**Public Email Comments & Questions**

Reply comments are included where related to resource planning, comments/questions not related to resource planning were directed to other departments within Avista.

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| **Email Comment** |
| Hi James,   I really appreciated your meeting today, though I have not heard this detail before on this kind of subject related to Avista.  I was taken by surprise when I saw the last slide about what options were purposely not included last year in the Integrated Resource Plan.  You asked the audience about what changes might be considered, and I needed some time to think.   At least three of the four items need consideration.     For instance, not including renewables outside of Washington seems illogical.  The transmission system is allowing exchange of electric generation from Washington hydro across huge distances by way of the HVDC line from Celilo to LA.  Californians pay about 32 cents per KWH (according to Bing search), and we pay about 9 cents, causing an imbalance that will not continue.  California may presently have no generation we need or want to pay for, but it does exist.  And they certainly want our power, which will affect long-term planning.   Not considering nuclear power is not environmentally sound or consistent with CETA.  While it may not seem good for the price and other social and physical considerations, it certainly is appropriate with the water and land resources we have at Hanford Reach.  Nuclear is a clear choice for reducing GHG emissions.  It will provoke controversy, just like all proposals.   I understand the aversion to community solar, but I don't agree with it.  Community solar has more benefit because it demonstrates how people can work together to reduce their carbon footprint.  As an educational tool it helps young people and students see one viable way to reduce climate change.  Without that hope our future citizens feel less secure with negative attitudes in today's world.  This works especially well when panels are installed in view on schools, community centers, and other public buildings.  Beyond the Equity metric is this sense of community and future opportunity.  I know you don't want another responsibility required by the Office of Future Wellness.  Please reconsider participating as a partner, not just a connector, in Community Solar.  Clallum Public Utility District is applying directly for low-income community solar grants from WSU's Energy Program that pay for 100% of the installation.  These are tax credits, to be sure, and they may not fit with Avista's financial situation.   Thanks again for the opportunity to comment.   Bill Garry  |
| Avista folks,Staff has some feedback regarding the scenarios, and climate sensitivity analysis of the last two electric TAC meetings. Looking forward to discussing on Thursday! 1. Staff strongly recommends that Avista rely on the RCP 8.5 scenario year-round, instead of Avista’s proposal to use RCP 4.5 in the winter months and RCP 8.5 in the summer months. Having taken into account Avista’s reasoning that it is concerned about the 8.5 scenario potentially not accounting for extreme winter cold snaps, Staff believes there can be other ways to work with this concern such as finding an RCP 8.5 model that includes some degree more of that volatility.  Staff highlights that the NW Power and Conservation Council relies on RCP 8.5 for its climate modeling. For the purpose of consistency, Staff urged all utilities during the 2022/2023 IRP cycle to adopt RCP 8.5 as their climate modeling standard. Barring empirical evidence indicating the future will deviate from RCP 8.5, Staff strongly urges adoption of RCP 8.5 to promote regional consistency in analysis.
	1. WAC 480-90-238 (2) (b) "Lowest reasonable cost" means the lowest cost mix of resources determined through a detailed and *consistent analysis* of a wide range of commercially available sources.
		1. Staff believes that using two different climate futures within the same year for planning purposes would not be a consistent analysis. Staff is open to discussing other ways we can agree on to address Avista’s concerns with winter cold snaps, but using two different climate futures in each year isn’t a reasonable approach from our perspective.
2. Staff would like to briefly provide some follow-up to our discussion on Thursday, the 28th. Staff requested that Avista consider a “plausible worst case scenario” that would drive customer flight and, among various variables to consider, listed RCP 4.5 among the variables that might accelerate the possible positive feedback loop noted by Staff. In response, Avsita staff noted that Avista was considering a similar scenario and listed RCP 8.5 as the climate change pathway associated with this scenario.
	1. Staff recommends that Avista includes RCP 4.5 in a “plausible worst case scenario”. Please consider the following table contrasting RCP 4.5 and 8.5 and impacts Staff anticipates:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RCP 4.5** | **RCP 8.5** |
| Colder | Warmer |
| More Heating Degree Days | Fewer Heating Degree Days |
| More Demand from Customers | Less Demand from Customers |
| More CCA compliance instruments acquired | Fewer CCA compliance instruments acquired |
| More bill impacts on Customers | Fewer bill impacts on customers |
| Greater fiscal pressure for customers to leave gas service | Less fiscal pressure for customers to leave gas service |
| Less stable customer counts for gas service | More stable customer counts for gas service |

* 1. If Avista has other justifications for why RCP 8.5 presents a less stable future Staff would be happy to discuss those concerns at a future TAC or inter-staff meeting.

**Molly Morgan** (she/her) |
| Avista IRP team,I am an Avista Electric customer in Post Falls ID.As Avista has requested public comment, I read through the DRAFT TAC2 presentation. In brief, I think you should abandon pursuit of "green" and "equitable" activism and focus on minimizing cost to the end user.I am appalled by the focus on "Renewable Energy" "Clean Energy" and reducing "Greenhouse Gas Emissions".CO2 emissions have improved the climate for both humanity and the ecology. If anything we should be increasing greenhouse gass emissions, not reducing them. I realize much of this is required by regulatory bodies, but you should be loudly pushing back against this foolishness, not acquiescing quietly.I am also deeply offended and alarmed by the insistence on "equity" which amounts to illegal discrimination. Annette Brandon's "Overview of Equity" attempts to equivocate on this topic by equating "Equality" with "Equity" but even this fails on slide 4 where Equity is defined as "Equality in outcomes" in the Venn diagram. This is the kind of resentful excellence-hating thought that killed over 100,000,000 people in the past 70 years in the failed and failing communist states.Since these champions of equity are such foes of competence, it comes as no surprise that Annette has mistyped "Transition fo Clean Energy", has chosen the word "exasperate" when she clearly meant "exacerbate", and has used the misspelling "PARTICPATION" not once or twice, but fully four times. If equality of outcomes is important to Avista, I would expect similar grammatical gaffes elsewhere, but I digress.You are playing with fire here. It would behoove you to quietly cut all ties with the "Equity Advisory Group" and all such ideologically motivated organizations and to comply as recalcitrantly as legally possible with top-down regulatory requirements.The public utilities should be focused on delivering reliable power at the lowest net cost, without engaging in environmental and social activism. It is true that emissions have some costs associated with them, but they are trivial compared to the cost of "green energy". Enmeshing "equity" concerns in your planning will only lead to grief. Power generation and grid stability is a difficult enough technical challenge on its own. Distracting your organizational focus will only lead to an inability to effectively complete your job, from which failure the poorest and most vulnerable will suffer the most.For example, poor people die when power fails in the winter. Yet the utility Planning Margin (page 40, labeled "32" of the "DRAFT 2025 IRP TAC2 Presentations 1-30-24" document) forecast shows much slimmer margins in the future, both in winter power generation and overall, in conflict with the margin planning stated by the IRP just a year ago (page 206 labeled 9-15 of the "2023 Electric IRP Final w cover" document) showing consistent wintertime planning margin moving forward. If you think this is all so much scare-mongering, I merely note that the actual reported margins for the latest three semiannual reporting periods (10%, 13%, and 15%) have fallen far below the forecast margin (39%) and are lower even than the lowest margins projected in the future (17%). It appears all it would take is one bad winter and the poor will be very equitably freezing to death while those with foresight keep warm burning wood (which, if it makes a difference, is a far "dirtier" fuel even than coal).Speaking of "clean" energy, I hope I have made it clear that I am in complete opposition to the notion that CO2 is somehow dirty. However, I grant for the sake of argument that "a transition to clean energy" (or perhaps "transiton" as Brandon might have it) is the goal. With that concession, I find it completely baffling that the only mention of the cleanest, most reliable, safest, and cheapest source of energy is at the very end of the document. Whose unserious, unscientific, kindergarten-level, self-loathing, luddite idea was it to state off-hand "No nuclear energy" as if this was a reasonable assumption? The question is rhetorical. It was, no doubt, a politician.As to the "Affordability Initiative", it's all very nice sounding to forgive "Arrearage" but what this actually amounts to is wealth redistribution under the guise of compassion. If you really wanted to make power more affordable, actually lower your costs and prices for all of your customers. As it is, you are effectively engaging in discriminatory pricing which, I state once more, is totally illegal.Equity is a far greater danger to the poor than CO2 emissions and climate change. Your job as a utility is to make power cheap and reliable. Focus on that, and the rest will follow.Respectfully,Paul Spooner P.E. |
| Hi John,   Attached are some comments I wanted you to see.  These are a little drastic, but I am concerned that all of us need to better understand the impending catastrophes with some of the "tipping points" approaching.  Especially the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation possible collapse, and the loss of Antarctica and Greenland glacier ice.  This is all difficult to convey or to predict with certainty, and I appreciate your efforts in planning.   Thanks for the opportunity to comment.   Bill Garry Here are some comments on the April 9, 2024, Avista IRP TAC meeting which talked about climate change and climate modeling. I am concerned that using the worst case RCP 8.5, or “business as usual” case, for predicting energy demands and required loads is ignoring the massive impacts that warming of 4-5 degrees Celsius by 2100 would have on the whole world's civil order. We had a simple fire possibly set by a malfunctioning light pole (Medical Lakes, 2023) cause huge destruction and strife. Large-scale migration to avoid impossible living conditions may affect millions, if not billions, of people within 25 years. If Washington State is more favorable for surviving than Bangladesh (which actually might be completely flooded by 2100) or Mexico City (which may have no more water by 2050) we will see more pressure for more than just “affordable housing”.Simple economics also shows how our cheap electricity will change to expensive as Californians now pay 32 cents per kilowatt-hour and we pay 10 cents. Better transmission lines will also mean better competition as well as better supply. The Pacific Intertie already exists from Celilo to Los Angeles. I realize the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) weaves a web of confusion with its RCP's and SSP's. They have not been successful explaining what is really a difficult and impossible job to predict the future. And I understand Avista's predicament in using that information. You need to use the best available methods. The IRP planning time frame is just two-three years, and 25 years ahead is impossible. I think it would be good to tell people that the realities of climate change are not predictable, but the best guesses by knowledgeable scientists say we face huge problems that will take large investments in production, transmission, and securing our energy supplies. Conservation is by far the cheapest and most desirable first effort. This may be against the direction of stockholders, but Avista is a Public Utility.Following are a few quotes:Dr. Richard Moss said in 2010 in the periodical *Nature*:“RCP8.5 cannot be used as a no-climate-policy reference scenario for the other RCPs because RCP8.5’s socioeconomic, technology and biophysical assumptions differ from those of the other RCPs.”[Dr Glen Peters](https://cicero.oslo.no/en/employee/30/glen-peters), research director at [CICERO](http://www.cicero.uio.no/en/employee/30/glen-peters) in Norway, tells Carbon Brief:“With the benefit of hindsight, the ‘[new scenario framework](https://www.nature.com/articles/nature08823)’ (SSP/RCPs) did not function as planned. The integration between climate models and IAMs (RCPs and SSPs) never really happened; the RCPs were only intended to be a short-cut, and merged with SSPs back in 2012, but it is 2019 and we are only now seeing integration, albeit somewhat limited. At this point I think only a vanishingly small number of modellers on both climate and energy understand the background on why SSPs and RCPs were even developed, and that has led to deep misunderstandings. |
| Hi John,  I attended the TAC meeting yesterday on behalf of Renewable Northwest (RNW). Thanks for all the info - it was great to hear about the ways Avista is incorporating equity into planning and practice. I'm emailing Avista for two reasons: first, to offer some thoughts on the overall TAC process to facilitate deeper engagement, and second, to provide some feedback on the storage technologies conversation from the first TAC meeting. 1) RNW finds it helpful that the company sends the slides before the meeting so TAC members can be prepared. In addition, RNW thinks it would be helpful if Avista could highlight the specific topics/questions they are asking us to weigh in on both in advance of the meeting and in a brief summary after the meeting. That way it's quite clear what the company is looking for feedback on, and people can provide comments during the meeting or after in writing. 2) RNW understands that Avista is deciding which storage options to model and we'd like to suggest that the company model options for short, medium, and long duration storage, including lithium ion and sodium ion for short duration, pumped hydro and compressed air energy storage for medium duration, and metal air and flow batteries for long duration. RNW believes that modeling a broader set of commercially available storage options would be beneficial to the resource planning process. Thank you for your consideration. Katie-- **Katie Chamberlain** *(she/her)* **Renewable Energy Technical & Policy Analyst**Renewable Northwest(c) 347-901-2239[www.renewablenw.org](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.renewablenw.org%2F&data=05%7C02%7CJames.Gall%40avistacorp.com%7C7947d1c44c124d2bfde608dc22a49292%7C64c8d5efb6f743d8b84b8d044edc901d%7C0%7C0%7C638423337501135377%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=WpjPv%2FUCeG1KokcMhh8FdY9pvMDG30Qu8DojpgBQBUM%3D&reserved=0) |
| We received an online customer inquiry and we need your assistance in responding. Details of the inquiry are below. Please respond to this e-mail and let me know if you are able to contact this customer. If you would prefer that I contact the customer directly, please respond to this e-mail and provide me with the information the customer has requested.Case Number: 00271020Created Date: 3/19/2024Case Subject: [External] Re: Updates on Avista’s Transition to Clean EnergyName: Scott D DavisAddress: Email: Account Number: Phone: Contact Customer By: Case Description: Just because you call it clean energy does not make it CLEAN. WE NEED ALLL ENERGY SOURCES TO BE ENERGY INDEPENDENT. CLIMATE CHANGE IS A CON OR A SHAM AND YOU WANT TO DO SOLAR AND WIND BECAUSE IT IS CLEAN. CHINA IS NOT OUR FRIEND. THE WEF IS NOT OUR FRIEND. JOHN KERRY AND AL GORE ARE NOT OUR FRIENDS. WE HAVE HYDRO POWER WHICH IS CLEAN AND HAS AN AGRICULTURAL BENEFIT NUCLEAR ENERGY IS CLEAN AND ABUNDANT. CITIES WITH AN ABUNDANT WATER SUPPLY COULD HAVE A SMALL LOCAL NUCLEAR POWER PLANT WHCH WOULD CREATE LOCAL JOBS. WE NEED TO DEVELOP ALL THESE OTHER FORMS OF ENERGY BEFORE WIND AND SOLAR. IN SPOKANE WE HAVE SEASONS, SO ELECTRIC CARS AND BATTERIES DO POORLY IN THE COLD. ELECTRIC CARS ARE HEAVIER AND THEREFORE IF ALL THE CARS ARE HEAVIER THEN ROADS AND PARKING GARAGES WILL NEED TO BE ENGINEERED FOR THE INCREASED WEIGHT. I LIKE THE GAS AND DIESEL ENGINS AND THE EFFICIENT AND AVAILABILITY OF THE FUELS. I WOULD SUGGEST STOP SUPPORTING THE PROPAGANDA AND DEVELOP ALL ENERGY SOURCES. SINCERELY SCOTT D. DAVIS  |
| Hi James,   I really appreciated your meeting today, though I have not heard this detail before on this kind of subject related to Avista.  I was taken by surprise when I saw the last slide about what options were purposely not included last year in the Integrated Resource Plan.  You asked the audience about what changes might be considered, and I needed some time to think.   At least three of the four items need consideration.     For instance, not including renewables outside of Washington seems illogical.  The transmission system is allowing exchange of electric generation from Washington hydro across huge distances by way of the HVDC line from Celilo to LA.  Californians pay about 32 cents per KWH (according to Bing search), and we pay about 9 cents, causing an imbalance that will not continue.  California may presently have no generation we need or want to pay for, but it does exist.  And they certainly want our power, which will affect long-term planning.   Not considering nuclear power is not environmentally sound or consistent with CETA.  While it may not seem good for the price and other social and physical considerations, it certainly is appropriate with the water and land resources we have at Hanford Reach.  Nuclear is a clear choice for reducing GHG emissions.  It will provoke controversy, just like all proposals.   I understand the aversion to community solar, but I don't agree with it.  Community solar has more benefit because it demonstrates how people can work together to reduce their carbon footprint.  As an educational tool it helps young people and students see one viable way to reduce climate change.  Without that hope our future citizens feel less secure with negative attitudes in today's world.  This works especially well when panels are installed in view on schools, community centers, and other public buildings.  Beyond the Equity metric is this sense of community and future opportunity.  I know you don't want another responsibility required by the Office of Future Wellness.  Please reconsider participating as a partner, not just a connector, in Community Solar.  Clallum Public Utility District is applying directly for low-income community solar grants from WSU's Energy Program that pay for 100% of the installation.  These are tax credits, to be sure, and they may not fit with Avista's financial situation.   Thanks again for the opportunity to comment.   Bill Garry Hi Bill,Thanks for listening today. I think I was not clear the last slide was a scenario with the purpose was. The goal is to quantify (cost and resource selection) for a future scenario that only focuses on certain criteria (meaning only focusing on the customer benefit indicators). Since there is no requirements for the scenario, we are fishing for what assumptions we should include or not- so thank you for your feedback. You are the second person to mention to me we should add nuclear back, so that is helpful feedback.  Lastly, we don’t see this scenario as a viable plan, but rather a bookend to understand the cost impacts of only focusing on customer benefit indicators and not least cost planning- but is a requirement for us to analyze.  Also we did include community solar in our last IRP’s preferred resource strategy, but we have yet to implement any programs. I’m not sure when we will implement a program, but I have the feeling we’ll be asked to create one in the next few years.Thanks for participating and hanging in with us. James |
| Hi James,  Thanks for another great TAC meeting today. Kate Brouns (cc'd) and I were in attendance, and we wanted to follow up briefly about the load forecast. I think you mentioned that the load forecast doesn't include data center growth but that you were considering either including that in the high load growth scenario or in a separate scenario. I don't know that we have a preference between those two approaches, but definitely encourage some consideration of data center and large customer growth. Looking forward to continued updates and discussion on this front. Thanks, Katie-- **Katie Chamberlain** *(she/her)* **Renewable Energy Technical & Policy Analyst**Renewable Northwest(c) 347-901-2239[www.renewablenw.org](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.renewablenw.org%2F&data=05%7C02%7CJames.Gall%40avistacorp.com%7C28d516c50ff04731300b08dc58bc866f%7C64c8d5efb6f743d8b84b8d044edc901d%7C0%7C0%7C638482813958876221%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=ZbH%2FymDb5xMOnC0L8edbkuUaFpZOd95cy9oMXRKnv8o%3D&reserved=0)Thanks Katie, we likely will include a large customer in the forecast for the DRAFT IRP, if the customer pulls out before finalizing the IRP we’ll remove them for the final IRP. As far as data center what sizes are you seeing? We have heard of up to 200 MW, but as also around 50 MW. I was considering assuming 100 MW for the scenario.  Any thoughts?-James |
| Avista IRP team,I am an Avista Electric customer in Post Falls ID.As Avista has requested public comment, I read through the DRAFT TAC2 presentation. In brief, I think you should abandon pursuit of "green" and "equitable" activism and focus on minimizing cost to the end user.I am appalled by the focus on "Renewable Energy" "Clean Energy" and reducing "Greenhouse Gas Emissions".CO2 emissions have improved the climate for both humanity and the ecology. If anything we should be increasing greenhouse gass emissions, not reducing them. I realize much of this is required by regulatory bodies, but you should be loudly pushing back against this foolishness, not acquiescing quietly.I am also deeply offended and alarmed by the insistence on "equity" which amounts to illegal discrimination. Annette Brandon's "Overview of Equity" attempts to equivocate on this topic by equating "Equality" with "Equity" but even this fails on slide 4 where Equity is defined as "Equality in outcomes" in the Venn diagram. This is the kind of resentful excellence-hating thought that killed over 100,000,000 people in the past 70 years in the failed and failing communist states.Since these champions of equity are such foes of competence, it comes as no surprise that Annette has mistyped "Transition fo Clean Energy", has chosen the word "exasperate" when she clearly meant "exacerbate", and has used the misspelling "PARTICPATION" not once or twice, but fully four times. If equality of outcomes is important to Avista, I would expect similar grammatical gaffes elsewhere, but I digress.You are playing with fire here. 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It was, no doubt, a politician.As to the "Affordability Initiative", it's all very nice sounding to forgive "Arrearage" but what this actually amounts to is wealth redistribution under the guise of compassion. If you really wanted to make power more affordable, actually lower your costs and prices for all of your customers. As it is, you are effectively engaging in discriminatory pricing which, I state once more, is totally illegal.Equity is a far greater danger to the poor than CO2 emissions and climate change. Your job as a utility is to make power cheap and reliable. Focus on that, and the rest will follow.Respectfully,Paul Spooner P.E.Hi Paul,Thank you for your comments. As an Idaho customer, the equity provisions we are required to follow will apply to Washington portion of our plan, such as the creation of the equity advisory group and tracking of customer benefit indicators. The cost to comply with these requirements will also be assigned to customers in Washington state. Also, our load service in Idaho will have to follow least cost planning, therefore, costs of uneconomic “clean” energy will not be borne by customers in Idaho, if the Idaho Commission does not allow these cost to be included in rates.  As you may know we have to balance two very divergent states from a policy point of view, I am sure at some future point we will have separate plans for both Washington and Idaho customers. I do appreciate your comments and they will be included in the public comment section of the next plan. Thanks,James GallManager of Integrated Resource Planning |
| Hi John,  I attended the TAC meeting yesterday on behalf of Renewable Northwest (RNW). Thanks for all the info - it was great to hear about the ways Avista is incorporating equity into planning and practice. I'm emailing Avista for two reasons: first, to offer some thoughts on the overall TAC process to facilitate deeper engagement, and second, to provide some feedback on the storage technologies conversation from the first TAC meeting. 1) RNW finds it helpful that the company sends the slides before the meeting so TAC members can be prepared. In addition, RNW thinks it would be helpful if Avista could highlight the specific topics/questions they are asking us to weigh in on both in advance of the meeting and in a brief summary after the meeting. That way it's quite clear what the company is looking for feedback on, and people can provide comments during the meeting or after in writing. 2) RNW understands that Avista is deciding which storage options to model and we'd like to suggest that the company model options for short, medium, and long duration storage, including lithium ion and sodium ion for short duration, pumped hydro and compressed air energy storage for medium duration, and metal air and flow batteries for long duration. RNW believes that modeling a broader set of commercially available storage options would be beneficial to the resource planning process. Thank you for your consideration. Katie-- **Katie Chamberlain** *(she/her)* **Renewable Energy Technical & Policy Analyst**Renewable Northwest(c) 347-901-2239[www.renewablenw.org](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.renewablenw.org%2F&data=05%7C02%7CJames.Gall%40avistacorp.com%7C7947d1c44c124d2bfde608dc22a49292%7C64c8d5efb6f743d8b84b8d044edc901d%7C0%7C0%7C638423337501135377%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=WpjPv%2FUCeG1KokcMhh8FdY9pvMDG30Qu8DojpgBQBUM%3D&reserved=0)Hi Katie,Thank you for the ideas on the TAC meeting. I’ll add this to my list we’ve generated a few concepts we’ll bring back to the TAC soon.  As far a storage, we’ve not yet added Sodium-ion to our list yet, we are not opposed so we’ll look into it- if you have any sources for information please send them my way. CAES we dropped a while back and went with the liquid version, maybe we should look into it again. Thanks again for the ideas.James |
| May 13, 2024To: James Gall, John Lyons and TAC members.From: Dave Van Hersett, Retired Professional Engineer and Founding TAC MemberSubject: Reflections of six decades of utility service in PNWReference: Role of WA UTC, then and nowBACKGROUND: These are the reflections of an 85-year-old on the six decades of my career as a Professional Engineer in the electric utility industry here in the Pacific Northwest. I first went to work for The Washington Water Power Company (TWWPCO) the summer of 1960. A college student working with the mechanical maintenance crew. This was a hands-on experience on how the utility generation and distribution resources are kept operational. After graduation from WSU and a tour in the US Air Force during the Vietnam conflict rejoined TWWPCO as a Mechanical Engineer working on the construction of the Centralia 1400 MW coal plant, two gas turbine projects and the conception of and development of the 50 MW wood fueled power plant at Kettle Falls. Note that the 1400 MW centralia plant can run the city of Seattle by itself. For your prospective, it takes one 100 car train of coal to provide the energy to run Seattle for a day. In 1980 I left regular pay checks to develop 5 – 20 MW wood fueled power plants in Pacific Northwest sawmills. Next co-founded Northwest Energy Services, Inc. to install energy efficient improvements on college campuses, hospitals, schools, and grocery store chains. Measured actual savings and sold these savings to utilities in PNW, mostly Bonneville Power Administration.WASHINGTON STATE UTILITY COMMISSION (WUTC) MISSION STATEMENT EVOLUTIONThese six decades of working in the Pacific Northwest utility industry gives me a unique view of how the WUTC has changed its mission over the years. The Mission Statement for the WUTC is: TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE OF WASHINGTON BY ENSURING THAT INVESTOR UTILITIES ARE SAFE, EQUITABLE, RELIABLE AND FAIRLY PRICED. Over the years the appointed Washington Commissioners have modified their actual mission from representing the customers interests to that of implementing the political programs dictated by the current administration. They implement their desires on the investor utilities by controlling the rate increases they authorize. If the investor utility does not go along with their program, then the rate increases are withheld. In this manner we now have amateurs running our electric and natural gas utilities instead of professional engineers trained and educated in the development, design, installation, and distribution of electric and natural gas energy resources. We now see that investor utilities are now selecting more expensive generation options instead of selecting generation resources that are equitable to all customers, reliable 24 hours per day, and fairly priced. The utilities have replaced 2 – 3 cent per kwh fossil fueled generation like Centralia with green 6 -8 cent per kwh wind and solar generation. These green resources require natural gas (another fossil fuel) generation to back-up the wind and solar generation when these green resources cannot meet the customers loads. Natural gas is a energy resource that comes out of the ground and does not need a manufacturing process as compared to coal and nuclear to generate electric power. Natural gas is the lowest cost fossil fuel energy resource. The result of green generation has created a huge demand for limited natural gas resources driving up the price of natural gas two to three times more than the historical price. We now have amateurs dictating the operation of utilities rather than the professionally trained engineers and experts managing and running the utilities.For instance, how much wind generation is needed to replace the 1400 MW coal plant at Centralia that could provide electric service to Seattle. It would require seven wind mills per mile from Seattle to Spokane, some 300 miles. This would mean the construction and installation of some 2100 wind generators along with the needed new transmission lines to gather this electric energy for delivery to the customers. Note that this green resource would only work when the wind is blowing. Also note that solar only works when the sun is shining.The result we are now experiencing higher energy rates of all kinds for all investor utility customers. In addition we have more forest fires that create orders of magnitude of more emissions that cover the whole state at times, and less reliable generation resources to meet the needs of the investor utilities customers. The most recent Washington Utility Commion subsidy program, as a result of their caused higher utility rates, is to have the investor utility, Avista, identify “disadvantaged” customers and provide them with funds to offset the higher cost of electric services. These funds will be taken from the existing Avista customers by raising their rates to pay for this subsidy. This is not a fairly priced service to all customers. It is just another way to tax citizens to pay for the implementation of political objectives rather than provide equitable, reliable and fair pricing. It is also another way to get more citizens on the payroll of the government to get more votes. Note that Avista’s electric rates historically are among the lowest in the nation due to Avista and Washington Water Power’s actions in the past. This too is changing in the near future.HOW TO GET BACK TO REALITYSo how can we get back to having professionals operate utility systems and eliminate the political influence on our most needed resource, electrical and natural gas energy service to its customers.Solution 1: APPOINT COMMISSIONERS THAT HAVE EXPERIENCE AND A STAKE IN THE SERVICE AREAS UNDER THEIR JURISDICTION. Change the selection process by removing the appointments by the current political occupants of the state government. We surely do not need a commissioner from California to direct how we obtain our energy resources here in the Pacific Northwest.Solution 2: CHANGE THE BUSINESS MODEL OF THE INVESTOR UTIITY TO THAT OF A PUBLIC UTLITY ORGANIZATION. This would remove the utility customers out from the jurisdiction of the WUTC. This can be accomplished by a vote of the customers to form a public utility.The WUTC has changed their objectives under the guise of “environmental goals” as lobbied aggressively by the special interest groups (the one percenters) in the absence of input from the actual customers. These special interest groups came to the TAC meetings with their plans only to be rejected by the utilities based on the input from their TAC members. So, these special interest groups (the one percenters) then went to the state legislature and were able to pass legislation that required the utilities to adopt higher cost energy resources and resources that created more pollution for the state. These one percenters also were successful in passing legislation changing the way we manage our forests to provide fuel for forest fires rather than to produce products for mankind, like lumber for affordable housing. Timber is like other crops, is used to support mankind’s needs. When I was is high school the world population was 2 billion, now it is 7 billion. We need lumber products to provide housing and paper and other products made from trees. The result is that our state is now having more expensive energy resources for our businesses and customers, reducing their competitive position in both the domestic and international market place. Note that businesses are leaving WA state to find a more friendly business environment, like Boeing.NOW LET’S LOOK AT THE AVISTA UTILITY’S ROLE FOR ITS CUSTOMERSWhen I worked for WWP the overriding mission was to provide the best and lowest price energy resources for its customers. Over the years their mission has evolved to that of what they have to do to comply with the dictates of the WUTC. This enabled the utility to provide compensation to its investors. The customer biased mission in the 60’ s and 70’s brought about low cost-hydro, coal generation and biomass fueled generation. These generation resources were the result of detailed engineering studies and environmental benefits. Their long-term impact to the customer rates were significant to keep their rates among the lowest in the nation. This gave our business and economy an advantage over those states and countries with higher energy costs. In recent years Avista Utilities has gone along with the demands of the WUTC to insure approvals of their rate increases. Avista has no market risk as their market is held in place by the WUTC. Even so the utility executives in recent times have enjoyed a ten-fold increase in their compensation. At the same time Avista has used the combined strength of the 300,000 plus customers to provide the strength to finance the acquisition of other utility systems and investing in real estate. Avista should be focused on using their customer strength to provide reliable and low-cost energy services. Instead, they are installing higher cost and less reliable wind, solar generation and shutting down low-cost fossil fuel generation per the dictates of the WUTC. Just what do us customers get from the higher priced Avista management other than higher rate increases and less reliable electrical and higher priced natural gas service?The utility could have gone to the State Supreme Court to challenge the changing role of the utility commission. This would have been good for the customers and maybe not good for Avista and its investors.WASHINGTON STATE COMPETIVE POSITION HAS DETEORIATEDNow lets look at our state’s competitive position in the domestic and international market place. There are about 2400 coal fired coal plants in the world today. China has 950 coal plants and is building 121 new coal plants. India has 285 coal plants and is building 39 new coal plants. The USA has 200 coal plants and is building 4 new plants. Just how much impact on the world pollution will shutting down one coal plant in Washington state impact the world pollution? The new Washington State environmental laws have also reduced the management and harvesting of timber in our state. The result is growing trees to produce fuel for forest fires instead of products for mankind. When I was in high school in the 50’s the summers were spending time at the lake water skiing, etc. Smoke from forest fires was an unusual event. Now we have smoke from forest fires covering the entire state of Washington several times a year. Today we have fires that destroy property and kill our citizens because of the armatures now dictating how to run our forests. We need to revert back to the forest management practices of the 50’s and 60’s to eliminate statewide pollution and produce timber products for our citizens and export products to the nation and the world. These recent green forest management practices have made ghost towns of 13 towns in the vicinity of Spokane and the loss of employment of some 30,000 people. To offset the tax revenue of this loss economic businesses, the state has increased its taxes to provide for the ever-growing government payrolls. Note the price of gasoline for one.FAILING TO MEET EVER INCREASING POPULATION GROWTHAs I have observed during these 60 years of reflections working in the utility industry, my hope is that we return to time when we had technically trained personnel running and managing our greatest resource, energy. Water and energy are the two most important resources that our customers and citizens need to meet the needs of our ever-expanding population. When I was in high school in the 50’s the world population was 2 billion. The world population today is 7 billion. Today we have many in the world going hungry and no water. To provide food, water and shelter for the ever-increasing population we have to carefully manage and optimize our limited resources. Letting the special interest groups, the one percenters, call the shots is turning our state and businesses backwards, increasing pollution and mismanaging our limited resources. The politicians of today seem to be more interested in getting reelected rather than serving the best interests of the people they represent.OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM IS FAILING TO KEEP UP WITH WORLD COMPETITONOur education system has also lost its way, we now have to get our technically trained personnel from around the world rather than from our own states and nation schools. Just compare the names of the doctors on the hospital directories from the 60’s to that of today. I am lucky to be able to retire and enjoy my grandchildren and golf with friends. My wife of 62 years and I have been blessed with four children. They include two engineers, a school teacher and a business owner and six grandchildren.GOOD BYE, I TRIED MY BEST, HOPE YOU WILL TOOThere are ten veterans in my extended family. We know the price of freedom and the risks of not speaking up to those taking our rights for their benefit.Good bye and good luck, Dave Van Hersett, senior citizen. |