count on Montana's agencies to address this problem head on. It's not going to happen. There is a huge denial bubble that we can't seem to crack despite years of trying. We're counting on you to be the adults in the room.

I was a smokejumper for several years in the late 1950's. Later in life I visited large, devastating fires in Montana, Washington and California. In 2014 two homes that I built and lived in (but no longer owned) in the Methow Valley of Washington burned to the foundation in the calamitous Carlton Complex fire. Megafires of today are just different from the fires I knew in the 50's, and we're told we can anticipate more.

Things have gotten riskier for people living in the Wildland Urban Interface, and riskier for firefighters. All this is happening with a backstory of a rapidly changing climate. CO2 levels have accelerated past an alarming 400 parts per million, a level not before seen by civilization. Summers are predicted to become hotter and drier; fire seasons last longer. Fire behavior is more extreme and there are more extreme weather events, now linked by experts to human causes -- a real game changer.

In this summer's drought and fire season, thousands were evacuated in Montana, Washington and California. Thick smoke obscured our landscape and damaged our health; firefighters died; our tourist season and agriculture were

harmed. This broke Montana's budget.

So what are we doing prolonging for decades Colstrip's dumping of greenhouse gases into our fragile atmosphere? Some people in power seem to have a distorted view of the real world. It's as if the urgency button is not being pushed when it's clear time is not on our side.

It seems to me that you are our last best hope for the last best place.

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