From: clairerichardsrn@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Claire Richards
To: Public Involvement (UTC)
Subject: PSE IRP, Dockets UE-2003044 and UG-200305
Date: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 12:25:20 PM

External Email

Dear UTC Commissioners,

I am a nursing scientist focused on studying the health impacts of climate change. The next 10-20 years are a critical time — to deny this is to deny science and common sense. There is overwhelming scientific consensus that the burning of fossil fuels has destabilized our climate and threatens to define the lives of children today. The Lancet (one of the most impactful journals out there) has published numerous articles on the topic of climate change and documenting the precariousness of our situation. Puget Sound Energy's draft 2021 Integrated Resource Plan fails to align with 2019's Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) requiring utilities to be 80 percent carbon free by 2030, which must be achieved by building more renewable energy and storage infrastructure sooner, retiring the Colstrip coal plant before 2025, and cancelling the Tacoma LNG and any other planned fossil gas plants, expansions or pipelines.

As Washington's largest, and most expensive, energy utility, Puget Sound Energy will be instrumental to determining if our state can achieve its climate goals. To see PSE's initial draft of this critical 20-year plan include building and expanding fossil fuel infrastructure while exploiting the cost cap loophole in the Energy Transformation Act is frustrating and worrisome; it should not be allowed to stand.

Planning for future investments should involve an equity evaluation that analyzes potential impacts on Treaty rights, communities already experiencing health disparities and high levels of pollution, and communities that have been historically marginalized. It should also include an evaluation of the impacts of ongoing burning of fossil fuels on future energy needs and power outages due to extreme weather events. This evaluation should span the project's life cycle impacts. Fossil fuel extraction and refining, including fossil gas, has a long and ugly history of harm through land and resource theft; man camps that have been linked to the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and the disruption of small communities; destruction of habitat and the ability to subsist off the land; and processes that leave behind communities rocked by cancer, birth defects, and other serious health concerns. It's time to leave these practices in the past and invest in less harmful energy.

Although I do not live in a house that is serviced by PSE and never have been, their decisions dramatically affect my life-- and ultimately we know that utilities are allowed to purchase energy from each other-- so we are all really customers of PSE and we have a stake in the harm PSE's energy plans cause to communities, climate, and future generations: by using and paying for the energy we are complicit, and we are demanding better. However, even though we've invested thousands of dollars into weatherizing our own home, our own energy reductions are meaningless if large polluters like PSE are allowed to continue to go on with business as usual. We are demanding more transparency in how PSE forecasts future energy demand (are they considering climate change and the decline in snow pack, need for water for fish habitat?), inquiry into the validity of construction costs passed onto customers, and a public engagement process that facilitates customers and stakeholders having an actual say in where our money goes and the implications of what powers our homes.

Sincerely,
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