

**From:** [Michelle McElhaney \(michellmt@aol.com\) Sent You a Personal Message](mailto:michellmt@aol.com)  
**To:** [UTC DL Records Center](#)  
**Subject:** Stop Puget Sound Energy's Sale of Colstrip  
**Date:** Sunday, December 22, 2019 8:46:01 AM

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Dear Washington UTC,

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to ask you not to approve the sale of Colstrip Unit 4 to NorthWestern Energy.

When our State passed 100% clean electricity legislation, lawmakers clearly expressed their intent to ensure the swift and orderly retirement of Colstrip, one of the region's largest polluters. That's why they specifically wrote that the State's utilities must be coal-free by 2025.

Montana-based NorthWestern Energy, on the other hand, has announced on multiple occasions that it intends to keep the plant open and running at least into the 2040s. PSE's proposed sale of Unit 4 could therefore significantly extend the life of the plant, which was on track to an orderly retirement when the Washington owners stopped buying coal in 2025. This transfer of ownership and continued pollution from coal is definitely not what lawmakers intended.

There are financial risks to ratepayers. The sale could lead to increased future costs to PSE customers by introducing uncertainty over which utility is responsible for the costs of cleaning up after groundwater contamination from coal ash ponds that have been leaking for decades. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality is in the process of producing a clean up plan, which is expected to cost the six owners of the plant up to \$700 million but in reality will likely be more. Determining legal liability for groundwater pollution becomes much more complicated if one owner is allowed to continue polluting longer than other owners. This potentially invites years of costly lawsuits, could put ratepayers at risk, and delays implementing a clean up plan.

Please do not approve the sale of Colstrip Unit 4.

Sincerely,

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