

From: [Kathy Cowles](#)
To: [UTC DL Records Center](#)
Subject: Re: Dockets UE-160918 and UG-160919
Date: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 9:57:33 AM

Feb 20, 2018

RE: PSE's 20 Year plan, UE-160918 and UG-160919

Washington Utilities and Transportation Committee:

I am a citizen of Seattle and am writing today to urge you to reject any plan from PSE that does not address getting Colstrip off the grid by 2025 and explicitly exclude all new fracked gas infrastructure, including the liquefied natural gas terminal in Tacoma.

PSE needs to officially commit to ending its stake in Montana's Colstrip coal plant. PSE made headway on cutting ties with coal when it agreed to shutter the plant's largest coal units by 2022 and pay off its outstanding debt on the plant by 2027. But there is still no firm deadline for ending the use of coal and this plan suggests PSE intends to run the plant through 2035. This inertia serves only to extend the life of the single largest source of carbon pollution in the American West.

PSE's plan to continue operating Colstrip could also cost Western Washington families. PSE's own analysis (pg. 52) shows that retiring Colstrip by 2025 and replacing it with cheaper power would save PSE \$150 million. King County and the cities of Seattle and Olympia have called on PSE to get off coal by 2025; PSE could do that as part of this planning process but has chosen not to.

PSE should not trade in one fossil fuel (coal) for another (gas). As PSE ends its commitments to coal, the utility's IRP makes huge investment in new gas plants in the coming years, building nearly four times as much gas capacity as wind and solar (Fig. 1-4, Page 18). Customers will take on all the financial risk of these gas plants – whether through rising prices due to volatile fuel costs or a price on carbon emissions, which seems inevitable in Washington State this year. Washington has a window into the future through California, which invested billions of dollars in gas plants after the state cut its ties with coal. Many of these plants are sitting idle and some are now stranded assets for utilities. Meanwhile, clean energy is getting cheaper and more reliable by the day, thanks to the falling price of battery storage, which eliminates the “intermittency” argument against wind and solar. These fundamental shifts in energy markets and the risks they pose to the public's pocketbooks are part of why regulators in Oregon and California are putting the brakes on plans for new gas projects. That's not to mention the underrecognized climate impact of gas, which increasingly comes from the fracking process and may be just as bad for climate when methane leaks are taken into account.

Before spending customers' money, PSE needs to take a hard look at whether or not to build anything at all. The Northwest Power and Conservation Council's 7th Power Plan demonstrated that the cheapest and least risky way for the Pacific Northwest to meet its future energy needs is by making our buildings more energy efficient and

modernizing our energy grid. In 90 percent of the council's scenarios, energy efficiency met all new energy demand in the region through 2030. But it is also important that we are preparing for a clean energy future, and truly considering it as an option when fossil fuel power plants retire.

PSE is stuck in the past at a time when our energy markets are undergoing transformational changes. Our state is committed to meet the goals of the Paris Climate Accords, calling for a 80 to 95 percent cut in climate pollution across the state's economy by 2050. This target all but requires a grid made of 100 percent clean energy, which will be impossible to reach if PSE executes this plan. Washington State is seeing the tangible impacts of climate change in the form of extreme wildfires that threaten rural communities and acidifying oceans that threaten our shellfish industry. For all our lofty climate goals, this is where the rubber meets the road.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Kathy Cowles
1102 E Republican St
Seattle, WA 98102