**COMMENTS ON PUGET SOUND ENERGY’S 2017 RATE CASE,**

**Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission Dockets UE-170033 & UG-170034**

 When I first heard that Puget Sound Energy wanted to raise rates, I thought it was to help them build a Liquid Natural Gas plant in Tacoma’s tide flats. I’d been reading about this plant, and the objections of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, who have lived in that place since time immemorial. I was surprised that PSE wanted to build this plant, because I naively thought they were embracing renewable energy. My husband and I saved for years to be able to afford solar panels, and then when my mother died and left me some money, we had our local electrician install as many as our roof would hold. Why? Because we are very worried about the effects of global warming, and we feel this generation has a responsibility to consider the health and quality of life of future generations. So why would PSE want to start from scratch now to build new superstructure to produce an outmoded and dangerous form of fuel?

 Right now, according to my reading and research, PSE’s energy sources are 14% coal, 35% gas, and 41% renewables. (I am disappointed to read that their coal plants in Colstrip are the 3rd or 4th largest polluter in the United States.) And I read that PSE’s current plan is to replace the coal with natural gas by 2045, rather than adding any more actual renewable energy sources. With the rate hike, PSE wants to generate money in part to phase out Colstrip plants one and 2 and improve 3 and 4, so as to continue to mine coal until the 2030 or later. PSE appears to regard natural gas as an “acceptable” fossil fuel, because burning it produces half as much CO2  as burning coal does.However, in an article printed in *Seattle Times* on August 8, 2017, a professor at Middlebury College points out that “It is doing nothing to slow climate change” because although it produces less CO2 when burned, if natural gas leaks into the atmosphere while being fracked, the unburned CO4 (meaning methane/ natural gas) enters the atmosphere and “traps heat about 80 times more effectively, molecule for molecule, than CO2. The point of this chemistry lesson is: if as little as 3 percent of natural gas leaks in the course of fracking and delivering it to the power plant through a pipe, then it’s worse than coal.” Surveys of leakage at fracking sites reveal rates up to 9 percent. This is the third report I’ve read by credible scientists pointing out that the CO4 being released accidentally is far worse than the CO2 and the quantity released in the past few years has been sufficient to cancel out the benefits we’ve accrued by releasing less CO2.

 Looking into the future I see only one plan that makes sense. That is to stop using ALL fossil fuels, preferably by 2025. As a person who has invested in the Earth’s future by installing solar panels, driving a Prius, limiting plane trips, and conserving household energy use, and as a long-time participant in PSE’s Green Power program, I would gladly pay higher rates if it meant closing down all the Colstrip plants by 2025, substituting renewal energy sources (solar, wind) for that 14% of power, and moving rapidly toward replacing all the gas use by 2030 if not sooner. I am a 21st century person who accepts the validity of science. I have no doubt that global warming is happening, and in my citizen science work at Vashon streams and beaches I have already directly observed habitat deterioration it has caused. We don’t know all the ramifications yet, but we do know that changing weather will destroy many species and cause huge problems for agriculture. We need as much margin of safety as we can manage. I do not want to pay for the implements of my descendants’ destruction.

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