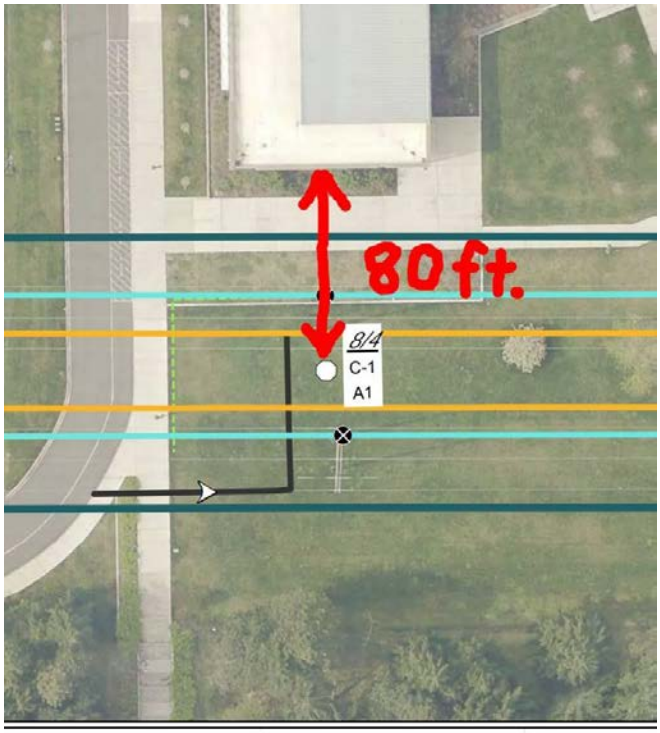
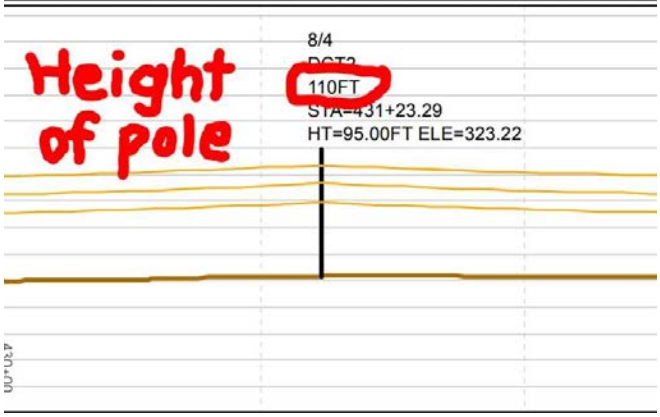
Comments on PSE's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP)

Docket number (UE-160918 and UG-160919)

I am specifically commenting on Chapter 8 of the IRP.

Safety 01/16/17





To the left is a diagram taken from PSE's permit application. It shows Tyee Middle School in Bellevue at the building at the top. The "80 ft." and corresponding arrow represent the distance from Tyee and the proposed pole location. That pole, which is 110 feet tall, is embedded 15 feet into the ground leaving a 95 foot tall steel pole only 80 feet from the school building. What is not made clear in the application is what material will be holding the pole in place. Many of the poles in the application show installation not with concrete, but with gravel fill. Questions remain as to what fill will be used at this site. If that is not troubling enough, take another look at the diagram--near the bottom of the page you see a turquoise-colored horizontal line. That line represents the gas pipeline.

The gas pipeline is approximately 140 feet from the school. More than 1,000 students attend Tyee Middle School. If PSE's pole were to be built so close to the school, every day those students attend school, they would be risking their lives. What is worse is that if something were to happen, they would die horrific deaths—being electrocuted, if the pole falls directly onto the school building, or possibly being burned alive by a pipeline fire or explosion, caused by arcing for example. (Please scroll down).

Here is another picture, taken from historylink.org.

http://www.historylink.org/File/5468

This picture shows the explosion that resulted from a pipeline rupture in Bellingham, Washington on June 10, 1999. This accident took the lives of three children. The Olympic pipeline was the pipeline that was ruptured, which is the same pipeline that runs next to Tyee Middle School.

The Olympic Pipeline is fifty-years old and aging. Construction that requires heavy trucks to transport debris and materials back and forth over buried, rusting pipelines for a period of months right next to a school should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. I have yet to see evidence that Energize Eastside is necessary. They have failed to provide data in a transparent manner, and in some instances have refused to release data at all, citing “security risks”.

The incident in Bellingham happened because initial construction resulted in a weakened valve. This pressure relief-valve failed, and no one knew. An Olympic pipeline worker that happened to be in the area reported the smell of gasoline, an hour after the valve failed. When a river of gas was discovered, the area was evacuated. One-and-a-half hours after the valve failed, the explosion took place.

Evacuation efforts likely saved more lives, but unfortunately, three children still died. It is unacceptable to me that we would knowingly sanction a scenario where more children’s lives were at stake, solely so that investors on another continent can profit.

In total, there are 13,000 children in schools that sit less than 600 feet from gas pipelines (some at high-pressure carrying jet fuel) along the utility corridor where PSE wants to build these proposed transmission lines for Energize Eastside.

In an era of climate change that repeatedly results in record lives lost around the world, we should do everything we can to protect children close to home. One thing that we can do is to not allow projects that put our children in peril. If there is a 1% chance that the accident in Bellingham could take place again, next to 1,000 Tyee students, we should not allow PSE to double that chance.

Please do not allow PSE to put our children at risk in a time where the world is already a treacherous place to live. Tell them “no” to higher rates in exchange for the possibility of more children dying. Thank you.

Cynthia Vautier