

Re: PSE IRP, docket # UE-160918 and UG-160919
February 21, 2018

To the Commissioners:

PSE's IRP is a dangerous plan to continue using coal as long as possible, and to build more fossil fuel infrastructure to support moving to fracked ("natural" is a misnomer) gas.

I am not a scientist, but I trust scientists, and I have been learning as much as possible over the last couple of years about human-caused climate change. I am a trained Climate Reality Leader, and a volunteer with several environmental organizations. I am a mother, a teacher, and a PSE customer, and I will do whatever is necessary to NOT pay for more fossil fuel infrastructure. I want to go 100% renewable. I already pay PSE extra money each month to ensure that my energy consumption is replaced with 100% green renewable energy.

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- Puget Sound Energy is sacrificing Puyallup Tribal land, community safety, and customer money for a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Tacoma that we do not need.
- PSE plans to operate its Colstrip coal plant—the largest source of carbon pollution in the NW—until at least 2035.
- PSE intends to build over 700 MW of new fracked gas plants over the next 10 years and has already secured the permits necessary to begin construction.
- Instead of investing in renewable resources, energy storage, and other modern solutions, PSE is wasting \$1 billion of ratepayer dollars in coming decades on "Energize Eastside" – an obsolete and unsafe transmission line through Eastside neighborhoods that only benefits the company's bottom line.
- PSE needs to commit to full decarbonization on an accelerated timeline, beginning with a full life cycle analysis of the greenhouse gas impacts of their entire energy portfolio, including methane leakage.

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. Further, PSE has shown it is determined to focus on gas, despite the fact that wind and solar are cheaper, and progress in storage has made it clear that we can go 100% renewable right now.

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). This is not what the majority of customers want: we want clean, renewable energy. And we 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. We can learn from 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 is worse than coal for the environment when methane leaks, water and energy use, and extraction site devastation are taken into account. And we must consider negative health impacts to those of us living near these extraction and refining sites, proven in statistics about asthma and lung disease.

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 air quality for everyone, landslides, flooding and drought caused by weather extremes, reduced snowpack and low stream flows, and [acidifying oceans](#) that threaten our shellfish industry, our fish runs, and our iconic Southern Resident whales.

It is our moral responsibility, yours and mine, to be stewards of this earth, and to leave this world better, for the sake of future generations. Please do what is morally right and require that PSE do what is best for customers by retiring all coal units by 2025, by NOT building any gas infrastructure, and by investing in wind and solar to meet our needs going into the future.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Nancy Shimeall

6634 159th Ave NE

Redmond, WA 98052