

Docket No. UE-200115 - Vol. IV

In the Matter of the Application of Puget Sound Energy

October 8, 2020



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BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Application of) DOCKET UE-200115

) PUGET SOUND ENERGY,)

) For an Order Authorizing Sale of All) of Puget Sound Energy's Interests in) Colstrip Unit 4 and Certain of Puget) Sound Energy's Interest in Colstrip) Transmission System)

VIDEOCONFERENCE PUBLIC HEARING - SESSION I
CHAIR DAVE DANNER
VOLUME IV
Pages 171 - 254

October 8, 2020
1:32 p.m.

REPORTED BY: CRYSTAL R. McAULIFFE, RPR, CCR 2121

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 LACEY, WASHINGTON; OCTOBER 8, 2020

2 1:32 P.M.

3 -oOo-

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 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

Page 175

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

Page 176

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.

Page 177

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.

Page 178

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

Page 179

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

Page 180

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

Page 181

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.

Page 182

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

Page 183

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

Page 184

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

Page 185

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

Page 186

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

Page 187

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

Page 188

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.

Page 189

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

Page 190

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

Page 191

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 redactions 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.

Page 192

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

Page 193

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

Page 194

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 hardly 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

Page 195

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

Page 196

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.

Page 197

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.

Page 198

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

Page 199

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

Page 200

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

Page 201

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

Page 202

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 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 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 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

Page 207

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

Page 208

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

Page 209

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

Page 210

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

Page 211	Page 213
<p>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,</p>	<p>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.</p>
Page 212	Page 214
<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 215</p> <p>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.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 217</p> <p>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</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 216</p> <p>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.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 218</p> <p>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</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 219</p> <p>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.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 221</p> <p>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.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 220</p> <p>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</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 222</p> <p>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</p>

Page 223

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.

Page 224

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

Page 225

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

Page 226

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.

Page 227

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

Page 228

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.

Page 229

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

Page 230

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

Page 231

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.

Page 232

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

Page 233

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

Page 234

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.

Page 235

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

Page 236

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

Page 237

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.

Page 238

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

Page 239

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

Page 240

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

Page 241

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

Page 242

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

Page 243

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

Page 244

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

Page 245

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

Page 246

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

Page 247

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,

Page 248

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.

Page 249

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 eminent 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

Page 250

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

Page 251

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.


Page 252

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.

Page 253

1 Thank you all. Bye-bye.
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 4 (Public Comment Hearing concluded at
 5 3:26 p.m.)
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Page 254

1 CERTIFICATE
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 3
 4 STATE OF WASHINGTON)
 5) ss.
 6 COUNTY OF KITSAP)
 7
 8 I, CRYSTAL R. McAULIFFE, a Certified Court
 9 Reporter in and for the State of Washington, do hereby
 10 certify that the foregoing transcript of the
 11 videoconference public hearing, Session 1, on OCTOBER 6,
 12 2020, is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge,
 13 skill, and ability.
 14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
 15 and seal this 28th day of October, 2020.
 16
 17 
 18 CRYSTAL R. McAULIFFE, RPR, CCR #2121
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 20
 21
 22
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 24
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A				
A-T-G 173:24	action 185:13	afternoon 172:4,25	216:20	224:4,7 226:20
abandon 202:16	190:19 194:13	174:7 182:4	allowed 191:15	230:3 231:15
ability 184:21	200:6 212:16	187:13 199:12	allowing 227:21	234:15 241:1
254:12	223:8 230:6 234:5	211:23 217:8	251:16	247:8 252:9
ablaze 196:9	actions 180:16	219:10 224:8	allows 179:2 223:8	approach 232:22
238:24	234:4 238:8	226:20 230:4	alternatives 213:22	241:23
able 179:4 191:5	active 193:22	231:16 232:2	218:24 219:5,6	approaching 191:7
205:17 219:1	activists 251:17	234:15 236:15	Amazon 244:10	approve 202:20
228:24 248:10	add 190:16	239:9,17 241:1	ambiguity 208:13	approved 205:2
absent 227:15	added 202:13	247:9,22 248:10	America 215:19	April 193:6
absolutely 204:25	adding 181:19	248:15 251:21,23	amount 204:17	aquifer 193:15,20
208:6 221:14	191:5 202:10	252:7	205:8 245:25	aquifers 193:4
abundance 233:22	241:18	agent 235:18	246:3	area 203:25 204:22
abundant 222:20	addition 173:10	aging 237:5	amounts 235:8	205:3,3,6,19,21
Academies 248:23	198:16 216:6	ago 190:11 196:7	242:1	206:1,7 208:5
accelerate 195:18	additional 198:16	198:22 208:16	analysis 181:8	215:3 218:25
197:9	202:13,17 205:8	244:8	analyze 249:17	223:4 244:25
accelerating 186:3	205:18 210:5	agree 207:18	Anderson 224:13	areas 242:8
access 181:4	213:19 223:2	agreed 199:5	231:21 241:2,5,10	argument 183:16
200:25	228:3 242:11	agreement 174:24	Andrea 197:17	aridity 238:22
accident 225:4	247:15	183:23 201:24	209:4,5 243:13	ash 188:3 193:1,7
accomplished	additionally 205:4	202:1,11 211:3,7	angry 237:21	194:2,23 196:8
191:13	address 173:23	232:19 233:5	animals 235:22	208:8 228:4
account 218:18	175:19 229:1	240:17	249:19 250:1	aside 208:8 223:7
accountable 234:9	addressed 199:7	agricultural 192:18	Ann 172:14 182:12	asked 190:17
accounts 198:25	adds 202:16	192:22 239:1	182:18 192:7	asking 185:24
accurate 254:11	adjudication 173:5	ahead 179:25 182:8	197:15,18 198:2	186:2 236:3
achieve 191:20	administration	182:13 187:22	Anne 209:6,7,15	aspect 189:1
242:23	238:9	189:19 195:7	Annette 217:11	assessment 250:14
achieved 213:10	administrative	203:2 209:12	announcing 185:22	asset 210:9 222:23
acknowledge 183:9	205:23	212:9 214:16	220:16	228:25 229:6
208:21	adopted 190:23	217:20 219:21	answer 175:25	233:12
acknowledged	adults 191:23	221:22 224:17	230:13	assets 174:14,19
222:16	192:1	226:25 230:14	antithetical 238:11	207:25 240:4,18
acquire 223:5	adviser 232:7	231:25 234:24	anybody 178:17	associated 203:14
acquisition 188:17	advisor 180:5	236:20 239:15	247:20 249:9	209:19
acres 196:8 250:19	advisory 185:14	241:8 243:22	anyway 211:1	association 214:21
250:23	222:3	aims 190:25	appeal 192:2	225:16
act 174:23 175:24	advocacy 237:8	air 188:6 196:2,5	applaud 194:12	assume 185:11
180:11,11 183:8	239:25	211:12 215:7	appliances 234:3	assumption 184:8
186:14 188:18	advocated 214:23	216:2,17 236:2	application 171:4	astounding 198:14
189:24 213:3	advocating 198:6	Al 217:13	172:7,16 226:15	atmosphere 188:8
216:25 227:14	237:10	alarming 189:1	appreciate 197:14	216:7 225:14
233:4 237:20	affirm 179:15	allocating 202:15	199:12,15 203:1	235:8 249:10
acted 249:3	affirmed 248:24	allow 181:24	211:23 217:8	attempt 204:10
	affordable 232:9	196:23 216:13,15	219:10 222:2	attempting 190:4

<p>213:5 Attenborough 250:11 Attorney 172:22 222:9 223:15 audio 188:14 Australia 249:24 authority 211:5 228:18 229:22 authorize 229:9 authorizing 171:6 172:8 available 181:6,11 231:5 243:9 avert 190:3 avoid 207:15 238:2 240:7 avoids 213:11 240:14 aware 180:16 Awesome 209:13 awhile 175:22</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">B</p> <hr/> <p>B 250:1 Babb 238:20,23 239:1 back 172:17 179:8 186:7 189:2,8,12 193:16,20 197:25 201:24 213:20 226:21 228:8 229:8 239:10 243:6,8 244:8 background 172:19 174:12 221:25 222:1 backyard 188:13 bad 182:22,25 189:22 190:10 191:23 223:6 229:3 251:3 badly 229:10 Bainbridge 212:14 212:16,17 213:14 232:5</p>	<p>balance 242:3 Balabas 172:14 178:22 199:15 232:3 239:18 252:21,22 bankruptcy 204:4 Barbara 230:6,7,11 Barber 225:25 based 184:9 214:22 249:13 basic 191:25 basically 202:5 Bastian 239:12,13 239:16,21 battles 229:13 becoming 191:8 218:21 bedrock 193:4 begins 177:12 178:2,9 behalf 192:17 194:19 203:7 219:25,25 224:25 beings 235:17 249:20,21 believe 180:15,22 200:17 201:10,21 202:12 212:23 240:4 243:6 believed 185:18 believes 174:22 Bellevue 221:24 Bellingham 183:2 belt 225:4 benefit 189:5 204:11 210:22 216:18 240:17 242:14 249:4 benefits 175:5 208:1 best 207:7 209:22 210:19 212:24,25 213:17 222:24 223:16 232:22 254:11 best-cost 208:4</p>	<p>best-performing 208:4 bet 211:24 Beth 192:5,8,10,15 better 190:14 229:19 230:25 231:3 beyond 196:17 big 195:22 197:5 246:10 bigger 235:20 biggest 191:13 227:22 229:2 bill 190:2 200:19 Billings 192:19 billion 250:1,1 bills 183:2 198:20 232:24 biodiversity 198:14 biologist 195:15 birds 249:19 bit 172:19 176:12 178:25 204:10 231:7 black 225:17,21 226:2 blows 246:4 board 200:6 Boeing 199:18 244:11,11 bombarded 233:23 Bonneville 244:20 245:1,4,22 boom 188:24 boron 193:9 Box 175:19 boy 250:1 Bozeman 192:16 breakdown 220:10 Brian 224:13 bridge 215:16 Briggs 182:5 bring 186:17 208:3 210:10 bringing 216:22 broad 204:15</p>	<p>brought 241:11 bubble 198:24 budget 191:7 201:19,20 210:25 build 210:15 246:19 building 181:20 186:21 244:9 built 201:7 215:17 223:3 249:3 bulbs 234:3 bullied 229:3 bully 184:3 Bunch 178:5,6 231:23,24 232:1,3 burden 202:9 burdens 240:16 Burk 230:9 Burke 231:17,18 243:20,21,23 244:4,5 247:3,5,8 burned 186:5 196:7,11 204:19 250:20 burner 216:21 burning 188:2,7 194:16 196:24 207:9 235:25 249:18 251:6 business 173:3 190:5 226:4 businesses 249:20 buy 186:7 189:2 202:11 213:20 218:6 228:8 245:8 246:24 buyback 207:21 220:23 buying 189:7,12 202:5 Bye-bye 253:1</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <hr/> <p>C 248:4 254:1,1 California 242:11 246:23 249:16</p>	<p>250:18 call 175:18 176:15 177:7,19 179:20 192:5 208:18 209:4 214:11 226:18 called 176:14,18,21 176:23 177:1,23 199:23 241:2 243:8 244:6 callers 236:11 calling 199:19 237:15 callously 228:25 calls 236:6 callus 191:24 calm 245:17,17 camera 209:10 campaign 225:25 227:6 campfire 250:3 cap 233:19 capacity 181:11,14 181:18 201:1 207:23 208:3 215:6 216:21 223:3,5 229:14 233:11 242:2,11 242:13,20 capital 183:21 captive 198:4 car 196:14 235:11 carbon 184:9,24 188:2,9 191:7 198:23 200:20 216:8 225:20,21 227:22 233:24 236:1 240:13 249:10 care 183:13 carefully 210:17 cars 220:21 case 172:20 174:12 176:8 cases 203:20 catastrophe 251:18</p>
--	---	---	---	---

catastrophes 251:2 catastrophic 191:18 Catherine 247:23 248:3 cause 207:19 225:13 causing 235:7 CCR 171:25 254:18 cedar 195:18,21 Center 182:13,19 203:8 centigrade 225:22 century 214:24 certain 171:7 172:9 174:14 175:4 203:19 certainly 186:1 200:7 203:19 229:13 Certified 254:7 certify 254:9 CETA 180:22 181:22 183:12 191:14,16 200:13 207:13 208:5 209:24 210:14 223:7,18 233:7,15 241:11 chair 171:11 172:4 172:12,24 173:1 173:20,25 174:5 177:18 178:21,23 179:18 182:1,11 182:14,16 185:4,9 187:12,17,22 189:18 192:3,12 195:3,7 197:13,20 197:23 199:11,14 202:25 203:5 206:13,18 208:25 209:11 211:22,25 212:9,11 214:6,16 217:17 219:9,17 221:17,22 224:6	226:19,24 230:2 231:14,25 232:2 234:14,19,21,24 236:13,17,20 237:7 239:8,13,14 239:17 240:25 241:8 243:5,22 244:2 247:7,19,25 248:5,8 251:20 252:6,24 Chairman 203:3 206:9 214:18 227:1 chairs 183:4 challenged 198:20 205:22 challenging 206:8 chance 225:21 change 188:9,12 191:19 195:23 207:11 215:8,11 216:9 225:6 227:16 235:18 238:16 248:15,18 248:21,24 249:2,7 249:23 250:16 changed 241:6 Changes 215:22 changing 216:14 charged 238:12 chat 177:4,6 178:6 cheap 245:5 cheaper 222:19 232:21 cheapest 245:3 cheating 191:25 children 221:1 chimney 196:8 choice 232:11 235:11 chosen 206:7 Christine 178:6 231:23 232:3 chunk 205:18 circumvented 190:16	citizen 214:22 244:25 245:4 citizens 192:20 212:22 216:23 223:17 city 212:16 214:1 232:7 237:15 238:25 239:3 245:1 claim 226:8 clamoring 186:9 clean 174:23 180:11 183:7 186:13,17 188:18 189:23 190:2,5 194:3,6,11 196:5 197:6 210:10 211:10,19 213:3 215:7 216:18,24 217:5 221:3 222:14 223:7,19 227:6,9,14 232:9 233:4,13 235:3,25 237:13,16,18,20 239:22 240:19 243:1 cleaner 211:12 216:17,22 233:22 cleaning 194:9 cleanup 194:22 202:14,15 208:8 208:14 213:23 223:12 228:3 233:17 clear 187:2 201:13 222:4 238:6 clearly 191:19 229:18 clever 191:21 click 176:16,18 client 251:9 climate 180:13 183:3,6 185:13 186:3 188:9,12 190:3,19,22 191:19 195:14,17	195:23 196:10,11 200:6 204:17 207:11,14 212:15 213:1,9 215:8,11 215:12,25 216:9 216:14,17 220:9 220:10 225:6 227:16 229:11 230:6,22 232:6 234:6 237:8 238:15 239:3,22 240:9 248:14,18 248:21,24 249:2,6 249:7,23 250:14 250:16 251:9,17 climate-friendly 218:23 219:1,6 clings 226:12 close 184:14 193:18 199:5 202:7 210:18 218:10 226:6 244:21 252:16 closer 215:6 closing 184:9 208:18 closure 186:2 187:6 197:10 201:15 223:21 232:16 234:11 cloudy 241:23 co-commenters 226:17 co-run 198:5 CO2 207:10 220:20 225:13,15 235:8 235:14,19 coal 188:2,3,3,7,7 189:6 193:1,7 194:2,16,22 196:11,15,18,24 196:25 198:24,25 199:3 201:15 203:13,14,15,16 204:17 205:8,12 207:9,12 213:21	216:21 223:8,10 224:3 225:3,4,5,9 225:13 227:20 228:3 231:2 233:21 235:25 237:5 241:12 244:15 246:14,16 249:10 251:5 coal's 225:16 coal-based 199:21 200:13 coal-derived 186:18 coal-fired 180:12 216:7 coast 242:8 Cobin 224:19 code 220:14 coined 225:25 colleagues 172:13 252:13,14 college 183:1 color 225:7 Colstrip 171:7,7 172:9,10 174:14 174:14,16,21,25 175:4,12 181:1 182:22 183:24 184:4,9 185:23 186:1,6,25 187:5 187:7 188:19 190:7 192:24 193:5,12,25 194:5 194:7,22 196:20 196:24 197:10 198:10 200:11,15 200:17,23 201:12 201:14,19,25,25 202:7,9,19,20,22 203:14,16,16 204:18 205:10,13 205:17 208:8,19 208:22 209:19,22 210:8,18,25 211:3 211:7 212:19,24 213:4,15 215:5
--	--	---	---	--

216:8,13,15,20 217:3,4 218:8,10 220:2,17,23 221:15 222:8,10 222:19 223:13,18 223:21 224:2,2 225:10 227:4 228:4,8 229:17,19 232:14,16 234:10 235:7 236:5,8 237:2,11 240:4,6 240:18 243:3 244:14 245:11 246:1 Colstrip's 186:8 216:1 column 229:6 combusted 225:18 come 173:17 213:24 248:19 comes 183:11 184:3 204:17 235:18 242:5 coming 195:8 196:10 197:25 233:2 251:1 commend 220:15 comment 172:15 174:9 175:13,16 175:16 178:19 182:4,6,10 187:16 192:14 196:12 206:3,21 214:19 224:14 225:23 230:8 231:22 234:13 239:9 241:3,4,6 247:1 247:24 253:4 commenters 252:19 comments 173:14 175:11,14 176:1 177:3 182:2 184:6 203:1 206:23 209:15 211:23 217:8 219:10	224:7 226:20 240:24 241:1 247:22 248:10,11 248:12,13 252:8 252:15,19,22 comments@utc.... 175:18 176:4 commercial 217:24 commission 171:2 172:7,13,17 173:4 175:3 198:9 201:10 202:20 203:6 206:10,25 207:5 208:21 214:5,18 218:15 224:5 229:21 236:4 237:10 238:12 239:18 240:22 245:7 Commission's 198:21 commissioned 210:12 Commissioner 172:14,14 178:21 178:22 214:3 239:17,18 252:17 252:17,21,21 commissioners 173:7 175:11,24 180:2 182:14 199:15 202:18 209:14 212:18 214:3 226:13 227:2 232:2 236:21 commitment 183:7 committed 194:10 commodity 189:7 communities 225:7 225:8 232:10 239:1 companies 193:12 194:7 198:22 204:10 company 188:24	193:14 199:1,18 201:22 206:6 compatible 223:23 compelled 237:4 competitive 183:25 completed 205:4 completely 231:2 complex 180:23 193:3 compliance 233:7 complicit 235:6 comply 190:8 210:14 233:14 components 225:11 composed 249:18 compromise 198:13,19 computer 176:13 concedes 184:13 concentrate 179:3 concerned 195:14 203:11,24 204:5,9 204:16,20 210:4 236:25 concerning 208:7 208:13 concerns 202:6 204:15 213:19 concluded 253:4 concludes 240:24 concluding 212:21 conclusion 180:19 180:23 conditioning 199:4 confidence 221:12 confirmed 181:7 Congress 248:18 connected 242:9 Connecting 242:2 connections 195:9 228:22 connects 242:20 consensus 249:7 consequence 237:4 consequences 235:23	conservation 192:18 198:6 214:21 conservative 184:8 consider 183:11 184:2 210:17 250:13 considered 228:11 considering 197:4 consistent 208:22 211:6 245:14 constantly 233:23 constraints 186:12 constructed 242:16 constructive 217:4 consultant 191:4 191:10 208:2 217:23 consumed 250:23 consumers 190:4 contains 201:23 228:16 contamination 193:2 228:4 contend 192:24 continue 174:25 198:25 199:1 205:10 207:9 216:14 235:19 236:1 continued 187:5 196:23 208:21 211:5 216:20 continues 208:9 215:21 continuing 183:22 203:24 206:2 218:6 continuously 193:15 contract 228:2 contradicts 227:13 contributes 216:9 contributing 235:14 contribution	216:17 cook 212:1 214:8 214:10,11 243:15 250:10 cooler 216:17 corner 229:8 corporation 237:22 237:25 correctly 197:21 corridors 224:24 corruption 189:6 Cort 219:19 221:20 221:23 Corton 212:1,5,6,8 212:8,10,13,13 cost 181:4,19,20,22 183:24 198:17 200:25 202:9,13 207:22 210:2 213:21 218:7,7,16 218:18,21 219:7 222:16,17 228:8 233:2,16 240:18 242:24 cost-based 181:8 costing 175:6 costly 229:12 costs 180:17,21 183:20,21 184:17 198:23 199:7 202:10,15 208:10 213:23 228:3 233:8,19 234:7 241:24 246:8 council 192:6,17 212:16 213:2,14 213:19 214:1 239:23,24 Counsel 172:22 Counsel's 173:2 counter 221:11 country 213:18 215:1 227:22 242:22 245:16 counts 224:1 county 185:17
--	---	--	---	---

<p>190:20,21,22 238:20 245:2 254:5 County's 191:18 couple 223:16 course 204:23 205:12 court 189:15 205:23 212:7 217:7 224:17 230:14 254:7 cover 222:12 COVID 232:25 create 190:21 229:16 created 194:8 creditors 204:3 credits 233:6 crisis 183:6 186:4 186:23 195:17 196:10 220:10 232:25 239:3 critical 222:23 crop 211:15 cross 230:7,7,11 CRYSTAL 171:25 254:7,18 CU 184:15 CU-3 184:5,14 CU-4 184:5 Cupp 172:18 173:10,16 174:5,7 176:7 177:17,23 178:1,8,15 252:1 252:4 current 180:16 198:19 218:7,9 219:23 222:25 223:4 229:17 Currently 250:25 curtail 186:24 custom 198:18 customer 178:6 185:12,18 187:23 190:12,13 195:13 207:17 221:24</p>	<p>232:4,8,8 233:23 236:22,25 customers 175:5,7 182:23 183:23 185:24 186:2,9 187:2 190:15 197:8 198:18 199:21 200:1 202:16 208:6 209:25 210:4 212:25 213:16,25 218:17 228:1,15 229:6,23 232:23 232:24 240:19 cuts 240:20</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <hr/> <p>D 248:2 damage 235:7 dangers 214:2,4 Danner 171:11 172:4,12,24 173:1 173:20,25 174:5 177:18 178:21,23 179:18,25 182:1 182:11,14,16 185:4,9 187:12,17 187:22 189:18 192:3,12 195:3,7 197:13,20,23 199:11,14 202:25 203:5 206:9,13,18 208:25 209:11 211:22,25 212:9 212:11 214:3,6,16 214:18 217:17 219:9,17 221:17 221:22 224:6 226:19,24 227:1 230:2 231:14,25 232:2 234:14,19 234:21,24 236:13 236:17,20 239:8 239:13,14,17 240:25 241:8 243:5,22 244:2</p>	<p>247:7,19,25 248:5 248:8 251:20 252:6,24 Daraviani 217:18 219:11,12 243:17 data 181:9 193:5 date 175:15 210:19 229:17 daughter 183:1 Dave 171:11 172:12 David 185:23 186:9 186:11 197:16 206:15 207:2 day 193:20 194:13 245:20 254:14 days 215:22 245:24 de-water 194:1 deadline 241:11,12 deal 182:22,25 183:6,12,17,19 184:15,24 185:3 223:11 228:1,16 229:3,4,10,22 248:13 251:4 dealing 249:9,11 Dear 180:2 death 226:1,6,6 249:11,13 250:6 Deborah 248:2 decade 215:14 decades 192:23 227:23 242:25 December 220:10 decided 187:15 decision 175:9 194:15 250:14 decision-making 204:7 decisions 221:10 deck 192:8 217:18 217:19 219:20 decks 221:1 declaration 201:18 220:9 declare 187:4</p>	<p>201:11 202:18 decommissioning 233:16 decrease 185:1 deem 229:22 232:16 deeply 180:16 default 228:10 definitely 222:24 248:24 degrade 216:2 degrees 191:2 225:22 250:7 delay 183:21 deliberations 252:9 delivering 192:16 demand 218:11,19 222:25 228:21 demands 186:23 223:2,7,24 democracy 238:11 democratic 239:5 demonstrate 218:16 demonstrated 191:10 denied 183:19 denies 199:9 deny 175:3 186:25 198:9 207:5 222:7 234:10 Department 193:23 205:5 depreciating 207:24 depth 193:3 DEQ 205:24 Derf 197:16 203:2 203:7 209:2 Des 198:3 description 190:14 despite 184:16 destroyed 203:20 238:14 destroying 238:25 destruction 249:11</p>	<p>249:13 detailed 194:25 determination 180:18 devastation 239:2 develop 193:24 development 199:19 dewatered 203:22 difference 211:18 different 200:5 201:16 230:17 difficulties 177:6,7 difficulty 202:15 diminishing 198:14 dioxide 184:24 188:2,9 216:8 225:20 249:10 dip 242:10 dire 235:22 direct 210:2 232:15 236:7 direction 232:18 directions 238:23 directly 221:11 director 214:20 227:6 directs 207:15 dirtyest 196:25 dirty 186:8,10,18 189:12 232:20 233:5,21 disagreements 228:12 disaster 190:3 251:10 disconnect 246:20 discussing 186:13 disregard 191:24 disruption 188:15 distant 188:10 distortions 248:20 Divesting 198:23 DNA 200:3 docket 171:4 172:11 182:25</p>
---	--	--	--	---

184:5 206:21 207:6 documents 184:13 193:6 195:1 doing 209:10,11 251:18 dollar 190:7 dollars 233:10 domestic 198:13 doomsday 190:18 door 231:6 dot 173:23,24,24 Dozens 237:13 draft 205:4 dragging 229:23 dramatic 191:11 dramatically 215:14 drilled 193:14 drive 180:17 195:21 196:14 dropping 218:20 drops 242:13 droughts 211:14 dry 194:2 196:1 238:24 due 175:7 215:12 215:25 232:25 Dunphy 247:23,24 248:2,7,9 251:15 251:20 Duwamish 224:20 dying 195:19,22	echo 178:25 195:24 203:10 220:18 252:22 economic 232:25 economical 223:23 economically 198:20 economies 192:22 economy 217:5 227:17 244:9 ecosystem 195:14 educated 236:6 effect 188:9 190:5 efficiency 217:25 217:25 218:11,19 efficient 234:3 effort 237:15,18 efforts 191:18,20 193:24 eight 245:19,24 246:22 EIS 205:4 either 177:6 183:24 225:1 Eleanor 239:12,21 elected 189:24 electric 196:14 207:17 234:1 235:11 electrical 194:11 246:13 electricity 186:10 186:19 187:2 194:8,16 196:16 199:22 200:14 227:20 232:9,12 232:21 237:16,18 241:13 242:2,5 electrification 224:23 element 201:16 eliminate 180:12 200:13 227:19,23 246:14,16 eliminating 187:9 Ellen 211:25 212:1	212:3,3 243:14 embodied 200:13 emergency 220:9 emission 183:14 200:19 227:16 238:2 emissions 180:9,12 184:25 185:1 196:24 198:23 199:8 207:15 211:11 213:11 216:1,7 225:19 235:20 238:3,15 240:7,9,12,15 emitting 235:7 emphasize 222:13 encourage 202:22 209:21 210:17 encouraged 219:2 219:4 end-run 237:23 endangered 204:20 204:21 ended 206:4 Energize 244:7,7 Energizenw.com 247:6 energizing 244:9 energy 171:5 174:18,21,23 180:11,20 183:7 184:2 186:8,10,13 186:17 188:17,18 189:23 190:3,5,18 191:17 193:6 194:4,11,18,21 195:13 196:15,15 196:18 197:3,6,7 199:20 200:10 201:6,12,13 207:3 207:8 210:10 211:10,19 213:3 216:18,22,24 217:5,25 218:11 218:11 222:14,15 222:16,17 223:7	223:19 224:24 226:8 227:4,6,9 227:14 231:13 232:4,6,15,18 233:4,6 234:2 235:6,25 236:5,8 237:1,13,20 239:22 240:5,19 241:17 242:21 243:1 244:17,24 246:10,14,17 249:12 Energy's 171:6,7 172:9 182:21 227:3 240:3 enforce 202:5 engineer 180:3 engineering 220:8 221:13 222:1 engineers 219:24 220:3,5,6 221:10 England 250:11 ensure 194:20 218:25 237:18 ensuring 223:18 238:13 entail 198:17 entire 191:20 enumerable 204:16 environment 189:11 204:13 206:11 240:1 environmental 182:12,19 193:23 203:8 204:7 205:5 226:4 230:17 239:23,24,25 Eric 224:11,12 226:21 227:5 escalating 183:20 184:17 202:8 especially 198:20 218:21 225:7 242:17 ethics 220:14 evening 175:10	252:12,20 events 211:15 everybody 252:7 everyone's 177:3 252:10 evidence 201:21 249:1 Evista 236:22,25 237:3 238:19 239:6 Evista's 237:11 example 185:22 211:20 215:12 excavate 194:2 exceeded 246:25 excellent 188:20 exceptionally 201:1 excess 242:10 exclusively 203:15 excuse 174:20 206:3 244:1 246:25 251:13 exempt 211:7 exercise 183:14 185:2 229:21 existential 207:11 existing 200:11 245:12 exists 249:2 exit 210:19 229:17 expand 188:17 205:2,6 206:2,7 expansion 205:3,21 206:1,8 expansions 205:7 expected 175:8 expenditures 183:21 228:10 229:16 237:5 expensive 186:18 201:8 210:15 222:15 233:22 234:1 experience 180:4 211:13 216:9 242:10
E				
E 177:13 178:2,10 254:1,1 e-mail 173:18,21 173:23 175:17 176:2,3,4 earlier 176:5 196:12 210:23 241:3 early 223:20 earth 211:13 easy 241:19 249:23				

experienced 196:6	fans 196:4	fired 223:8,10 224:3 227:20 237:5	211:14 235:22 239:2	fulfill 208:5
expert 182:24	far 191:3,6 208:16 244:14 245:10 250:20 251:1	firefighters 250:25	forests 195:24	full 184:21 194:21 199:9 223:20
expired 251:14	farms 192:20 242:6 242:12,15	fires 211:14 235:20 249:14,15,21,24 250:18,19,22 251:2	formal 173:4,11 175:24	fully 181:3 196:20 209:18
explain 174:11	fast 197:10 215:21 250:4	firestorm 238:23	formality 179:11	fund 204:3 218:10
explicitly 240:13	father 225:3	firm 190:8	formally 195:15 201:11	funding 187:5 194:22 202:22 210:18 222:10 223:17 236:9
exponentially 241:24	fear 196:9 229:7 251:10,11	firs 195:23	forward 194:13 204:6 205:16 252:19,22	funds 208:8
export 238:4	fears 202:8	first 174:11 179:20 180:7,15 185:17 187:24 215:18 222:6 223:16 227:13 243:25 244:14 245:3,6	fossil 186:4,24 191:16 210:9 219:3 225:18 226:5,11 227:8 241:18 246:21	further 181:20 197:1
Exporting 184:25	feature 177:4,6	fiscally 209:23	fossil-fuel-run 198:12	future 180:17,21 181:4 188:10 201:11 202:10,19 207:25 210:18,21 210:21 211:18,20 213:15 215:10 218:9,22 219:2 222:23 223:1,13 229:16 233:2 240:10 251:11
expressed 216:24 238:1	February 174:12	Fish 230:19	foster 186:21	
extends 193:2	federal 205:22	Fitzgibbon's 196:21	found 208:2	
extinction 211:16 250:12	Federation 220:8	Fitzu 189:16,17,21	foundation 198:4 249:1	
extra 220:20 246:7 246:23	feel 235:6,13	five 174:16 180:4 197:11 199:6	founded 244:6	
extreme 211:14,15 238:22 249:22	feeling 244:15	fix 194:1	four 190:23 192:23 195:25 211:2	
extremely 228:16 228:18 242:19	Feeser 247:15,17	flags 227:25	fourth 228:16 250:13	
	feet 215:22	flooding 235:21	Fran 212:1,5,8	
F	fellow 239:19	focus 180:14	Francis 212:13	
F 178:11 205:3,21 206:7 254:1	Ferrara 217:9	folks 173:2,6,19 198:19 241:10	Frank 173:24	
face 235:22	fewer 238:4	follow 176:9	frankly 237:21	
facilitate 183:17 227:8	field 250:5	follow-up 173:18	FREESER 206:3 246:25 251:13	
facility 237:24	fields 238:24	followed 197:16 230:6	freight 224:23	
fact 175:6 189:2 222:16 223:5 240:11	fifth 250:15	following 204:3 226:9 232:18	Frenkowski 224:11 224:12 226:21,22 227:1,5 230:3	
factor 201:1	fight 228:14 251:1	food 235:22	fuel 191:16 202:8 219:3 226:5,11 227:8 238:15 246:21,21	
factors 180:24 181:11,14	filed 174:13 175:2	football 250:5	fueled 238:23	
fails 227:11	filings 175:25	footnote 220:12,13	fueling 196:15	
failure 201:20	filters 196:3	footprint 233:24	fuels 186:5,24 210:10 225:18 241:18	
failures 211:15	final 190:17	for-profit 237:22		
fairly 191:3,11 198:1 199:20	finally 186:11 189:1 193:13 223:22 233:16	forced 193:13		
faith 189:22 190:10 191:23 223:6	financial 184:18 204:11	forces 201:24 228:7		
familiar 206:25	financially 244:17	forecast 222:25		
family 192:20 225:5	find 192:2 220:23 238:10	foregoing 254:9		
family-based 192:18	finds 211:5	forest 195:19		
	finish 176:25			
	finished 176:20			
	finite 183:10			
	fir 195:18			
	fire 196:9 238:20 239:1 250:3			
				G
				G 205:6 206:1
				G-a-f 173:23
				g-o-v 173:24
				Gafken 172:22,24 173:9,13,16,22,23 176:3
				gallons 193:19
				gas 180:8,11 196:24 200:19 207:3 211:11 225:20 227:16 238:2,15 240:12 246:18,20
				gases 235:19
				gasoline 246:24
				General 223:15
				General's 172:22 222:9
				generate 196:17 200:8
				generated 174:25

