

## Higgins, Joni (UTC)

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**From:** Ben Earle <ben.earle@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 13, 2013 10:57 PM  
**To:** UTC DL Records Center  
**Subject:** 2013 Integrated Resource Plan, Dockets UE-120767 and UG-120768

Dear Commissioners,

I am contacting you as an individual with a great interest in Montana. As you know, Puget Sound Energy (PSE) is the single largest owner of the Colstrip coal-fired power plant in Eastern Montana. As an aging coal-fired power plant, Colstrip has several environmental and public health issues that the WUTC should take into consideration when reviewing PSE's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP).

It's well known that Colstrip's waste-water impoundments have been leaking and contaminating the underlying aquifer for decades. This has had adverse impacts on water quality and agriculture in the area, and recently triggered a \$25 million settlement with 57 affected residents. As you are well aware, the problems of coal ash contamination are a national problem, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is poised to release public health safeguards regarding coal ash. The costs of complying with these public health safeguards should be calculated into PSE's IRP.

PSE should also conduct a full and adequate accounting of the full range of costs associated with complying with air quality regulations such as potential SO2 non-attainment costs, compliance with the Regional Haze rule, and the new federal air toxics rules.

Montana has an abundance of clean and renewable energy sources that create good jobs for our state. These resources could also be valuable for Washington utilities' and ratepayers. For example, Montana's abundant wind energy resource would complement Washington's wind energy. This is because Montana's wind energy peaks in the winter when Washington's wind has slowed and has a lower capacity factor. This balancing capability could help utilities like PSE incorporate more wind into their portfolio, reduce integration costs, and improve grid reliability. These advantages all would help reduce costs to ratepayers.

I appreciate you taking my comments into consideration. Thank you for your time.

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Ben Earle  
[ben.earle@comcast.net](mailto:ben.earle@comcast.net)  
5524 NE 30th Ave.  
Portland, Oregon 97211

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