

Docket No. UE-200115 - Vol. IV

In the Matter of the Application of Puget Sound Energy

October 8, 2020



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1 LACEY, WASHINGTON; OCTOBER 8, 2020

2 1:32 P.M.

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4 CHAIR DANNER: Good afternoon, everyone.

5 Today is Thursday, October 8th, 2020. And this is a
6 public hearing of the Utilities and Transportation
7 Commission. In the matter of the application for an
8 order authorizing the sale of all of Puget Sound
9 Energy's interest in Colstrip Unit 4, and certain of
10 Puget's interest in the Colstrip transmission system.

11 This is -- the docket number for this matter
12 is UE-200115. My name is Dave Danner. I'm the Chair of
13 the Commission, and I'm joined by my colleagues,
14 Commissioner Ann Rendahl and Commissioner Jay Balasbas.

15 Our purpose today is to take public comment
16 on the application that is pending before the
17 Commission. I'm going to turn it back to John in just a
18 moment, John Cupp from our staff to go over the
19 logistics for the meeting and a little bit of background
20 on this case.

21 Before I do that, I want to -- let me ask if
22 Lisa Gafken of the Attorney General's Public Counsel
23 Unit, are you on the line?

24 MS. GAFKEN: Chair Danner, I am on the line.
25 Good afternoon.

1 CHAIR DANNER: Okay. I wanted to introduce
2 you to folks. The Public Counsel's Office represents
3 the interests of residential and small business
4 ratepayers before the Commission. And so in our formal
5 adjudication she will be representing those interests.

6 And so if folks providing testimony today,
7 we are not -- the Commissioners do not take questions
8 today. And if there are questions, I would refer them
9 to Ms. Gafken.

10 In addition, John Cupp, from our staff --
11 our staff is also a party to the formal proceeding
12 before us.

13 And so Ms. Gafken, if you have any opening
14 comments to make; otherwise, we'll just have John move
15 into the logistics.

16 MS. GAFKEN: I think Mr. Cupp can move on to
17 the logistics. If there's questions that come up, I can
18 provide an e-mail and phone number to follow-up with
19 folks after the hearing as well.

20 CHAIR DANNER: Do you want to provide that
21 e-mail now?

22 MS. GAFKEN: Sure, I can do that. So my
23 e-mail address is Lisa, L-i-s-a, dot Gafken, G-a-f, as
24 in "Frank," k-e-n @ A-T-G dot W-A dot g-o-v.

25 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very

1 much.

2 Now, John, I'm going to turn it over to you
3 for some -- some logistics and some setting the
4 groundwork. So if --

5 MR. CUPP: Yes, Chair Danner. Sorry if I
6 repeat some of what you've already said.

7 Good afternoon. My name is John Cupp. I'm
8 the public involvement representative for the UTC, and
9 I'll be the moderator for this comment hearing.

10 Before we go on the record I want to kind of
11 explain how this hearing will proceed. And first, a
12 little background on this case. On February 19, 2020,
13 PSE filed a request to sell its ownership interest in
14 Colstrip Unit 4 and certain assets in the Colstrip
15 transmission system.

16 PSE is one of five owners of Colstrip Unit 4
17 with a 25 percent ownership interest. PSE is selling
18 half of its 25 percent to Northwest Energy and half to
19 Talen Montana LLC, and a portion of their assets --
20 excuse me -- and a portion of their interest in the
21 Colstrip transmission system to Northwest Energy.

22 PSE believes the sale is necessary to meet
23 requirements of the Clean Energy Transmission Act.

24 Under the proposed agreement, PSE will
25 continue to purchase power generated from the Colstrip

1 Unit 4 through the end of 2025 at the latest.

2 UTC staff has filed testimony recommending
3 the Commission deny PSE's request to sell a portion of
4 its Colstrip holdings. Staff is not certain that the
5 sale of Unit 4 would result in net benefits to customers
6 as PSE proposes, but may, in fact, end up costing
7 customers due to uncertainty regarding the price of
8 replacement power. The UTC is expected to issue a
9 decision no later than January 19, 2021.

10 So this evening you will have an opportunity
11 to provide your comments to the Commissioners regarding
12 the sale of PSE's interest in Colstrip Unit 4.

13 The comment period is open through November
14 22nd. You'll have the opportunity to submit comments
15 through that date. And here's some ways you can
16 comment. We have a "submit a comment" link on our
17 homepage; that's www.utc.wa.gov, or you can e-mail us at
18 comments@utc.wa.gov. You can call us at 1 (888)
19 333-9882. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 47250,
20 Olympia, Washington 98504-7250.

21 I should mention that most of us are working
22 remotely, so it can take awhile for mail to get to us
23 sometimes right now.

24 The Commissioners act as judges in formal
25 filings like this, so they cannot answer your questions

1 tonight. This is for them to hear your comments.

2 If you have questions, you can e-mail Lisa
3 Gafken, as she said, or you can e-mail
4 comments@utc.wa.gov. That's the same e-mail I gave to
5 you earlier; and the same toll-free number, if you have
6 questions, 1-(888) 333-9882. And you can ask to speak
7 to me. Again, my name is John Cupp.

8 If you want information about the case or
9 wish to follow it, you can do so by going to
10 www.utc.wa.gov/2011.

11 Now, for some meeting logistics, we've
12 talked about just a little bit, if everyone can please
13 mute your computer mic for your telephone unless you are
14 called upon to speak.

15 If you call -- if you're joining us through
16 Teams, just click on the microphone icon. You will get
17 a slash through it when you're muted. When you're
18 called upon to speak, click on it, the slash will go
19 away. And please remember to re-mute your mic when you
20 are finished speaking.

21 If you called in on your phone, "*6" on your
22 keypad will mute you, and you can use it again to unmute
23 yourself when you're called upon to speak. And please
24 remember to press "*6" again to remember to re-mute
25 yourself after you finish speaking.

1 Please wait to be called on before you
2 speak. And please don't interrupt other speakers. We
3 want everyone's comments.

4 The chat feature in Microsoft Teams should
5 only be used for if you need to report technical
6 difficulties. You can either use the chat feature in
7 Teams for technical difficulties, or call Ryan Smith at
8 (360) 915-3646.

9 So before we go on the record, I'd like to
10 get the names of those who wish to speak who have not
11 already signed in to speak. So if you want to speak and
12 haven't already signed in and your last name begins with
13 A through E, please give us your name now and please
14 spell it.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: When you say "signed
16 in," what do you mean?

17 MR. CUPP: Well, just if you wish to speak,
18 so that Chair Danner knows who wants to speak, we'll
19 need to provide him your name so that he can call on you
20 when it's your turn to speak.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So if you have our
22 name on the list, we're signed in?

23 MR. CUPP: If you've already called to sign
24 in, you don't need to provide your name now.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

1 MR. CUPP: So is there anyone whose last
2 name begins with A through E who has not already signed
3 in to speak?

4 Okay. I don't hear anyone --

5 MS. BUNCH: Yes. Because I was hooked in
6 the chat. Christine Bunch, residential customer for
7 PSE.

8 MR. CUPP: Thank you.

9 Anyone else whose name -- last name begins
10 with A through E?

11 How about F through J?

12 Okay. How about J through O?

13 MS. McMULLEN: Yes, please. Rebecca
14 McMullen.

15 MR. CUPP: Okay. How about P through T.

16 U through Z?

17 Okay. I'm not hearing anybody speak up, so
18 I'm going to guess that we have all the people who want
19 to comment.

20 So I thank you, and I'll turn the meeting
21 over to Chair Danner, Commissioner Rendahl, and
22 Commissioner Balasbas.

23 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very
24 much.

25 I'm getting a little bit of an echo. The

1 only thing I would ask is if -- if you are not speaking,
2 please turn your video off. That allows us to
3 concentrate on the person who is speaking and will be
4 able to see that person, and that would be very helpful
5 to us.

6 So again, unless you are speaking, please
7 turn your video off. And then when it is your turn to
8 speak you can turn it back on. All right.

9 Thank you very much.

10 So at this point, though, I would like to
11 ask -- this is a formality we go through. For everyone
12 who has signed up to speak and everyone who intends to
13 speak today, would you please raise your right hand so
14 that we can swear you in.

15 Okay. So do you affirm that you will tell
16 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

17 MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yes.

18 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very
19 much.

20 Now, let's begin. I will call on the first
21 person. Paul Ossendorf, are you there? Paul Ossendorf.

22 All right. Let me move on to -- I'm sorry?

23 All right. Willard Westry. Are you there?

24 MR. WESTRY: I'm here.

25 MR. DANNER: All right. Go ahead, sir. You

1 have three minutes.

2 MR. WESTRY: Dear Commissioners, I am
3 Willard Westry. An engineer with 40 years industry
4 experience and five years working in the IRP stakeholder
5 process as a technical advisor.

6 I'm opposed to this sale for three reasons.

7 First, it will necessarily result in the
8 initial release of millions of tons of greenhouse gas
9 emissions, which is unconscionable.

10 Secondly, it violates the intention of the
11 Clean Energy Transmission Act and Greenhouse Gas Act to
12 eliminate all coal-fired emissions from their impact on
13 Washington climate.

14 I want to focus on the third reason, that
15 may not be as obvious as the first two. I believe that
16 UTC should be deeply aware of current actions that will
17 drive costs well into the future. This is a key to a
18 prudent determination.

19 My conclusion is that transfer of the
20 145 megawatts of transmission rights to Northwest Energy
21 will seriously increase the future costs of implementing
22 CETA, which I believe is not prudent.

23 This conclusion is complex and requires the
24 understanding of a number of technical factors that may
25 not be obvious. PSE has limited transmission rights to

1 Western Washington; 750 megawatts from the Colstrip
2 transmission line and 1,500 megawatts from the grid,
3 which is fully utilized. The 750 megawatts give PSE
4 future access to Montana wind resources, the lowest cost
5 and highest performing renewable generation source
6 available anywhere.

7 PSE has confirmed with me that Montana wind
8 resource is the lowest cost-based on their analysis.
9 Their IRP resource data shows that this resource is also
10 the highest performing because it has the highest
11 capacity factors of any available renewable generation
12 resource.

13 Montana wind has, more importantly, the
14 highest winter season capacity factors, matching PSE's
15 peak requirement.

16 All other renewable generation sources are
17 significantly lower. This means it would take many more
18 megawatts of any other source to meet capacity; thus
19 significantly adding cost. Using other resources would
20 also require building new transmission at further cost.

21 This is why the sale of any portion of
22 transmission to Montana will increase the CETA cost, is
23 not in the ratepayers' interest, and in my opinion not
24 prudent for the UTC to allow.

25 Thank you very much for your vital service.

1 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much for your
2 comments today.

3 Peter Morton has signed in but not wishing
4 to comment this afternoon.

5 And Robert Briggs has signed in not wishing
6 to comment.

7 I understand that Paul Ossendorf has joined
8 us. Do you want to go ahead, sir.

9 MR. OSSENDORF: Sorry, I don't have any
10 comment today.

11 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you.

12 Ann Hedges from the Montana Environmental
13 Information Center. Go ahead.

14 MS. HEDGES: Chair Danner and Commissioners,
15 thank you very much. Can you hear me?

16 CHAIR DANNER: Yes, we can.

17 MS. HEDGES: Thank you.

18 My name is Ann Hedges with Montana
19 Environmental Information Center, and I want to thank
20 you for this opportunity to speak.

21 The sale of Puget Sound Energy's share of
22 Colstrip Unit 4 is a very bad deal for both Washington
23 and Montana's customers.

24 The expert testimony submitted in this
25 docket reinforces that this is a bad deal for Washington

1 ratepayers, including my daughter, who goes to college
2 in Bellingham. I pay her utility bills, and I don't
3 want to see them rise; nor do I want this climate plan
4 to simply shuffle the chairs on the Titanic.

5 Washington has been a leader tackling the
6 climate crisis, but this deal would undermine that
7 leadership and commitment. The Clean Energy
8 Transformation Act is a model for other states. It has
9 helped Montana acknowledge that the plant's life is
10 finite. This has been invaluable in helping the state
11 consider what comes next.

12 But if this deal goes through, CETA is a
13 hollow shell. The planet doesn't care about
14 paper-shuffling exercise. It requires real emission
15 reductions.

16 More specifically, there is an argument that
17 this deal will facilitate Unit 3 going off-line sooner.
18 This is not true. Unit 3 will go off-line sooner if
19 this deal is denied. We know this because of the
20 rapidly escalating mining costs, the increasing L&M
21 costs, the years of delay in capital expenditures that
22 are continuing to pile up. The proposed power purchase
23 agreement that makes Puget customers pay the higher of
24 either the cost of Colstrip power or market power, which
25 by itself shows that the plant isn't competitive in the

1 market.

2 Even Northwestern Energy, who we consider to
3 be the bully in the schoolyard when it comes to trying
4 to keep Colstrip running, responded to questions
5 regarding CU-3 retirement in the Montana CU-4 docket.
6 And I'll submit some written comments on this.

7 In Northwestern's response to MEIC 36, 70
8 and 72, Northwestern said, "The conservative assumption
9 of Colstrip 3 closing in 2025 was based on carbon
10 restrictions in states like Washington starting at the
11 end of 2025."

12 Numerous statements from Northwestern in
13 these documents shows that even Northwestern concedes
14 that CU-3 will likely close before the end of 2025. The
15 only question is when will CU 4 retire. This deal will
16 guaranty it stays open longer than 2025 despite the
17 escalating costs.

18 Northwestern has a financial incentive to
19 the tune of \$220 million to make it run the plant until
20 at least 2042. Anything less could jeopardize its
21 ability to recover the full \$407 million that was
22 rate-based in 2008, \$220 million more than it paid just
23 a year before.

24 This deal would increase carbon dioxide
25 emissions and raise rates in both states. Exporting

1 emissions isn't a decrease; it is a paid-for-shuffling
2 exercise.

3 We urge you to reject this deal. Thank you.

4 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very
5 much.

6 Virginia Lore, are you there?

7 MS. LORE: Yes, I'm here. Thank you very
8 much. I am --

9 CHAIR DANNER: We can see you.

10 MS. LORE: And you can hear me, too, I
11 assume.

12 I'm a PSE customer and a member of the
13 Vashon Climate Action Group. I was a member of PSE's
14 Technical Advisory Group for their 2019 Integrated
15 Resource Plan and I participate in the 2021 integrated
16 resource planning.

17 When I first moved to King County and became
18 a PSE customer, I believed PSE's publicity about how
19 green they were. As I learned more about the real PSE,
20 the profit-driven, investor-owned PSE, I realized that
21 PSE does not always reveal the whole truth.

22 For example, in announcing the proposed sale
23 of Colstrip, PSE's Senior Vice President David Mills
24 said, "This is what our customers have been asking for."

25 Really? I don't recall ever hearing anyone

1 ask for the sale of Colstrip. But I've certainly heard
2 many customers asking for its closure.

3 We know we are in an accelerating climate
4 crisis. We understand the science. We know that fossil
5 fuels burned anywhere harm the planet everywhere. We
6 would not ask for Colstrip sale.

7 PSE also proposes to buy back some of
8 Colstrip's dirty energy from the new owners at a higher
9 rate. Has David Mills heard customers clamoring for
10 higher electricity rates for dirty energy? I haven't.

11 Finally, David Mills has repeatedly
12 mentioned that PSE's transmission constraints are a
13 problem whenever discussing the Clean Energy
14 Transformation Act.

15 Does he think we cannot see the irony of PSE
16 proposing to get rid of valuable transmission lines that
17 could be used to bring us clean, inexpensive wind energy
18 from Montana rather than dirty expensive coal-derived
19 electricity?

20 When the State set up investor-owned
21 utilities, policies to foster building infrastructure
22 may have been needed. But we are way past that time.
23 We are now in a crisis that demands what we quickly
24 curtail the use of fossil fuels.

25 Now is the time to deny the sale of Colstrip

1 and transmission lines. Now is the time to make it
2 clear that customers will not pay for electricity from
3 out-of-merit purchases.

4 Now is also the time for the UTC to declare
5 that the continued funding and operating of Colstrip is
6 no longer prudent and to insist on the closure of
7 Colstrip.

8 Now would also be a great time to begin the
9 process of eliminating investor-owned utilities in our
10 state.

11 Thank you very much for your time.

12 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much for
13 participating this afternoon.

14 John Sherwin, are you there?

15 MRS. SHERWIN: Oh, hi. So John has decided
16 to just do a written comment. I'm his wife.

17 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very
18 much for that.

19 Ronald Snell. Ronald Snell, are you there?

20 Lewis Ponz, are you there?

21 MR. PONZ: Yes.

22 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Go ahead, sir.

23 MR. PONZ: I'm a PSE customer.

24 First, PSE is proposing selling Unit 4 to
25 Northwestern. And the new owners propose running the

1 mine at least until 2059. Not only will -- will the
2 burning of coal at Unit 4 produce lots of carbon dioxide
3 and coal ash, but the mining of coal produces lots of
4 methane.

5 It has been shown that 10 percent of the
6 methane released into the air originates from the mining
7 of coal. Mind you, not the burning of coal, but simply
8 its mining. Methane in the atmosphere has a greater
9 effect in climate change and carbon dioxide; and not in
10 the distant future, but over the next 20 to 30 years.

11 These increases in methane will result in
12 more immediate climate change. We don't want any more
13 wildfires in our backyard.

14 Second, PSE is proposing selling its (audio
15 disruption) ratepayer-owned transmission line well below
16 its long-term value. PSE knows that they will need to
17 expand their acquisition of renewable energy to meet the
18 Clean Energy Transformation Act.

19 The Colstrip transmission line is surrounded
20 with excellent wind power and can be used to tap into
21 these resources, the value of which will only increase
22 over time.

23 Selling of the transmission line to
24 Northwestern is boom to the company and a travesty for
25 PSE ratepayers.

1 Finally, an alarming aspect of PSE's plan is
2 the fact that PSE is willing to buy back power of
3 Northwestern at a higher than market value price.

4 This is horrible, since again, the ones who
5 benefit are not the ratepayers but PSE shareholders and
6 the coal industry. It also smells of corruption,
7 proposing selling a commodity at a low price and buying
8 back its only marketable use at a higher than marketable
9 value.

10 So PSE is hurting the ratepayers and the
11 environment by proposing the sale of its transmission
12 line at the low market value and buying back dirty power
13 at above market price.

14 Thank you.

15 THE COURT: All right. Thank you very much.

16 Lynn Fitzu, are you there?

17 MS. FITZU: Yes, I am.

18 CHAIR DANNER: Okay. Turn your video on and
19 go ahead.

20 All right. We can see you and hear you.

21 MS. FITZU: Thank you.

22 I want to talk about bad faith. In 2019 the
23 Washington State Legislature passed the Clean Energy
24 Transformation Act by a majority of the elected
25 representatives who represented a majority of voter will

1 in the State of Washington.

2 This bill was passed because we want clean
3 energy and we want to avert a climate disaster. This is
4 after years of consumers attempting to influence PSE's
5 business plan for clean energy to no effect.

6 To me, this is -- this little move on the
7 part of PSE of selling Colstrip Plant 4 for one dollar
8 to a Montana holding firm in order to comply with the
9 substance of the law but not the spirit of it is the
10 hype of bad faith.

11 Many years ago when I was, again, testifying
12 at one of these hearings, a customer identified himself
13 as a hostage customer of PSE. I cannot think of a
14 better description of the position that we, the
15 customers of PSE and the voters of Washington are in,
16 being circumvented in every way by PSE, when to add to
17 the final insult of this, we will be asked to pay more
18 for this rerouted doomsday energy.

19 I represent Thurston Climate Action Team.
20 We are a nonprofit in Thurston County working with
21 Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater and the County to create a
22 climate mitigation plan for our county. That plan is on
23 the verge of being voted and adopted by all four
24 jurisdictions in January.

25 Our plan is science-based and aims at

1 reductions that would meet what the scientists tell us
2 is necessary in order to keep well below two degrees
3 temperature rise. Fairly far into the plan our
4 consultant was struggling to meet those target goals and
5 was only able to do so in adding in sequestration.

6 This indicates that we are now so far in our
7 planetary carbon budget that we are approaching a point
8 where it is becoming increasingly impossible to even
9 reach the targets that we must reach as a planet.

10 As our consultant demonstrated to us in a
11 fairly dramatic slide, roughly one-third of the
12 reductions we must make to meet our goals and our
13 biggest section of reductions were to be accomplished by
14 CETA.

15 Thus, if PSE is allowed to subvert the
16 intention of CETA to reduce the use of fossil fuel
17 energy for our state, they will render impossible, not
18 only Thurston County's efforts to stem catastrophic
19 climate change but clearly will also undermine the
20 efforts of our entire state to achieve such goals.

21 Selling it for \$1 was a clever trick to get
22 around a legislative mandate. When you see this sort of
23 bad faith, one looks around for the adults in the room
24 to report this sort of callus disregard of the will of
25 the public and the basic cheating with the rules.

1 You are the adults in the room that I can
2 find. I appeal you to stop this.

3 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very
4 much for your remarks.

5 All right. So I'm going to call up Beth
6 Kaeding from the Northern Plains Resource Council, and
7 then also ask Ronda Hunter, Ann Kreaker, and Kevin Jones
8 to be on deck. They will be the next three after Beth
9 Kaeding.

10 Beth Kaeding, are you there?

11 MS. KAEDING: Yes, I am. Can you hear me?

12 CHAIR DANNER: Yes, I can.

13 MS. KAEDING: Thank you very much for this
14 opportunity to comment.

15 And yes, I am Beth Kaeding, and I live in
16 Bozeman, Montana. And I am delivering testimony today
17 on behalf of Northern Plains Resource Council. We're a
18 grassroots conservation and family-based agricultural
19 nonprofit in Billings, Montana. And we organize Montana
20 citizens to protect our water quality, family farms and
21 ranches, and we promote land stewardship and strong
22 rural agricultural economies.

23 For four decades our members who ranch and
24 live near the Colstrip power plants have had to contend
25 with polluted water that has leaked from the plants

1 unlined coal ash ponds. The leakage has resulted in the
2 contamination plume that extends more than a mile out
3 from the pond complex into a depth of a mile into
4 bedrock aquifers.

5 Water quality data submitted by Colstrip
6 owner/operator Talen Energy in April of 2020, documents
7 that the coal ash ponds for Units 3 and 4 are leaking
8 polluted water that is 58 times the Montana state
9 water quality standard for boron, 51 times the standard
10 for lithium, and 90 times the standard for Malidnanum,
11 to name just a few of the pollutants.

12 The companies running Colstrip have long
13 ignored this issue. When finally forced to do
14 something, the company simply drilled wells that
15 continuously pump the polluted water out of the aquifer
16 and recirculate it back to the ponds.

17 In 2011 there were 900 wells surrounding the
18 ponds. Today there are close to 2,000 wells that
19 monitor and pump about a million gallons of water each
20 day out of the aquifer and back to the ponds to keep
21 this toxic plume from spreading.

22 Now, Northern Plains is an active
23 stakeholder in the Montana Department of Environmental
24 Quality's ongoing efforts to develop long-term
25 remediation plans for the Colstrip power plants. But

1 the only true way to fix this problem is to de-water the
2 ponds, excavate the coal ash, store it high and dry, and
3 then treat the water to clean it.

4 Puget Sound Energy is one of six owners of
5 Colstrip Units 3 and 4. Each owner must be required to
6 pay its share to clean up this toxic mess. The
7 companies that profited from generating Colstrip
8 electricity created this monumental toxic waste mess and
9 they each must be responsible for cleaning it up.

10 In 2019, the State of Washington committed
11 to the goal of a hundred percent clean electrical energy
12 by 2045. Northern Plains members hardily applaud this
13 action and look forward to the day when every state,
14 including ours, does the same.

15 However, Washington's decision to move away
16 from generating electricity from burning coal must not
17 be done without the recognition of what using that
18 energy source for years has left behind.

19 So today, on behalf of Northern Plains 3,000
20 members, I am requesting that the Washington UTC ensure
21 that Puget Sound Energy remain obligated for its full
22 share of funding the cleanup of the toxic Colstrip coal
23 ash pond mess for as long as that takes.

24 Again, thank you for hearing my testimony.
25 And I have submitted more detailed testimony, along with

1 other documents on your website.

2 Thank you.

3 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very
4 much.

5 All right. Ronda Hunter, are you there?

6 MS. HUNTER: Yes, I am. Can you hear me?

7 CHAIR DANNER: We can. Go ahead.

8 MS. HUNTER: I will only be coming through
9 in voice, not video, because my internet connections are
10 a little slow out here.

11 Thank you very much for this opportunity to
12 speak. My name is Ronda Hunter, and I am a Puget Sound
13 Energy customer.

14 I am also a climate concerned ecosystem
15 biologist living in formally very wet Western Washington
16 south of Olympia for the last 50 years or so. But now,
17 more recently, I've watched the climate crisis
18 accelerate as the red western cedar and the grand fir
19 trees in the forest around me are dying out.

20 And you, yourselves, can all see this when
21 you drive up and down I-5. The western red cedar is
22 dying out from the top, the big leaf maples, and even
23 the grand firs. This -- this is climate change in our
24 own echo systems in our own forests.

25 The last three to four years we have

1 suffered hot, dry summers and record wildfires with
2 smoke-choked air quality that has even required us to
3 stay indoors sometimes. Heck, we were strapping filters
4 on our window fans this summer just to try to keep the
5 indoor air quality clean enough. I'm sure you all
6 experienced most of that as well.

7 Three years ago, my neighbor's home burned
8 to ash and a chimney. And this summer, 300 acres were
9 ablaze near my own home. I now fear fire every summer.
10 The climate crisis is here now. It is not just coming.
11 And coal burned anywhere affects climate everywhere. I
12 love that comment that the lady made earlier in this
13 session.

14 I drive an electric car and my home has
15 solar energy. But Puget Sound Energy coal is fueling
16 about a third -- a little over a third of my electricity
17 beyond what I can generate on solar. And I don't want
18 to use coal energy.

19 I thank the UTC staff for their position
20 opposing this PSE sale of Colstrip 4. And I fully
21 support Representative Fitzgibbon's letter signed by 21
22 Washington State Legislators underscoring their
23 opposition to this sale which would allow continued
24 greenhouse gas emissions from burning coal. Colstrip is
25 the dirtiest coal plant west of the Mississippi.

1 Further, I think that those transmission
2 lines from Montana are very valuable to help send us
3 wind energy from Montana. And I've heard rumors that
4 local tribes are considering installing wind on those
5 big high ridges. There's a lot of wind in Montana.
6 That's clean energy that we need here. So keep those
7 transmission lines for us as Puget Sound Energy
8 customers.

9 Lastly, I ask that the UTC accelerate
10 closure of Colstrip as fast as possible, much sooner
11 than five years from now.

12 Thank you all very much.

13 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very
14 much. Appreciate your participation.

15 All right. Ann Kreaker is up next.
16 Followed by Kevin Jones and then Derf Johnson, David
17 Park, and Andrea Scott Marie.

18 So Ann Kreaker, are you there?

19 MS. KREAKER: I am.

20 CHAIR DANNER: Did I pronounce your name
21 correctly?

22 MS. KREAKER: It's Kreaker.

23 CHAIR DANNER: Kreaker, okay.

24 MS. KREAKER: And you see that I'm there.
25 Okay. Thank you. It is a little slow in coming back.

1 Mine is fairly short, but underscoring so
2 many who have just gone before me. My name is Ann
3 Kreaker, and I am a resident in Des Moines, Washington,
4 a captive ratepayer of PSE, as is the private foundation
5 that I co-run, which supports Wildlife and natural
6 habitat conservation, along with advocating for social
7 justice.

8 Both personally and professional I urge the
9 Commission to deny the transfer of the three property
10 requests by PSE and the Colstrip plant and transmission
11 system.

12 PSE is a fossil-fuel-run utility whose
13 operations compromise all wild and domestic life, with
14 habitat and biodiversity diminishing at astonishing
15 rates.

16 In addition, the ongoing and additional
17 cost, which this sale will entail, passed on to their
18 customers, as has been the custom for them to do,
19 compromise those folks who cannot even pay their current
20 bills in these especially economically challenged times.

21 By the Commission's own statement two plus
22 years ago, utility companies operating in our state must
23 tally social costs of carbon emissions. Divesting of a
24 coal plant only pushes the bubble down the Visqueen.
25 The coal power will continue, and by all accounts

1 continue with another company.

2 Meanwhile, all life will pay with their
3 health and shortened lives with this coal plant
4 conditioning rather than PSE taking the responsible
5 role, as agreed upon, to close the plant responsibly by
6 2025, which is now just five years away.

7 How have they addressed the social costs of
8 any emissions? They have not, nor will they unless the
9 Washington UTC denies this sale in full.

10 Thank you very much.

11 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much.
12 Appreciate your testimony this afternoon.

13 Kevin Jones, you are up.

14 MR. JONES: Thank you Chair Danner,
15 Commissioners Rendahl, and Balasbas. I appreciate the
16 opportunity to testify today.

17 I just wanted to mention that in late 2016,
18 soon after I returned from The Boeing Company, as a
19 technology development manager, I started calling Puget
20 Sound Energy with the fairly simple request of how could
21 their customers help them move away from coal-based
22 electricity?

23 I called for -- about every two weeks for
24 several months. And while I talked to several people
25 during that time, I never once heard any recommendation

1 about how PSE customers could help them actually do
2 that. And I'm pretty sure that's because PSE doesn't
3 think that way. They don't see that in their DNA. They
4 don't see that as part of their long-range plan.

5 So now I have a different role. I'm now a
6 board member of the Vashon Climate Action Group, and
7 you've certainly heard me testify before and you've seen
8 several letters that we have helped generate to raise
9 issues surrounding our utility.

10 In short, Puget Sound Energy should not sell
11 Colstrip Unit No. 4. They should not sell the existing
12 transmission line. The intent of the Washington State
13 Legislature embodied in CETA is to eliminate coal-based
14 power from Washington's electricity grid by 2025.

15 The sale of Colstrip might meet the letter
16 of that law, but it does not meet the intent of that
17 law. The sale of Colstrip does, however, I believe
18 violate the intent and letter of Washington's new
19 greenhouse gas emission limit law, House Bill 2311,
20 which specifically restricts leakage of carbon pollution
21 to other regions.

22 So PSE must not shut it down. They must not
23 sell off Colstrip.

24 The transmission line, as mentioned before,
25 one of the lowest cost access to reliable and high

1 capacity factor Montana wind, an exceptionally good
2 match to our winter loads here in Western Washington.
3 We need to keep that. We have. As ratepayers we have
4 paid for that.

5 It will just put another roadblock in the
6 way of securing that renewable energy if a new
7 transmission line has to be built and it will be more
8 expensive.

9 Now, the really important thing that I want
10 to mention is that I believe the Commission should take
11 this opportunity to formally declare that future Puget
12 Sound Energy investment in Colstrip Unit 4 is imprudent.
13 This will send a clear message to Puget Sound Energy and
14 the other Colstrip owners that our state regulators
15 support closure of this coal plant as opposed to
16 transferring to a different element.

17 There's a lot of reasons that you can
18 justify this declaration. Number one, PSE voted against
19 the 2020 Colstrip operations and maintenance budget.
20 Their failure to support that budget is a strong
21 evidence that they don't believe this is a long-term,
22 prudent investment for their company.

23 The proposed sale contains a prior purchase
24 agreement, right, which forces us to purchase power back
25 from Colstrip through 2025. If Colstrip power was a

1 prudent purchase, the power purchase agreement would not
2 be required.

3 This tells us that this investment is not
4 prudent if we have to have that kind of a regulation in
5 place to enforce buying the power and is basically a
6 stipu -- one of the other concerns is that one of the
7 reasons Colstrip 1 and 2 had to close was because of
8 fears of escalating fuel price from the mine. Those
9 projected cost increases will burden Colstrip No. 4.
10 This adding risk to our future power costs, which the
11 power purchase agreement requires us to buy.

12 So these issues, I believe, provide rational
13 enough, but when added to the additional cost risks of
14 ground pollution, groundwater cleanup, and the
15 difficulty of allocating those cleanup costs to PSE
16 customers who now abandon that resource, that just adds
17 additional risk.

18 So I really ask the Commissioners to declare
19 that future PSE investments in Colstrip is imprudent.
20 The Commission should not approve the sale of Colstrip
21 Unit 4 or the transmission line, and you should
22 encourage PSE to stop funding Colstrip Unit No. 4.

23 So please shut it down. Don't sell it off.
24 Thank you.

25 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very

1 much. Appreciate your comments.

2 Okay. Derf Johnson, go ahead.

3 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can
4 you hear me okay?

5 CHAIR DANNER: Yes, I can.

6 MR. JOHNSON: Members of the Commission, my
7 name is Derf Johnson. I'm here on behalf of the Montana
8 Environmental Information Center, and I'm located in
9 Montana.

10 I also would like to echo many of the prior
11 speakers in that we're very concerned and opposed to
12 this sale. And I want to talk about something that
13 hasn't been raised yet, and that is the Rosebud Coal
14 Mine, which is associated with the Colstrip coal plant.

15 The mine exclusively provides coal to the
16 Colstrip plant; and in turn, Colstrip only takes coal
17 from the Rosebud mine and has done so for the past
18 40-some years since it's been operating.

19 The mine has certainly hammered and certain
20 cases totally destroyed sensitive prairie streams that
21 are near and within the mine site. There's been a
22 number of streams that have been dewatered. There's
23 water pollution problems throughout the mine, and we are
24 very concerned about the continuing operation of the
25 Rosebud mine and its potential impacts in the area.

1 Westmoreland Resources was the owner for
2 quite some time of the mine, but is now owned by a group
3 of hedge fund creditors following Westmoreland's
4 bankruptcy, that previous operator.

5 We're very concerned about the implications
6 of this new ownership structure moving forward and how
7 it is going to impact the environmental decision-making
8 at the mine.

9 Ultimately, we're concerned about these --
10 how these companies might attempt to reap the last bit
11 of financial benefit possible out of the mine in order
12 to recoup their investments and what implications that
13 might have for the environment and the water quality
14 surrounding the mine.

15 Our concerns about the mine are broad and
16 they are enumerable. Obviously, mostly we are concerned
17 about the climate and the amount of coal that comes out
18 of the mine, which immediately gets to move to Colstrip
19 where it is burned.

20 We're also concerned about endangered
21 species, the mine's impact on endangered species such as
22 the pallid sturgeon, other wildlife in the area that may
23 be impacted and, of course, water quality and water
24 quantity near and within the mine site; and this is
25 southeastern Montana where water is an absolutely a

1 necessity for survival.

2 Recently the mine was approved to expand in
3 a new area known as Area F, a massive expansion. And
4 additionally, a draft EIS was recently completed by the
5 Montana Department of Environmental Quality to again
6 expand to another section known as Area G. If we're to
7 take these two expansions and sum them together, it
8 would amount to an additional 217 million tons of coal.

9 To put that number into perspective for you.
10 If Colstrip Unit 4 were to continue operating
11 indefinitely, it could run for 72 more years with that
12 coal that's been permitted. Of course, no one thinks
13 that Colstrip is going to last that much longer and
14 Unit 4 is going to last that much longer.

15 But what we don't want to see is for this
16 particular proceeding to move forward, for Northwestern
17 to be able to operate Colstrip for a much longer period
18 of time, and for an additional larger chunk of the
19 Rosebud mine in that area in southeastern Montana to be
20 impacted.

21 Notably, the Area F expansion that I
22 mentioned prior to this is being challenged in federal
23 court and through an administrative proceeding at the
24 DEQ by my organization.

25 We also have very similar objections to the

1 Area G expansion and the implications of the mine
2 continuing to expand.

3 MS. FREESER: Excuse me, your comment period
4 has ended. Can you wrap it up, please.

5 MR. JOHNSON: Yep.

6 Unfortunately, the mining company has
7 already chosen to expand into Area F, and we are also
8 challenging that expansion.

9 So with that, Chairman Danner, Members of
10 the Commission, I would urge you to reject this sale and
11 to protect the environment in southeastern Montana.
12 Thank you.

13 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very
14 much.

15 David Perk, you are up.

16 MR. PERK: Okay. Thank you. Can you hear
17 me?

18 CHAIR DANNER: Yes, we can. And we can see
19 you.

20 MR. PERK: Thank you very much for the
21 opportunity to comment on Docket UE-200115.

22 Before I start, I just want to say the
23 comments from the participants from Montana really
24 resonate with me and provide a lot of information I
25 wasn't familiar with. I hope the Commission will weigh

1 it accordingly.

2 My name is David Perk. I'm a resident of
3 Seattle and a Puget Sound Energy ratepayer for gas.
4 I've been observing PSE's IRP process for two years. I
5 urge the Commission to deny the three transfer of
6 property requests in this docket. These sales are not
7 in the best interest of the public.

8 As you've heard, Northwestern Energy intends
9 to continue burning coal until at least 2039. That's 5
10 million tons of CO2 a year; that's totally unacceptable.
11 Climate change is an existential threat.

12 In their haste to meet the "no coal by 2025"
13 stipulation of CETA by selling Unit 4, PSE would violate
14 the new climate goals passed last session, HB 2311,
15 which directs us to avoid leakage of emissions to other
16 jurisdictions.

17 I'm glad not to be a PSE electric customer,
18 because I agree with UTC Staff that each of the proposed
19 transfers has, quote, "significant potential to cause
20 harm to ratepayers," unquote.

21 As you've heard, the buyback of power from
22 Northwestern is uneconomical and violates the least cost
23 requirement. By including the transmission capacity in
24 the sale, PSE is depreciating the value of those
25 transmission assets and is trading away their future

1 benefits.

2 PSE's own consultant has found that more
3 capacity, not less, would be needed to bring that
4 best-cost, best-performing Montana resource into the
5 service area to fulfill the CETA requirements. So that
6 sale makes absolutely no sense and harms customers.

7 Most concerning to me in many ways, PSE has
8 set aside funds for Colstrip ash pond cleanup. But as I
9 understand it, if Unit 4 is sold and continues to
10 operate, PSE remains responsible for remediation costs
11 past the point of sale.

12 While that is unfair to PSE ratepayers, what
13 is more concerning is that the resulting legal ambiguity
14 could slow down the cleanup process. And that process
15 is going to be immense and should have started long,
16 long ago. It is far more prudent to retire the plant in
17 2025 for all owners.

18 So in closing, I call upon the UTC to reject
19 PSE's sale of the Colstrip plant and the transmission.
20 But more importantly, it really is time for the
21 Commission to acknowledge that the continued operation
22 of Colstrip is not consistent with prudent utility
23 practices.

24 Thank you very much.

25 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very

1 much.

2 Derf Johnson, can I ask you to turn your
3 video off, if you can hear me.

4 And let's call up Andrea Scott Marie. Are
5 you there? Andrea Scott Marie?

6 All right. Anne Newcomb, are you there?
7 Anne Newcomb, are you there?

8 MS. NEWCOMB: Okay. Yep, I'm here. Sorry.

9 I was looking for my mute and turning on my
10 camera. How are you doing today?

11 CHAIR DANNER: Doing great. Thank you. Go
12 ahead.

13 MS. NEWCOMB: Awesome.

14 Thank you, Commissioners, for taking the
15 time to hear our comments today. My name is Anne
16 Newcomb. I'm a long-time Issaquah resident and have
17 lived in PSE territory for over 50 years.

18 I fully support the UTC Staff in rejecting
19 the sale of Colstrip Unit No. 4 and associated
20 transmission lines to Northwestern and Talen.

21 I also encourage you to use all of your
22 power to retire Colstrip. The sale is not in the best
23 interest of public safety. It is not fiscally prudent
24 and goes against the intent and preparation for CETA.
25 It will require that PSE customers pay a

1 higher-than-market price for power from Northwestern and
2 Talen, which is a direct violation of the least cost
3 requirement.

4 I'm also concerned that PSE customers will
5 still be on the line to pay for additional pollution
6 even though PSE is -- no longer owns the plant.

7 It is important for PSE to retain its share
8 of Colstrip transmission lines. Montana and Wyoming
9 wind power will be an important asset to replace fossil
10 fuels with clean energy, and we need the lines to bring
11 wind power to the west.

12 PSE even commissioned the study that said
13 massive increases in transmission from Montana and
14 Wyoming will be needed to comply with CETA.
15 Transmission lines are very expensive to build and we
16 need to keep them.

17 I encourage you to carefully consider any
18 future funding of Colstrip repairs and updates so close
19 to the exit date. It is not in the best interest of PSE
20 ratepayers to invest in updates and repairs when they
21 won't get the future -- when we won't get the future
22 benefit.

23 Possibly, this could lead to an even earlier
24 retirement, as happened with Units 1 and 2. PSE did
25 vote against the Colstrip 2020 budget, but we had to pay

1 for it anyway.

2 There are four separate provisions in the
3 owners' Ownership and Operation Agreement for Colstrip
4 Units 3 and 4 that may help. They state, "If a
5 regulatory authority finds that continued investment is
6 not consistent with prudent utility practices, then --
7 then a Colstrip owner is exempt from the agreement."

8 And these, I have referenced in my written
9 statement.

10 While a transition to clean energy and
11 reduced greenhouse gas emissions will be a positive one
12 with cleaner air, water, jobs, the transition to a
13 warmer earth is not such a great experience with the
14 rising sea levels, droughts, extreme forest fires,
15 extreme weather events, crop failures, and mass
16 extinction.

17 What we do now has the potential to make a
18 huge difference in our future. We can be proud to be
19 Washingtonians leading the march to a clean energy
20 future and setting a good example for others.

21 Thank you.

22 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much.
23 Appreciate your comments this afternoon.

24 MS. NEWSOME: You bet.

25 CHAIR DANNER: So next up, Ellen Lockhart,

1 and after Ellen Lockhart, Fran Corton, and Tracy Cook
2 Lee, you'll be next.

3 Ellen Lockhart, are you there? Ellen
4 Lockhart.

5 Fran Corton, are you there?

6 MS. CORTON: Yes. Can you hear me?

7 THE COURT: Yes, who's this?

8 MS. CORTON: Fran Corton.

9 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Go ahead.

10 MS. CORTON: Can you see me?

11 CHAIR DANNER: We cannot see you, but we can
12 hear you.

13 MS. CORTON: So my name is Francis Corton,
14 and I live on Bainbridge Island, Washington, which is in
15 PSE's service territory. And I am a member of Climate
16 Action Bainbridge. Last Tuesday night the City Council
17 of Bainbridge Island unanimously voted to submit a
18 letter to the UTC Commissioners opposing the sale of
19 Colstrip Unit 4 and its transmission lines to
20 Washington.

21 Here is the concluding paragraph of their
22 letter. Quote: As representing nearly 25,000 citizens
23 in PSE's service territory, we do not believe that PSE's
24 sale of Colstrip Unit 4 to Northwestern is in the best
25 interest of its customers, nor in the best interest of

1 the climate. We strongly recommend you reject the sale.

2 The Council notes that the intention of
3 Washington State's Clean Energy Transformation Act was,
4 quote, "for Colstrip to retire by the end of 2025. Now
5 PSE is attempting to undue the intent of this provision
6 by selling Unit 4 to Northwestern, which intends to run
7 this unit through 2039," unquote.

8 The letter also notes that the State
9 Legislature's new law setting climate reduction targets
10 states that its goal should be achieved in a way that,
11 quote, avoids leakage of emissions to other
12 jurisdictions. The proposed sale undermines that
13 intent.

14 The Bainbridge Council also opposing the
15 sale of Colstrip transmission lines, which are of future
16 value to PSE customers because they are, quote,
17 "surrounded by some of the best wind resources in the
18 country."

19 The Council has two additional concerns.
20 One is PSE's promise to buy back power from
21 Northwestern's coal plant at potentially higher cost
22 than market alternatives. The other is that PSE will
23 remain liable for the cleanup costs, even though the
24 post-sale pollution will come from Northwestern's
25 customers, not PSE's.

1 I am proud that my city council has
2 recognized the dangers of PSE's proposed sale. Thank
3 you, Commissioner Danner and all the commissioners for
4 this opportunity to highlight those dangers to the
5 Commission.

6 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very
7 much.

8 Tracy Cook Lee, you are up. And after you,
9 Peggy Perkin, Rob Smith and Michael Laurie will be up.

10 So Tracy Cook Lee, are you there?

11 Tracy Cook Lee, last call.

12 All right. Peggy Perkin, are you there?

13 Peggy Perkin.

14 Rob Smith, are you there?

15 MR. SMITH: Yes. Rob Smith is here.

16 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Go ahead, sir.

17 MR. SMITH: Great. Thank you.

18 Chairman Danner, Members of the Commission,
19 thank you for this opportunity to comment. My name is
20 Rob Smith. I'm the Northwest Regional Director for
21 National Parks Conservation Association, with an office
22 based in Seattle. We are a national nonprofit citizen
23 organization, which is advocated for the protection of
24 national parks for more than a century.

25 We have more than 1.3 million members and

1 supporters across the country, with 34,000 living in
2 Washington state. More than half of those live, like I
3 do, within the service area of PSE.

4 NPC opposes PSE's proposal to sell its
5 interest in the Colstrip Unit 4 plan and the
6 transmission capacity because it does not move us closer
7 to the goals of clean air and a reduction in
8 human-caused climate change. This is not in the
9 interest of Washingtonians.

10 The greatest threat to the future of our
11 national parks is climate change. Mount Rainier is a
12 good example. Due to a rapidly warming climate this
13 most glaciated peak in the lower 48 states is seeing
14 glaciers retreat dramatically in the past decade at six
15 times the historic rate.

16 The highway bridge over the Nisqually River
17 on the way to Paradise was built in 1908 at the toe of
18 the Nisqually Glacier and was termed the first road in
19 America to reach a glacier. That glacier is largely out
20 of view more than a mile up the valley today.

21 This ice mass continues to retreat as fast
22 as three feet every ten days during the summer. Changes
23 like this can occur naturally over thousands of years,
24 but now they are happening within our lifetimes and are
25 largely due to human-caused climate pollution.

1 Colstrip's visible emissions immediately
2 threaten to degrade the air quality at Yellow Stone,
3 Grand Teton, Glacier, Teddy Roosevelt, and other
4 national park units in the Northern Rockies and Great
5 Plains.

6 But, in addition, loading our shared
7 atmosphere with other coal-fired emissions, notably
8 carbon dioxide, such as produced at the Colstrip plant,
9 contributes to the climate change we experience here in
10 Washington State and which can be witnessed at places
11 like Mount Rainier National Park.

12 It is not in the public interest of
13 Washingtonians to allow the Colstrip power plant to
14 continue as a source of climate changing pollution. If
15 PSE sells their interest at Colstrip, it may allow them
16 to say they are "off the hook" as owners. But it is not
17 a contribution to cleaner air, a cooler climate, or a
18 transition to clean energy to the benefit of Washington
19 State.

20 To allow the continued operation of Colstrip
21 as a coal burner and to give up transmission capacity
22 which could be used for bringing cleaner energy to our
23 state is to undercut the will of our citizens as
24 expressed in the landmark Clean Energy Transformation
25 Act passed last year.

1 For these reasons, and to save places like
2 Mount Rainier National Park, NPC opposes PSE's proposal
3 to sell their interest in the Colstrip plant. We urge
4 PSE to play a constructive role in retiring Colstrip by
5 2025 and transitioning to a clean energy economy.

6 Thank you.

7 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Smith.
8 Appreciate your comments this afternoon.

9 And Rosemary Ferrara signed up but not
10 wishing to testify.

11 Annette Kenyon signed up not wishing to
12 testify.

13 And Al Vasquez signed up not wishing to
14 testify.

15 Michael Laurie, are you there?

16 MR. LAURIE: Yes, I'm here.

17 CHAIR DANNER: Okay. So just a moment. I
18 just want to let Jerry Daraviani, you're on deck. And
19 John Mathison, you are on deck after him.

20 So Mr. Laurie, go ahead.

21 MR. LAURIE: Okay. Thank you very much.

22 My name is Michael Laurie. I've been a
23 sustainability consultant for over 35 years, and I've
24 worked on hundreds of commercial and residential
25 efficiency projects in Puget's energy efficiency

1 programs.

2 I'm opposed to PSE selling their
3 transmission lines, because they will be very valuable
4 in transmitting Montana and Wyoming wind to Western
5 Washington. I'm also opposed to PSE selling the plant
6 but continuing to buy power from the plant at what may
7 be a higher cost than the current cost.

8 Instead of PSE selling Colstrip Unit 4, I
9 suggest they work with all current and proposed future
10 owners to close all the Colstrip plants and instead fund
11 renewable energy, energy efficiency, demand management
12 and storage systems needed to replace the plants by
13 2025.

14 I understand that PSE is required by the
15 Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission to
16 demonstrate that they are pursuing the least cost
17 options for serving their customers. I think this is
18 important to take into account that the cost of
19 renewable storage efficiency and demand management
20 options are dropping and are well on their way to
21 becoming the least cost resource now and especially in
22 the future.

23 But which mix of these climate-friendly
24 alternatives makes the most sense when, how, and where
25 in each service area varies. So to ensure that PSE is

1 able to get on a least-cost path in a climate-friendly
2 way now and in the future, they should be encouraged to
3 step away from all the fossil fuel options now and they
4 should be encouraged to put in place pilot projects for
5 the most promising alternatives to learn quickly which
6 mix of climate-friendly alternatives make the most sense
7 and at the least cost of their service territory.

8 Thank you very much.

9 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much for your
10 comments this afternoon. Appreciate it.

11 All right. Jerry Daraviani, are you there?
12 Jerry Daraviani.

13 All right. Then, John Mathison, are you
14 there?

15 MR. MATHISON: Yes, this is John Mathison.
16 Can you hear me okay?

17 CHAIR DANNER: I can.

18 So just a moment. Let me let Mark Johnson
19 and Cort Olsen and Patricia Roriton know that they are
20 on deck.

21 So Mr. Mathison, please go ahead.

22 MR. MATHISON: My name is John Mathison, I'm
23 a current WSPE Washington Society of Professional
24 Engineers, Seattle section president. And I'm speaking
25 on my own behalf, not on behalf of the organization.

1 And I'd like to urge the rejection of the sale of
2 this -- of Colstrip No. 4.

3 Washington Society of Professional Engineers
4 is a state society of the National Society of
5 Professional Engineers, NSPE, and we require all
6 professional engineers to hold paramount the safety,
7 health, and welfare of the public.

8 The World Federation of Engineering
9 Organizations has a declaration of climate emergency of
10 December 2019 that the crisis of climate breakdown are
11 the most serious issues of our time. Then the NSPE
12 professional obligations requires sustainable footnote,
13 and in -- well, I'll just reference you to footnote one,
14 and it's also in the NSPE code of ethics.

15 I'd like to thank you and commend the UTC
16 Staff on issuing a press release announcing their
17 position opposing PSE's sale of Colstrip. And the
18 reasons for this are -- I just want to echo the -- the
19 many of the other speakers and reasons I hadn't even
20 thought of. But the extra 5-million-plus tons of CO2
21 per year; that's more than a million cars to run all the
22 way until somewhere into the 2040s.

23 The PSE's buyback of Colstrip power I find
24 just -- I'm not even sure how to -- how I can talk about
25 that. That's -- that's just -- that's just a horrible

1 thing to do to our children to -- to shuffle the decks
2 and pretend -- pretend that you're -- that you're
3 meeting the -- the clean power standard.

4 Selling the valuable transmission lines.
5 That -- when we know that there's -- there's wind out
6 there. There's solar out there. There's lots of ways
7 that we can get power, and we will need -- PSE will need
8 those -- those power lines.

9 I think the other thing that I wanted to say
10 is that when engineers and managers make decisions
11 directly counter to the safety, health, and the welfare
12 of the public and the public loses confidence and it
13 tarnishes the engineering profession and people think
14 that you are on the take. And I absolutely strongly ask
15 for the UTC to reject the sale of Colstrip.

16 Thank you.

17 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you, sir.

18 All right. Mark Johnson, are you there?

19 Mark Johnson.

20 Moving on to Cort Olsen, are you there?

21 MR. OLSEN: I am, sir. Thank you.

22 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Go ahead, sir.

23 MR. OLSEN: My name is Cort Olsen. I'm a
24 Bellevue resident, PSE customer -- there's a lot of
25 background noise. Let me try my headset.

1 I've got an engineering background, and I
2 appreciate the value of science. I've been a regular
3 participant in the PSE IRP technical advisory process
4 since 2016, and I wish to make two things clear in my
5 testimony today.

6 First of all, I voice support for the UTC
7 Staff's recommendation to deny the PSE's plan to sell
8 its interest in Colstrip; and, secondly, I would like to
9 voice support for the Attorney General's position that
10 PSE should stop funding retired's use of all Colstrip
11 units.

12 Before I cover those two points, though, I
13 would just like to emphasize a point that's been made
14 already today, and that is that the -- clean energy
15 doesn't have to be more expensive than today's energy
16 cost. In fact, Puget Sound Energy has acknowledged that
17 Montana wind power is a low cost energy option for them.

18 Recent market pricing suggests that Montana
19 wind power is probably cheaper than Colstrip power, and
20 it's abundant in winter peak season.

21 Now, for point number one, in support of the
22 UTC Staff, I have three positions to offer. Giving away
23 a critical asset for the future transmission lines is
24 definitely not in the best interest of our ratepayers
25 and current regional demand forecast modeling done by

1 the State of Washington shows that to service our future
2 power demands here in Washington, significant additional
3 transmission capacity, must be built from mid-Montana to
4 our area. PSE, therefore, should maintain their current
5 transmission capacity and, in fact, acquire more.

6 Secondly, the sale is bad faith, stepping
7 aside away from the clean energy demands of the CETA
8 action and allows coal fired power generation to be
9 passed on to out-of-state interest rather than retiring
10 coal fired power.

11 Thirdly, the deal perpetuates ratepayer risk
12 for what is likely going to be a Superfund Cleanup site
13 in the future, both the mine and the Colstrip plant
14 itself.

15 In support of the Attorney General, I have a
16 couple of other points. First, it's in the best
17 interest of Washington citizens for PSE to stop funding
18 and stop using Colstrip power. Ensuring the CETA
19 mandate to transition to clean energy, PSE should also
20 use its influence there to promote the early full
21 closure of Colstrip 3 and 4.

22 And finally, Montana wind is more
23 economical. Montana wind is also the most compatible
24 power resource for our peak winter. Demands in the PSE
25 territory here.

1 So on two counts we need to prevent the sale
2 of Colstrip and we need to retire all use of Colstrip
3 coal fired power.

4 Thanks very much for your time. Appreciate
5 the interest of the Commission.

6 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very
7 much, Mr. Olsen. I appreciate your comments this
8 afternoon.

9 So, Patricia Rorigen, are you there? She
10 has signed in not wishing to testify.

11 Let me then ask if Eric Frenkowski, are you
12 there? Eric Frenkowski.

13 All right. Then Brian Anderson has signed
14 in not wishing to comment.

15 Mary Patterson, are you there?

16 MS. PATTERSON: Yes, I'm hear. Thank you.

17 THE COURT: All right. Go ahead.

18 MS. PATTERSON: All right. Thank you. My
19 name is Mary Cobin Patterson. I'm a resident of
20 Northeast Seattle, traditional land of Duwamish and
21 Salish people. I'm a member of 350 Seattle and I'm also
22 a volunteer with Solutionary Rail, which is a project
23 for freight and passenger rail electrification, and also
24 for using rail corridors to transmit renewable energy
25 statewide, nationwide. I'm not speaking on behalf of

1 either organization.

2 When my Scottish grandfather was three and a
3 half months old, his father was killed in a coal mining
4 accident in a coal mining belt of Lowland, Scotland. So
5 the end of coal mining is personal to my family as well
6 as a matter global climate change and public health.
7 Public health especially for communities of color, low
8 income communities, and workers who have suffered the
9 worst impacts of coal. I oppose PSE's proposed selling
10 of its share of the Colstrip mine and transmission
11 components.

12 Two points in particular. We all know that
13 coal is a major cause of the unprecedented rise of CO2
14 in mother's atmosphere, now reported by NASA to be at
15 414 parts per million CO2.

16 Last well-known is coal's association with
17 black tar particulate matter that results from
18 incompletely combusted fossil fuels. According to NASA,
19 only if we significantly reduce the emissions of
20 methane, also known as natural gas, carbon dioxide and
21 black carbon do we have a chance of limiting global
22 warming to less than 2 degrees centigrade. That's from
23 NASA, and I'll send the link via online comment.

24 Secondly, on more of a moral plane. Poor
25 people's campaign visionary Reverend Barber has coined

1 the phrase "necropolitics," the politics of death.

2 And another visionary black leader, Reverend
3 Yearwood, whom I heard speak before the Washington
4 Environmental Voters, has said that business practices
5 of the fossil fuel industry are, quote, "a
6 death sentence for" -- "a death sentence for us," close
7 quotes.

8 Puget Sound Energy may somehow claim that it
9 is following Washington state law according to the
10 letter of the law. But that is the logic the
11 necropolitics of the fossil fuel industry that PSE
12 stubbornly clings to.

13 The UTC, the Commissioners that I am
14 speaking to now, on the other hand, can uphold the law's
15 intent and reject the application for sale.

16 So thank you very much for this opportunity
17 to speak and thank you also to all the co-commenters on
18 this call. I've learned so much from today.

19 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very
20 much. Appreciate your comments this afternoon.

21 And Eric Frenkowski, welcome back.

22 MR. FRENKOWSKI: Thank you. Can you hear
23 me?

24 CHAIR DANNER: We can. And we can see you
25 as well. So why don't you go ahead.

1 MR. FRENKOWSKI: Thank you, Chairman Danner
2 and the Commissioners for the opportunity to speak on
3 the matter of Puget Sound Energy's potential sale of its
4 shares in Colstrip Unit 4 to Northwestern Energy.

5 My name is Eric Frenkowski. I'm the
6 director of the Western Clean Energy Campaign. For the
7 past 15 years, my organization has worked throughout the
8 west to facilitate the transmission from fossil fuel to
9 clean energy. And I can tell you without hesitation and
10 as an interested outside observer that this proposed
11 sale fails to meet the prudence test in a number of
12 ways.

13 First, it contradicts the spirit of
14 Washington's Clean Energy Transformation Act, which
15 unambiguously states that absent significant and swift
16 reduction in greenhouse gas emission, climate change
17 poses immediate significant threat to our economy,
18 health, safety, and national security. Therefore, the
19 law says, it is the policy of the State to eliminate
20 coal fired electricity.

21 Allowing PSE to sell its shares in one of
22 the biggest carbon polluters in the country and possibly
23 keep it running for decades more doesn't eliminate
24 anything.

25 Second, there are huge red flags around the

1 risk the deal poses for Puget Sound customers. Language
2 in the contract says Puget Sound ratepayers will be
3 liable for additional costs tied to the cleanup of coal
4 ash contamination at Colstrip even after the sale.

5 Other provisions -- provisions indicate that
6 Puget Sound will have to pay to maintain the plant after
7 the sale. And then there's the requirement that forces
8 Puget to buy back power for Colstrip at a higher cost
9 than market rate. None of this makes any sense. Any
10 expenditures incurred after the plant is sold by default
11 should be considered --

12 Third, if there are disagreements over the
13 issues I just mentioned, they will be settled through
14 protracted legal fight, which posed their own risk to
15 customers.

16 Fourth, the deal contains extremely valuable
17 transmission giveaway, the UTC, in its oversight
18 authority, should be extremely weary of. Studies show
19 that the output of Montana wind is the highest in winter
20 months, precisely when it's most needed to meet
21 heightened demand in Washington.

22 Transmission connections to Montana is also
23 hugely valuable in terms of both revenue and
24 reliability. And Puget Sound should not be able to
25 shed such an asset so callously.

1 The last issue I'll address is more a matter
2 of pride. Is Washington's biggest utility really going
3 to let itself be bullied into making a bad deal?
4 Looking at this deal as an objective observer from the
5 outside, there doesn't seem to be a whole lot lined up
6 in the asset column for Puget Sound or its customers.
7 Instead, Puget Sound seems to be letting fear of lawsuit
8 back it into a corner.

9 Is that really a prudent reason to authorize
10 such a badly lopsided deal. Everything about what's
11 been proposed is problematic. It's not good for climate
12 protection. It has costly risk for taxpayers. It will
13 almost certainly lead to lengthy legal battles. It
14 gives away hugely valuable transmission capacity.

15 There's a very simple solution to all these
16 liabilities. Any expenditures that create a future for
17 Colstrip past Puget Sound's current 2025 exit date are
18 clearly imprudent. The sooner Puget Sound gets out of
19 Colstrip, the better. The longer it stays, the worse it
20 gets.

21 The Commission should exercise every power
22 in its authority to deem the deal imprudent and keep it
23 from dragging Puget Sound, its customers, and the rest
24 of Washington down with it.

25 Thank you very much for the opportunity to

1 speak today.

2 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much,
3 Mr. Frenkowski. I appreciate your participation this
4 afternoon.

5 All right. Next up, Mia Siefers from Vashon
6 Climate Action Group. You'll be followed by Barbara
7 Cross, Joseph -- I'm sorry, Barbara cross is signed in
8 but not wishing to comment. Joseph Hiss and Herbert
9 Burk.

10 So Mia Siefers, are you there? Mia Siefers?

11 All right. Barbara Cross -- not. Sorry.

12 Joseph Hiss, are you there?

13 MR. HISS: The answer is yes.

14 THE COURT: Go ahead, sir.

15 MR. HISS: Okay. My name is Joe Hiss. I
16 live in Olympia, Washington, and I am a member of some
17 28 different environmental groups; although I don't
18 represent any of them today except myself.

19 I've been retired from the US Fish and
20 Wildlife Service here in Western Washington for the past
21 12 years, during which I have seen that my real vocation
22 is in climate protection, and this is why I'm speaking
23 out today.

24 Obviously, the people that have spoken
25 before me, know the issue inside and out much better

1 than I do. So I just want to, again, support their
2 position to say we should get out of coal completely.
3 If we can do it tomorrow, that would be better than
4 waiting any length of time at all.

5 And wherever on the grid is available, we
6 should keep the door open to wind power. And -- and as
7 a ratepayer, I am willing to pay a little bit more if I
8 need to in order to make that happen.

9 So kudos to all these people who have
10 testified who were really shown how well-boned up they
11 are. I wish I were so as well.

12 Again, please reject the offer as presented
13 by Puget Sound Energy.

14 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much, sir. I
15 appreciate that. That you're participating this
16 afternoon.

17 Herbert Burke, are you there? Herbert
18 Burke?

19 All right, then. Paul Matthew, are you
20 there? Paul Matthew?

21 Neil Anderson signed in not wishing to
22 comment.

23 Christine Bunch, are you there?

24 MS. BUNCH: Yes, I'm here.

25 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Go ahead, then.

1 MS. BUNCH: Great. Thank you.

2 Good afternoon, Chair Danner, Commissioners
3 Rendahl and Balasbas. My name is Christine Bunch, and
4 I'm a Puget Sound Energy residential customer living on
5 Bainbridge Island, which is on Suquamish land.

6 While I serve as a climate and energy
7 adviser with the City of Seattle, I'm here today
8 testifying as a PSE customer. And as a customer, I want
9 clean electricity that is affordable, reliable, and
10 doesn't harm the planet and health of our communities.

11 Unfortunately, I don't have a choice on
12 where I get my electricity, so I have to rely on the UTC
13 to help protect my interests.

14 So I urge the UTC to reject the Colstrip
15 sale and instead direct Puget Sound Energy to pursue
16 closure of Colstrip by 2025 and deem it as obsolete.

17 PSE's proposal is a step in the wrong
18 direction for the following reasons. Puget Sound Energy
19 would lock in a power purchase agreement for 90
20 megawatts of dirty power regardless of whether
21 electricity from other sources is cheaper.

22 This approach is not in the best interest of
23 its customers, as pointed out by other testifiers. And
24 customers are already struggling to pay utility bills
25 due to COVID and the resulting economic crisis, as well

1 as all ratepayers who may have to pay higher rates in
2 the coming years as PSE pursues future cost recovery.

3 Also, a sale would not meet the intent of
4 the Clean Energy Transformation Act. And again, a
5 purchase agreement of 90 megawatts of dirty power means
6 that PSE will need to pay for renewable energy credits
7 to be in compliance with CETA.

8 Those costs, again, getting passed on to
9 ratepayers like myself. This is not -- it's very
10 inefficient use of ratepayer dollars.

11 Also, the transmission capacity should not
12 be given away. It is probably the most valuable asset
13 here and should instead be used to transmit clean
14 Montana wind power, which can be used to comply with
15 CETA requirements.

16 And finally, the cost of decommissioning and
17 cleanup is unknown and something that ratepayers are
18 likely to pay in higher rates, since the proposal does
19 not cap these costs.

20 It is time to move on from saddling
21 ratepayers with propping up dirty coal plants when there
22 is an abundance of cleaner and less expensive power
23 options. As a customer, I'm constantly bombarded with
24 messages from PSE to ask me to lower my carbon footprint
25 by participating in things like their green power

1 program, to purchase an expensive electric vehicle, to
2 put solar on my roof or by purchasing energy
3 efficient appliances and light bulbs.

4 These actions are requested of the
5 ratepayer, but I rarely see any meaningful action on
6 PSE's part to reduce their climate pollution.

7 Privatizing profits and socializing costs is
8 PSE's usual modus operandi.

9 So I urge the UTC to hold PSE accountable
10 and deny the sale of Colstrip and instead pursue its
11 closure.

12 Thank you so much for the opportunity to
13 comment on this important issue.

14 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much. I
15 appreciate you participating this afternoon.

16 Let me go to our supplemental sign-in sheet.
17 Lori McCole, are you there?

18 MS. McCOLE: Can you hear me?

19 CHAIR DANNER: Yes. Lori McCole.

20 MS. McCOLE: Hi. Can you hear me now?

21 CHAIR DANNER: Yes, we can. Can you hear
22 us?

23 MS. McCOLE: Yes, I can.

24 CHAIR DANNER: Great. Go ahead.

25 MS. McCOLE: All right. Thank you.

1 Hello. And thank you for the opportunity to
2 speak. This has been very informative with some really
3 good, clean suggestions.

4 Again, my name is Lori McCole. I live in
5 Oak Harbor on Whidbey Island. I'm in the Puget Sound
6 Energy service territory and feel that I'm complicit in
7 the damage the Colstrip plant is causing by emitting
8 large amounts of CO2 into the atmosphere resulting in
9 the heating of the planet.

10 I try to do my part. I have solar panels
11 and electric car, but I have no choice but to use PSE
12 services which makes me part of the problem.

13 I feel obligated to the inhabitants of this
14 planet to do what I can to stop contributing to the CO2
15 levels that are more than 400 parts per million when
16 they should be 300 parts per million, tops.

17 In the last 50 years, human beings have been
18 the largest agent of change when it comes to greenhouse
19 gases. If we continue to heat the planet with our CO2
20 emissions, we will be living with bigger fires, more
21 smoke, more flooding, and then receding shorelines. Our
22 animals, forest, food supplies will face dire
23 consequences that have already started.

24 I'm urging PSE to do the right thing. Work
25 on producing clean energy. Don't support a coal burning

1 plan that will continue to pump tons of carbon into the
2 air for the next 20 years.

3 I'm asking Washington's Utility and
4 Transportation Commission to reject the Puget Sound
5 Energy sale of the Colstrip plant, and I guess, since
6 I've heard -- I've been so educated by all these calls,
7 and to keep the transmission lines, and instead, direct
8 Puget Sound Energy to stop popping up the Colstrip plant
9 with the ongoing funding and retire the plant in 2025.

10 Thank you for listening. I thought you guys
11 got tons of good information from the other callers that
12 I hadn't even touched. Thanks.

13 CHAIR DANNER: All right. We have signed
14 you off. Thank you very much for your participation
15 this afternoon.

16 MS. McCOLE: Thank you for the opportunity.

17 CHAIR DANNER: Rebecca McMullen, you are
18 next. Are you on the line?

19 MS. McMULLEN: I am. Thank you.

20 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Go ahead.

21 MS. McMULLEN: Hello, Commissioners. My
22 name is Rebecca McMullen. I'm an Evista customer in
23 Spokane, Washington. I'm opposed to the sale for three
24 reasons.

25 As an Evista customer I'm concerned that if

1 Puget Sound Energy sells to Northwestern, giving
2 Northwestern majority ownership of Colstrip Unit 4,
3 Evista, as a minority owner and us ratepayers, as a
4 consequence, could be compelled to make imprudent
5 expenditures in an aging and inefficient coal fired
6 plant.

7 Secondly, I'm chair of 350 Spokane, a local
8 grassroots climate advocacy nonprofit organization. A
9 number of 350 Spokane supporters came before this
10 Commission in 2017 advocating for the planned retirement
11 of Colstrip and Evista's Integrated Resource Plan. We
12 then spent 10 months of 2018 initiating, negotiating,
13 and promoting a local clean energy initiative. Dozens
14 of volunteers put hundreds of hours into this successful
15 effort to pass a city ordinance calling for the goal of
16 100 percent clean electricity by 2030 in Spokane.

17 We then immediately turned to join the
18 statewide effort to ensure 100 percent clean electricity
19 for Washington, which was also successful with the
20 passage of the Clean Energy Transformation Act in 2019.

21 It frankly makes me angry to see an
22 out-of-state multi-national for-profit corporation
23 trying to make an end-run around the hard-fought laws of
24 this state to sell a polluting facility to another
25 out-of-state corporation.

1 It is the expressed intent of Washington's
2 recent greenhouse gas emission target law to avoid
3 leakage of our emissions to other jurisdictions, not to
4 export or pass it off to jurisdictions with fewer
5 restrictions.

6 This proposed sale undermines the very clear
7 will of the people of this state. It undermines the
8 actions that leaders and the legislature and the
9 administration of this state took in response to the
10 will of the people. So I find this proposal
11 antithetical to our participatory democracy.

12 Thirdly, this Commission is charged with
13 ensuring utility services are safe. Wildfire has
14 destroyed 181 homes in Washington in the past two
15 months. Human greenhouse gas emissions fuel climate
16 change that threatens the safety of Washingtonians in
17 their own homes.

18 Initial reports indicate that high winds on
19 September 7th made a tree touch an Evista power line
20 that started the Babb Road fire in Spokane County
21 35 miles south of where I sit.

22 Extreme heat, aridity, strong winds from
23 unusual directions fueled the Babb Road firestorm which
24 set dry wheat fields ablaze and ripped through the towns
25 of Malden and Pine City, destroying 121 homes in small

1 agricultural communities. The Babb fire was not a
2 forest management problem. The devastation of Malden
3 and Pine City is a climate crisis problem.

4 So for the safety of Washingtonians, for the
5 protection of our democratic processes, and for the
6 protection of Evista ratepayers, I ask you to reject
7 this sale.

8 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very
9 much for your comment this afternoon.

10 Let me go back. And Paul Matthew, are you
11 on the line? Paul Matthew?

12 All right. Eleanor Bastian, are you there?

13 MS. BASTIAN: Yes, I am, Chair Danner.

14 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Why don't you go
15 ahead.

16 MS. BASTIAN: Thank you.

17 Good afternoon, Chair Danner, Commissioner
18 Rendahl and Commissioner Balasbas, Commission Staff, and
19 fellow stakeholders. Thank you for the opportunity to
20 speak today.

21 My name is Eleanor Bastian, and I'm the
22 Climate and Clean Energy Policy manager at the
23 Washington Environmental Council.

24 The Washington Environmental Council is the
25 statewide environmental advocacy organization working to

1 protect and restore the environment for all
2 Washingtonians.

3 We oppose Puget Sound Energy's proposed
4 transaction of Colstrip assets. We do not believe it is
5 in the public's interest. Puget Sound Energy and the
6 other owners should retire Colstrip. Shuffling who owns
7 emissions to avoid actually reducing them doesn't meet
8 the intent of Washington's laws and does not help our
9 climate. Just reducing emissions on paper will not
10 protect our future. It simply makes the problem worse.

11 In fact, we have a new state law, HB 2311,
12 that updates Washington's greenhouse gas emissions
13 limits and states explicitly that meeting our carbon
14 limits needs to be done in a way that avoids leakage of
15 emissions to other jurisdictions.

16 Not only does the sale increase burdens with
17 no benefit, the proposed power purchase agreement and
18 sale of Colstrip transmission assets may increase cost
19 to customers and impede the clean energy transformation.
20 It's short-sighted and cuts off valuable renewable
21 resource opportunities we may need.

22 We urge the Commission to reject this
23 proposed transaction.

24 Thank you. And that concludes my comments.

25 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very

1 much. Appreciate your comments this afternoon.

2 So Neil Anderson, I called your name
3 earlier. You had signed in but not wishing to comment.
4 Do you wish to comment?

5 MR. ANDERSON: Yeah. So originally I was
6 going to comment at six o'clock, and so I changed it to
7 1:30.

8 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Well, go ahead.
9 You're up.

10 MR. ANDERSON: So a lot of folks today have
11 brought up CETA and the 2025 deadline to get rid of
12 coal. But it also includes another important deadline.
13 By 2045 all of our electricity has to be from renewable,
14 non-remitting sources. And as PSE likes to point out,
15 getting to 100 percent renewables will be a hard problem
16 to solve.

17 When your energy mix is already mostly
18 fossil fuels as PSE's is now, adding a little more wind
19 and solar is pretty easy. But as they start making up a
20 larger percentage, the intermittency becomes more of an
21 issue. You have to start investing in more and more
22 storage to handle those times when the whole region is
23 cloudy and there is no wind. And as you approach 100
24 percent, the storage costs go up exponentially.

25 But there's another way this can be managed

1 that doesn't involve massive amounts of storage
2 capacity. Connecting our electricity good with other
3 regions can help balance the load and reduce the need
4 for all that storage.

5 If all of our electricity comes from wind
6 and solar farms in Washington, a single weather system
7 can impact all of them. But that system won't be
8 affecting neighboring states or areas off the coast.

9 So if we're connected to all of them and
10 experience a dip in output, we can tap into excess solar
11 from California or additional wind capacity from Montana
12 or offshore wind farms. And we can supply to them
13 during other times when their capacity drops. So all of
14 us benefit from reduced storage needs.

15 But while wind and solar farms can be
16 constructed pretty quickly, transmission lines take much
17 longer, especially if there's landowners longer out. So
18 we need to start planning for this now, which is why
19 it's extremely short-sighted for PSE to be selling
20 transmission capacity that connects our region to one
21 that has some of the highest potential for wind energy
22 in the country.

23 This sale will make it harder to achieve our
24 long-term renewable targets and cost ratepayers much
25 more over the next decades as we try to solve the

1 problem of moving to 100 percent clean energy.

2 So I ask that you reject their request to
3 sell Colstrip holdings.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much.

6 All right. Let me go back. I believe that
7 is everyone that has signed up. But I'm going to go
8 back to those whose names I called and they weren't
9 available.

10 Hang on a second, sir. Let me do this in
11 order.

12 Ronald Snell, are you there? Ronald Snell?

13 Andrea Scott Marie, are you there?

14 Ellen Lockhart, are you there?

15 Tracy Cook Lee?

16 Peggy Perkin?

17 Jerry Daraviani?

18 Mark Johnson?

19 Mia Siefers?

20 Herbert Burke.

21 MR. BURKE: I'm here. Can you hear me?

22 CHAIR DANNER: Yes, I can. Go ahead, sir.

23 MR. BURKE: Thank you. Sorry to -- learning
24 on this, with the keyboard locked, you can't unmute the
25 phone, or at least my phone. So I missed it the first

1 time. Excuse me one second.

2 CHAIR DANNER: That's all right. We're all
3 learning technology.

4 MR. BURKE: And I'm supposed to be a
5 technology person. My name is Herbert Burke. I'm a
6 retired science teacher. I founded a website called
7 "Energize Northwest." And if you're lazy, it's Energize
8 NW, back about ten years ago, with the idea of
9 energizing the northwest economy by building several
10 nuclear power plants at Hanford; that's before Amazon
11 and before Boeing went up. So Boeing is probably going
12 down. So I'm getting my website up. I was ill for a
13 while and could not keep it up, but it's there.

14 As far as selling Colstrip, my first initial
15 feeling was "sell it." Get away from coal.

16 I'm hearing people say that they'll -- Puget
17 Sound Energy will be financially liable. But from what
18 I remember, they are only paying themselves \$0.02 a
19 kilowatt, which is less than hydroelectric power from
20 Bonneville. So there's very little incentive for them
21 to close the plant down. If they get rid of it, their
22 mind will be thinking "Where else do we get power?"

23 In that point, one of the things is that
24 Puget Sound Energy is "low man on the totem pole." A
25 Washington state citizen living in an area that's served

1 by Bonneville, whether it is City Light in Tacoma, which
2 has most of their generation, or Snohomish County which
3 has none. They get first and cheapest power from
4 Bonneville. But a citizen from Vashon Island can't get
5 the same cheap power.

6 So I would think the state needs, the first
7 thing, a utilities commission to get the private
8 utilities to buy wholesale power at the same price the
9 nonprofit utilities are government owned.

10 As far as the transmission lines, my thought
11 was they should sell them or keep them if Colstrip is
12 planning a nuclear plant to replace the existing plants.

13 I hear people saying we'll transmit wind.
14 Keep in mind, wind and solar are not consistent. And as
15 a previous speaker said, "Well, we'll just wire up the
16 other part of the country."

17 Hey, when we have a calm, we have a calm
18 over state -- many states.

19 Solar, you only have it about eight hours a
20 day.

21 Wind, you have it wherever.

22 I've got a note on my site saying Bonneville
23 won't even put a percentage of wind power in state
24 because they went eight days with no wind.

25 So if you are going to get the same amount

1 of power that you would get from Colstrip, you would
2 have to have wiring, transformers, what have you,
3 between Montana and here to get the same amount of power
4 since the power peaks when wind blows. So it's much --
5 if you are going to store the power, you would store it
6 here down at the source.

7 So many of these renewables have extra
8 costs, which the purveyors have been very good at
9 passing on to taxpayers.

10 So the big thing is, is Puget Sound Energy
11 planning something else? My site makes the point to
12 one -- actually, one nuclear plant the size of the one
13 that's already there would provide enough electrical
14 energy of the northwest to eliminate all of our coal
15 use.

16 A second one would eliminate coal use for
17 Oregon and Montana and start getting rid of energy
18 natural gas.

19 If you build six of them, you could
20 disconnect the gas pipes and we won't be using any
21 fossil fuel except liquid fuel for transportation.

22 And if you want to go up to eight nuclear
23 reactors and sell the extra power to California, and we
24 buy the gasoline from them, so to speak.

25 MS. FREESER: Excuse me. You've exceeded

1 your comment time, please. Can you wrap it up? Thank
2 you.

3 MR. BURKE: Yep. I could wrap it up. I
4 actually said more than I thought I would get in.

5 But my name is Herbert Burke. The website
6 is Energizenw.com.

7 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much,
8 Mr. Burke. I appreciate your participation this
9 afternoon.

10 So let me now turn Paul Matthews. Are you
11 on the line?

12 All right. We are hearing piano music, so
13 can you mute your phone. Thank you.

14 Paul Matthews, are you on the line.

15 Ms. Feeser, are there additional names on
16 the signup sheet that I have not seen?

17 MS. FEESER: No. That's all the names that
18 we had who had signed in.

19 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you.

20 Is there anybody else on the line right now
21 who has not signed in but wishes to testify or make
22 comments to us this afternoon?

23 MS. DUNPHY: Yes, this is Mary Catherine
24 Dunphy. I would like to comment, please.

25 CHAIR DANNER: Can you spell your last name,

1 please?

2 MS. DUNPHY: Yes. D, as in "Deborah," U-N,
3 as in "Nancy," P, as in "Paul," H-Y. Catherine with a
4 C.

5 CHAIR DANNER: All right. And you are
6 representing yourself?

7 MS. DUNPHY: Yes, I am representing myself.

8 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you. Proceed.

9 MS. DUNPHY: Thank you. I'm grateful to be
10 able to make comments in afternoon.

11 I would like to request that my comments
12 also reflect the -- the comments of people who are
13 against this deal and be incorporated into my comments.

14 We've heard a lot of talk about climate
15 change this afternoon, but I would like to talk a
16 little -- a little more specifically about it.

17 In 1988 James Hanson testified before
18 Congress about climate change. And his -- he's a
19 scientist and -- and he has -- his predictions have come
20 true. But there's been a lot of distortions about
21 whether climate change is real or not.

22 And I would just like to state for the
23 record that the National Academies of Science presidents
24 have definitely affirmed that climate change is real.
25 This quote is from a June 18th, 2019 news release.

1 "A solid foundation of scientific evidence
2 on climate change exists. It should be recognized,
3 built upon, and most importantly acted upon for the
4 benefit of society."

5 Professor Michael Mann, one of the world's
6 most imminent climate scientists said, "There is as much
7 scientific consensus about human-caused climate change
8 as there is about gravity."

9 So anybody who wants -- who is dealing in
10 coal or producing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere at
11 this point is dealing in death and destruction. And
12 Northwest Energy should not be wanting to make a profit
13 based on death and destruction.

14 The fires this year have been so horrible
15 that we've had the smoke from the fires in Washington
16 state and California and Oregon here in Montana.

17 Now, let's just analyze what smoke is.
18 Smoke is composed of particulate matter from burning
19 trees, plants, animals, insects, birds, houses,
20 vehicles, businesses, and human beings, because human
21 beings have been killed in these fires this year.

22 In terms of extreme weather, we hear
23 things -- it's easy to say climate change, but when you
24 hear about particulars, the fires in Australia, they
25 killed last year, during their summer was our winter; 3

1 billion, that's B with a "boy," billion animals were
2 killed.

3 The campfire in 2018, that fire was moving
4 so fast, it was -- it was moving at the rate of one
5 football field a second.

6 Death Valley this year recorded temperatures
7 of 130 degrees. You know, what has to -- and that's a
8 record in terms of recorded temperatures. And one has
9 to wonder how high these temperatures will get and when
10 do humans start to cook?

11 Sir Richard Attenborough in England recently
12 did a report on extinction of many species.

13 I would also like you to consider the fourth
14 national climate assessment as you make this decision,
15 the inter -- I think it is the fifth report of the UN
16 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

17 Oh, I would like to say one other thing
18 about fires. In California this year, there have been
19 8,236 fires. And seven -- sorry, 4 million acres have
20 burned so far.

21 In 2019, there were only -- and I'm, you
22 know, saying that rather sarcastic -- 5,487 fires and
23 only 157,000 acres were consumed that year. These are
24 terrible statistics.

25 Currently, there are 20,000 firefighters

1 coming from as far away as Israel to help fight these
2 fires. These are catastrophes. And I guess the
3 question is: How bad does it have to get?

4 So I really urge that this deal not be made.
5 Keep the power lines. But we need to retire these coal
6 burning power plants as soon as possible.

7 We should have started making plans in 1988.
8 We wasted 32 years. But it's not too late, according to
9 some client -- climate scientists for us to turn this
10 disaster around. Otherwise, I fear for humanity in the
11 future. And we all should fear for humanity and every
12 species on the planet.

13 MS. FREESER: Excuse me, your time has
14 expired. Can you please wrap it up. Thank you.

15 MS. DUNPHY: Yes.

16 I was going to thank you for allowing to
17 share today. And thanks for all the climate activists
18 doing all they can to prevent more catastrophe. Thank
19 you.

20 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you, Ms. Dunphy, for
21 your participation this afternoon.

22 Let me ask again, is there anyone who did
23 not sign up but wishes to speak to us this afternoon?

24 All right. We have reached the end of the
25 sign-in sheet.

1 It is almost 3:30. Mr. Cupp, I'm going to
2 turn it over to you. Is there anything we need to know
3 before we go into recess and reconvene at six o'clock?

4 MR. CUPP: Not that I can think of. I think
5 we're good.

6 CHAIR DANNER: All right. I want to thank
7 everybody who participated this afternoon. This is --
8 public comments are an important part of our
9 deliberations on this matter, and so I appreciate
10 everyone's participation.

11 So we will go into recess and we will
12 reconvene virtually at six o'clock this evening.

13 So let me turn to my colleagues.

14 Colleagues, do you have any logistical
15 questions or any comments you want to make before we
16 close?

17 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: This is Commissioner
18 Rendahl. I just want to thank you all for making your
19 comments, and I look forward to hearing the commenters
20 this evening. Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER BALASBAS: This is Commissioner
22 Balasbas. I will echo those comments and look forward
23 to hearing more at 6:00 p.m.

24 CHAIR DANNER: All right, then we will be in
25 recess until 6:00 p.m.

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Thank you all. Bye-bye.

(Public Comment Hearing concluded at
3:26 p.m.)

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