

Docket Nos. UE-190529 and UG-190530  
(Consolidated) - Vol. II

WUTC v. Puget Sound Energy

January 7, 2020



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BEFORE THE WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND, ) DOCKETS UE-190529 and  
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION, ) UG-190530 (Consolidated)

)  
Complainant, )

)  
vs. )

)  
PUGET SOUND ENERGY, )

)  
Respondent. )

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PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING, VOLUME II

Pages 20-85

CHAIRMAN DANNER, COMMISSIONER RENDAHL AND  
COMMISSIONER BALASBAS

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January 7, 2020

6:00 p.m.

Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission  
621 Woodland Square Loop Southeast  
Lacey, Washington 98503

REPORTED BY: TAYLER GARLINGHOUSE, CCR 3358

Buell Realtime Reporting, LLC  
1325 Fourth Avenue, Suite 1840  
Seattle, Washington 98101  
(206) 287-9066 | Seattle  
(360) 534-9066 | Olympia  
(800) 846-6989 | National  
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A P P E A R A N C E S

COMMISSIONERS:

DAVID DANNER, Chair  
ANN RENDAHL, Commissioner  
JAY BALASBAS, Commissioner

\* \* \* \* \*

1 LACEY, WASHINGTON; JANUARY 7, 2020

2 6:00 P.M.

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4 P R O C E E D I N G S

5  
6 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Good evening. Today is  
7 January 7th, 2020, and this is a hearing of the  
8 Utilities and Transportation Commission.

9 I'm Dave Danner. I'm Chair of the  
10 Commission. I'm joined by my colleagues, Commissioner  
11 Jay Balasbas and Commissioner Ann Rendahl. And this is  
12 the first of two public comment hearings in the Puget  
13 Sound Energy general rate case that was filed on  
14 June 20th, 2019, and these are Dockets UE-190529 and  
15 UG-190530.

16 On June 20th, 2019, PSE filed with the  
17 Commission a request to raise rates that it charges for  
18 both electric and gas service. For the electric  
19 service, the Company proposed an increase of 139.9  
20 million, that would be an increase of 6.9 percent to its  
21 revenues. For the average customer, that would be a  
22 bill impact of \$5.51 a month. For gas, the Company is  
23 proposing an increase of 65 million or 7.5 percent. For  
24 the average customer, that would be an increase of \$2.45  
25 per month.

1           General rate cases are basically like court  
2 trials. The Commissioners sit as judges in lengthy  
3 proceedings, and we hear testimony from the Company as  
4 well as from numerous formal parties to the proceeding,  
5 and those would be the UTC Staff, who operate  
6 independently of the Commissioners, the Public Counsel  
7 Office of the Attorney General, and the State's Public  
8 Counsel is here tonight, Lisa Gafken. So if anyone has  
9 questions about the case, Ms. Gafken is here to take  
10 your questions. And the Public Counsel office  
11 represents the interests of the residential customers  
12 and small business customers. We also have, as formal  
13 parties, large industrial customers, environmental  
14 groups, and advocates for low income citizens.

15           By law, the proceedings that we have take up  
16 to 11 months, and they generally involve thousands of  
17 pages, data spreadsheets, and testimony. The purpose of  
18 the public hearing tonight is to hear from citizens  
19 about the proposed rate increases, what impacts they'll  
20 have on individual households and businesses, and what  
21 changes you think might be warranted regarding your  
22 electric or gas service. We take seriously what you  
23 have to say, and it does inform our consideration in  
24 this proceeding.

25           Tonight, you will need to be sworn in before

1 you testify because this is part of a public proceeding  
2 of an adjudicatory proceeding. As I said, this is the  
3 first of two public proceedings that we're having to  
4 hear public comments. The next one will be January 22nd  
5 in Bellevue City Hall at 6:00 p.m., and then we begin  
6 our evidentiary hearing in the case with the formal  
7 parties on February 6th and 7th.

8           So without further ado, what I intend to do,  
9 unless my colleagues have anything they would like to  
10 say tonight, I'm going to start at the beginning of the  
11 sign-in list in the order, and -- and we will take your  
12 testimony in order. To save time, I would like to ask  
13 that those who are on the bridge line or in the room,  
14 can we swear you in as a group as opposed to swearing  
15 you in individually. So if you intend to testify, could  
16 I ask you to please stand and raise your right hand.

17           (All persons testifying sworn.)

18           CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much. You  
19 may be seated.

20           Okay. Let's start with Clayton Fleming, are  
21 you on the line?

22           All right. Kirt Butler?

23           MR. BUTLER: Yes, hi. Kirt Butler. I'm a  
24 resident in Kent, and based on the mailing that came out  
25 with the average percent change listed, it shows a 13.64

1 percent increase on average for the average household.  
2 That's pretty substantial. And then I look on the  
3 opposite side of this and there's entities that are  
4 getting quite a -- quite a nice reduction in rates. So  
5 that the -- I have a number of questions related to  
6 this.

7           There have been extensive housing increases,  
8 meaning the number of homes built in Kent have increased  
9 quite a bit over the past year. I believe upwards of  
10 500-plus units have actually been added just around our  
11 neighborhood. With that -- with the -- the potential  
12 increase in -- in use of electricity by those who have  
13 gone to LED lighting -- and then with this decrease on  
14 it looks like from various special interests that have  
15 been proposed to have decreases for their rates, it  
16 doesn't make sense to me that Puget Sound Energy has to  
17 increase residential rates at all, because the  
18 population that they are receiving money from has  
19 increased exponentially over the past few years.

20           I don't believe their costs to provide  
21 electrical power to those residents has increased  
22 exponentially. And, again, based on this mailing that  
23 came out, it shows an average increase really of 13.64  
24 percent for the general household if I understand the  
25 mailing correctly.

1 I don't see a rate increase as being needed.  
2 What I see being needed more likely is some improved  
3 management of costs at PSE.

4 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Thank you very  
5 much. Mr. Butler, I -- you had a number of questions.  
6 I want to make clear that this, tonight, the  
7 Commissioners don't take questions or answer questions.  
8 We -- we will take all questions as either rhetorical or  
9 we will refer them to parties who will get back to you  
10 then. And we have your information here I believe in  
11 the sign-up sheet, and -- and so in answer to your  
12 questions, I will ask the Public Counsel to -- to  
13 respond, and they'll -- they'll get back to you on  
14 questions that you have. But the overall gist of your  
15 testimony we have taken down and -- and we have got that  
16 recorded. So thank you very much.

17 MR. BUTLER: Great. I appreciate that.

18 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Okay. Marion Thrasher,  
19 are you on the line?

20 MS. THRASHER: Yes, I am.

21 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Okay. Would you like to  
22 testify?

23 MS. THRASHER: Yes, I would. I live in  
24 Renton, and I noticed again what the gentleman just  
25 stated, the increase is substantial, I -- and the

1 indicators as to why they're being increased are  
2 questionable.

3           Number one, it appears that -- hold on just  
4 a moment, please. It appears that the issue that we're  
5 dealing with here is solar, which indicates that there's  
6 a loss of revenue there. It's not an area that should  
7 be a concern of mine or any customer or anybody who's  
8 being serviced by PSE. Technology as far as  
9 self-service tools to allow the customers better  
10 interaction, again, I'm not really sure that a survey  
11 was done with the customers to indicate that they truly  
12 do need that particular type of assistance.

13           If those are the areas -- and, of course,  
14 the infrastructure of gas, but if they -- if those  
15 adjustments are based on those reasons, that's a  
16 significantly high percentage of increase, and I would  
17 strongly suggest as was spoke to you about certainly  
18 just recently, I think that you might want to talk about  
19 what's happening internally in term -- in terms of those  
20 who are monitoring the progress and -- and -- and  
21 success of PSE rather than putting an onus on the  
22 owners, homeowners. And those are my comments I would  
23 like to share with you today.

24           CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Thank you very  
25 much, and thank you for participating tonight.

1           John Brutton, Brottem? Yes, come forward,  
2 sir.

3           MR. BROTTM: Can I just speak through one  
4 of these mics here?

5           CHAIRMAN DANNER: Yes.

6           And for those on the bridge line, we can  
7 hear the clanking around, so if you can either mute your  
8 phone or -- or just quiet down a bit, then we won't have  
9 so much noise here. Appreciate it.

10          Go ahead.

11          MR. BROTTM: Yes, thank you.

12          CHAIRMAN DANNER: Is the green light on on  
13 your microphone?

14          MR. BROTTM: No, this is red. There we go.  
15 Okay. How's that?

16          CHAIRMAN DANNER: That's great. Speak in  
17 the microphone would be great.

18          MR. BROTTM: Yes. Thank you very much for  
19 the opportunity to address the UTC regarding concerns on  
20 these requests for rate hikes. I am a 40-year resident  
21 of the county, retired, and have been a client of PSE  
22 during that period of time. My concerns about the rate  
23 increase by mainly in the reason or reasons for that  
24 rate increase that I could see on the mail-out sheet  
25 where I saw this meeting posted, one of them is the need

1 to invest further in the technology -- and this is a  
2 quote -- (as read) technology systems such as  
3 self-service tools that allow customers to interact with  
4 PSE at their convenience.

5 To me that looks like additional efforts to  
6 eliminate the human element and the human interaction  
7 with customers, which is what I've experienced anyway.  
8 I've had two major episodes where I wanted to talk with  
9 PSE and was unable to get anywhere on those efforts.  
10 Those efforts really centered around damage sustained  
11 due to outmoded equipment that should have been repaired  
12 years before and also my concern regarding the public  
13 health safety of the systems and the personal safety of  
14 the individual homeowner.

15 And this was magnified in my -- from my own  
16 point of view with recent publication in The Wall Street  
17 Journal the 28th and 29th, Saturday -- Friday, Saturday  
18 Wall Street Journal in December of 2019. And on Monday,  
19 the -- I believe it was -- or Sunday, anyway, it was the  
20 30th, another point, and these focused on the  
21 healthcare -- or the safety issues that surfaced down in  
22 California with PSE weren't strictly related to the  
23 fires, but were related to the reasons that the fires  
24 occurred aside from the forest densities and the  
25 ripeness of the forest for forest fires, it was the

1 equipment that wasn't kept up and maintained.

2 Now, I can support these increases when I  
3 hear they're designed to improve the safety of the  
4 system, which I think is really an important issue  
5 that's overlooked, and it was in California too. I have  
6 tried to make copies of these for the Commissioners, but  
7 was unsuccessful today.

8 Anyway, the second reason that the request  
9 was made was to enhance the investment of the private  
10 equity owners in this private monopoly, which frankly, I  
11 I don't have any interest in supporting.

12 And those are my reasons for not supporting  
13 these rate increases. I don't think they address what I  
14 think is really a very significant public and private  
15 issue, which is maintenance of the equipment that they  
16 use. And I don't think I need to say any more.

17 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Thank you very  
18 much. Did you say you have some written remarks or  
19 written --

20 MR. BROTTM: I have material with me that  
21 I -- I tried to make these -- copies of these, but was  
22 unsuccessful. These were publications. (As read) Here  
23 are five fixes for PG&E. Safety experts say California  
24 utility needs to seize opportunity to make big  
25 changes --

1 CHAIRMAN DANNER: And what is the date of  
2 that and --

3 MR. BROTTM: This -- this paper is December  
4 30th, Monday --

5 CHAIRMAN DANNER: And what's the newspaper?

6 MR. BROTTM: -- 2019. It's The Wall Street  
7 Journal.

8 CHAIRMAN DANNER: The Wall Street Journal?

9 MR. BROTTM: And this is an extensive  
10 article on PG&E, (as read) Wired to Fail. This is from  
11 December 28th and 29th.

12 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Okay. So the court  
13 reporter has taken that information down, so we will be  
14 able to access those copies, so thank you for citing  
15 them. Thank you very much for being here.

16 Okay. I'd like to remind folks who are  
17 listening in on the telephone again that we can hear you  
18 talking, and it's getting a little noisy here. So if  
19 you could please -- if you have mute on your phone to  
20 mute the phone, otherwise just ask you to be as quiet as  
21 you can, please. Thank you.

22 All right. Chris Stearns? Good evening.

23 MR. STEARNS: Good evening. Thanks for the  
24 opportunity to address the board. I sit on a  
25 three-person board, and I know some of the struggles

1 that -- trying and work through things -- especially  
2 when you can't work with each other except in public  
3 meeting.

4           So I am here today to comment on this rate  
5 structure that is being proposed and ask for some  
6 considerations. First of all, the return on equity is  
7 being changed from what I understand from 9.5 to 9.8.  
8 When the company was taken over in 2009 I believe it  
9 was, first year I served, it was given I think a 9  
10 percent rate of return.

11           UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Speak up, please.

12           MR. STEARNS: It was a given 9 percent  
13 return on equity at that time, so it's risen gradually.  
14 I don't know anybody whose stock portfolio gets more  
15 than 4 or 5 on the average. Of course maybe their  
16 stocks go up over time. You have to consider that part  
17 of it. But PSE is upper end, very high rate of return  
18 on equity in my mind. It is a regulated entity. You  
19 guys decide that, but I'm just giving you some input  
20 about, you know, even the private utilities out there  
21 that are shareholder-owned and the stock market don't do  
22 this.

23           So one of the things that I see that PSE is  
24 lagging in is needs to focus more on its base charge for  
25 power. Fixed costs are often covered by utilities. I

1 know because I attend public community meetings. More  
2 and more by base charges because fixed costs don't go  
3 away. If you have a vacation home, you still have to  
4 have that power delivered there even if you're not  
5 there. And there are a growth of those kinds of things.  
6 I know in my utility there are. I run a water utility,  
7 but I know that that's what exists. And sometimes  
8 they're not really paying adequately to cover the costs  
9 of maintaining service.

10           And I think PSE's maintaining of service is  
11 somewhat remiss because we often see people coming in  
12 from Missouri, California to fix the utility over the  
13 phone, they don't know the system, and this really  
14 concerns the citizens of our county or in the further  
15 part of their area. We're not as close to Renton where  
16 most of their workers are located.

17           They do have Potelco down here, but I mean,  
18 their own employees aren't here in an emergency. Often  
19 they are not able to come because of the snow, sleet,  
20 whatever ice storm situation. And most recently, I  
21 think it was in 2012 was that situation in Thurston  
22 County. I think you remember that time.

23           And, you know, I'm concerned about where  
24 PSE's future generation is going to come from. They're  
25 purporting to be the largest utility. Certainly they

1 get a lot of gas from Canada, which they have ownership  
2 shared with the Canadians. I don't know how you  
3 regulate that if they're paying themselves. Up in  
4 Canada, the gas line, the resource up in Canada is  
5 vertically integrated conglomerate. Good luck  
6 regulating it.

7 But what I'm concerned about, I guess, that  
8 I'm concerned about is our future generation mix. They  
9 have contracts expiring in 2035 for public power, maybe  
10 off the PUD dams in Columbia, the separate mid Columbia  
11 dams. Other contracts are expiring, and they have no  
12 plans to -- they have nothing set to replace that  
13 generation. I don't know if they're going to get it off  
14 the spot market. I'm kind of wondering what they're  
15 doing.

16 So this is only 15 years from now, and I'm  
17 surprised that the utility's planning on its generation.  
18 Of course, the market changes as we all know, and a lot  
19 of things are influx, but there's no definitive -- for  
20 the largest utility in the state, there's no definitive  
21 place where this electricity is going to come from in 15  
22 years, and I'm concerned about that as a customer.

23 My utility depends on their power. When  
24 somebody cracks up a line nearby and then they don't pay  
25 for the damages because they claim it's a right of --

1 you know, act of God or something like that, they're not  
2 acting responsibility -- responsibly to other people  
3 that provide vital services like water to the  
4 communities around here, and I think people are figuring  
5 it out. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Thank you very  
7 much. Thank you for coming out tonight.

8 Lynn Larsen, not wishing to testify; is that  
9 correct?

10 MR. LARSEN: No.

11 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Okay. Stephon Shelley?

12 MR. SHELLEY: Yeah.

13 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Come forward, sir.

14 MR. SHELLEY: Yeah, I'm Stephon Shelly, and  
15 my wife and I live in the Yelm area, and we're under the  
16 Puget Sound Energy, and we've not been very happy with  
17 them. We're on a fixed budget, a low income -- low  
18 income fixed budget, and, you know, we heat with wood,  
19 we cook and dry clothes and -- and our water heater's  
20 all propane so that we're not using any of that  
21 electric. All of our lights are all LED. We do use  
22 electric to -- refrigerator and we have a well pump and  
23 a small freezer. But that doesn't constitute the amount  
24 of electricity that they say we're using.

25 And we have confronted them about these

1 issues, and they've only covered the basis legally so  
2 that they can get away with what they're getting away  
3 with. But there's no way we're using the kind of  
4 electricity, spending 3- and \$400 a month for -- for  
5 electricity that should not be. A lot of the guessing  
6 that they were doing for quite a few months was really  
7 out of line.

8           They -- they have just recently gone through  
9 a rate increase, and they have no business asking for  
10 another rate increase. If anything at all, they should  
11 be lowering their rates as they're already the most  
12 expensive power company or supplier in the state of  
13 Washington. And they -- our electricity hasn't been  
14 resolved and the issues have not been resolved even  
15 though we have complained to the Commission and we have  
16 complained to the -- the Puget Sound Energy, but they  
17 have not -- they have not properly answered the -- the  
18 issues that we're having with our -- with our  
19 electricity usage, which I know we're not using.

20           So I don't know what all is going on or why,  
21 but I'd like to get to the bottom of it, and I don't  
22 know who else to go to to ask about that either.

23           CHAIRMAN DANNER: Okay. So -- so let me  
24 ask. You have -- you have talked to our consumer staff?

25           MR. SHELLEY: Yes, I have.

1 CHAIRMAN DANNER: And how recently was this?

2 MR. SHELLEY: This has been going on for the  
3 last several months, probably six months or -- or more  
4 that we've been working with you guys as well as with  
5 the Puget Sound Energy. And we have had them come out  
6 and they did replace a meter that they said wasn't  
7 properly transmitting, so they were not able to get the  
8 readings off of that that they thought they should be  
9 getting.

10 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Okay. Well, we too will  
11 want to get to the bottom of this. It sounds like if  
12 it's -- if it's more recent, that might -- that  
13 investigation might still be open. Ms. Feeser is in the  
14 back. I'm going to ask you to give your information to  
15 her so she can follow up directly, and then I will ask  
16 her what's going on and we'll keep tabs on this. But we  
17 want to get to the bottom of it too. If you're getting  
18 billed improperly, that's very serious to us.

19 MR. SHELLEY: Absolutely believe that we  
20 are. It should not be this expensive.

21 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. We will look  
22 into this. We will -- I believe that my staff is  
23 already looking into this. We will -- we will follow  
24 up.

25 MR. SHELLEY: All right. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Okay. And thank you for  
2 coming out tonight.

3 Okay. Jane Doe? So, Ms. Doe, I have to  
4 ask, because this is an adjudicatory proceeding, if that  
5 is an alias source of a name, we're going to ask --  
6 we're going to need to have your -- your name.

7 MS. SHAW: I prefer not to give it.

8 CHAIRMAN DANNER: I don't have a counsel  
9 here -- or, Mr. Fukano?

10 MR. FUKANO: I believe for record purposes,  
11 you would need to give your name.

12 MS. SHAW: Okay. The last name is Shaw.

13 CHAIRMAN DANNER: And your first name?

14 MS. SHAW: I -- the first initial is D, and  
15 that is all that I am willing to provide.

16 CHAIRMAN DANNER: And you are a customer of  
17 Puget Sound Energy?

18 MS. SHAW: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right.

20 MS. SHAW: Okay. I have several issues.  
21 The investments and technology systems, I don't know too  
22 many agencies that require the customers to take care of  
23 that. I believe that should be taken care of out of  
24 their earnings, out of their revenue that they -- that  
25 they gain. The -- the brochure that we received said

1 that the customers pay for these returns in order to  
2 service debt expenses and provide the opportunity for  
3 shareholders to earn a fair return on their investment.

4           You know, I think PSE has had so many rate  
5 increases in the last few years that nobody's cost of  
6 living increase can even possibly come close to what PSE  
7 requests each time they request a rate increase. I'm a  
8 senior citizen. I try so hard to keep my electric bill  
9 down. I keep my temperature down to 59 degrees, I have  
10 had pneumonia four times just trying to keep it -- keep  
11 the electric bill down. I don't even use all the lights  
12 in my house. I don't turn on my porch light. I bake  
13 once a week on Sunday so all I have to do is microwave  
14 things throughout the week.

15           I try so hard to get my -- my electric bill  
16 down, but it seems like each year the increase that PSE  
17 is granted, the rates go up even though I'm using less  
18 electricity. I'm trying so hard to go down, down, down  
19 and the rates are going up, up, up. So there's no way I  
20 can ever even come out ahead on this game.

21           I think to provide the opportunity for  
22 shareholders to earn a fair return on their investment  
23 is just not right. I don't know how many Puget Sound  
24 Energy customers -- whoops -- are aware that a portion  
25 of their bill each month, whether they want it to or

1 not, goes to the Warm Fund to ensure that Puget Sound  
2 Energy will receive the payment for their -- for their  
3 charges from low income people. There is an area on the  
4 bill where you can check if you wish to contribute, but  
5 the portion that is automatically charged each customer,  
6 they have \$8 million available for use.

7 I tried to access some of that money for my  
8 elderly mother a while back, but the amount of money  
9 that you have to earn in order to be eligible to access  
10 assistance from that fund is so low that you would  
11 practically have to be homeless to do that, to get  
12 any -- any assistance. But they brag that they have so  
13 much money available to assist people with, but it's  
14 only at their discretion if you're practically homeless  
15 that -- that you need assistance.

16 So I -- I take issue with trying to conserve  
17 my energy usage when the woman on welfare up the street  
18 who has five kids has her windows hanging open, the  
19 lights are on all the time, and yet she gets assistance.  
20 And I'm sitting at home freezing, spending most of my  
21 time in my bedroom in bed to stay warm with no lights  
22 on, I have the battery-operated candles to try to  
23 conserve. To try to get assistance to weatherize my  
24 house, oh, yeah, you're going to pay for it. It's not  
25 really assistance. They're just going to work out a

1 plan that you can pay each month for them to come out  
2 and weatherize your house.

3 So, people, make sure that you know that  
4 you're helping to pay for other people's not being able  
5 to pay their bill. I really take issue with that.

6 Most appliances that we purchase these days  
7 are the energy conserving appliances, and it seems to me  
8 that we're being penalized for trying to conserve on  
9 energy. Increasing the levels of residential solar  
10 battery storage and electric vehicles. I had read  
11 something about PSE here not too long ago that because  
12 they weren't making as much money as they were used to  
13 making because everybody is trying to conserve energy  
14 and use the energy efficient appliances, that they had  
15 to increase rates to make up for that revenue. Not  
16 right. Not right.

17 I mean, the public -- we don't have an  
18 opportunity to even come out ahead again. That's just  
19 not fair. And I know it's not a matter of fairness, but  
20 PSE just -- they do whatever they want to do. I think  
21 we're still selling our energy to other states.  
22 Shouldn't we be taking care of our state, the residents  
23 in our state? We don't have the option of buying an  
24 appliance that's not smart -- or an energy efficient  
25 appliance, so we're buying the appliances that are

1 energy efficient. We're not seeing any return in that  
2 purchase because the rates are being increased.

3 I just think it's a shame that we live in  
4 Washington and we're giving our -- or selling our energy  
5 to other states. They're increasing the rates just  
6 about every year. Almost 8 percent yearly. I don't  
7 know anyone's checks who are -- that are able to keep up  
8 with that. My cost of living isn't that much. People  
9 who are low income, how do they even stand a chance?  
10 They make just barely above what PSE determines is  
11 acceptable for receiving assistance on their energy  
12 bill. Look at the homeless people. I mean, how do they  
13 have a chance even if they had a house? They wouldn't  
14 be able to afford their electric bill.

15 PSE is contributing to a problem. Oh, and  
16 the flyer back here says, (as read) The company must  
17 prove to the Commission that it requires additional  
18 revenue to provide safe and reliable service.

19 I don't think it's safe and reliable service  
20 when they're asking for -- to provide the opportunity  
21 for shareholders to earn a fair return on their  
22 investment. I'd like to make a fair return on my  
23 investment also, but PSE takes care of that. I try to  
24 cut back so that I don't have to give as much money to  
25 PSE. I'd like to be able to buy a nice meal once in a

1 while, go out for a dinner. I can't do that because my  
2 bill from PSE goes up even though my energy use -- usage  
3 goes down.

4 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Thank you very  
5 much for coming out tonight.

6 Jenny Hitch?

7 MS. HITCH: I have a question, but it sounds  
8 like you're not taking questions so...

9 CHAIRMAN DANNER: No, so I would refer you  
10 to Public Counsel.

11 MS. HITCH: Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN DANNER: So, Ed, on the line, I  
13 don't think we ever got your last name, but are you  
14 there?

15 MR. ROBERTS: They're muted right now.

16 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Okay.

17 MR. ROBERTS: And it looks like Ed is gone.

18 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Okay. How about -- trying  
19 to read this, Kirt Butler? Kirt, okay.

20 And Nathaniel Tillman?

21 MR. BUTLER: Yeah, hi, it's Kirt. I spoke  
22 earlier.

23 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Yes, thank you. You're  
24 down here twice, but, yeah, we got you. Thank you very  
25 much.

1 MR. BUTLER: All right.

2 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Mr. Tillman? All right.

3 Moving on.

4 MR. TILLMAN: Yeah, sorry about that. I was  
5 on mute.

6 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Okay. Great, go ahead,  
7 sir.

8 MR. TILLMAN: Yeah, I just kind of wanted  
9 to, I guess, piggyback on some of the things that have  
10 already been said here tonight, mainly being the Puget  
11 Sound Energy seeking a rate increase to essentially  
12 reward their shareholders. For working families and  
13 people, everyone else who is out here just trying to  
14 take care of their bills, I just see that as simply  
15 egregious, a slap in the face on being a customer of  
16 Puget Sound Energy. So I'm not going to be long-winded  
17 tonight, but I just wanted to add that to the record.  
18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Thank you very  
20 much, and thank you for calling in tonight.

21 All right. Bruce Wilkinson?

22 MR. WILKINSON: Sorry for my appearance.  
23 I'm a -- just got off work and digging in the mud all  
24 day, and --

25 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Quite a day for being

1 outside.

2 MR. WILKINSON: Right, yeah. And so --  
3 yeah, I -- I have a few concerns. I -- I am working --  
4 just to be up front, I am working on -- as a volunteer  
5 for a campaign to -- to make a public power -- Thurston  
6 County -- public power PUD in Thurston County. And  
7 so -- and there's reasons for that.

8 You know, I -- just to -- you know, just  
9 listening to other people's -- other people's, you know,  
10 concerns about their bills and stuff like that, my  
11 bill -- you know, my last bill said that I'm -- have a  
12 25 percent increase of energy use over like this time  
13 last year. And I'm like how could that -- how could  
14 that be possible? I mean, I live in a community house,  
15 I have like three other roommates, but, you know, we are  
16 just trying to -- we all just scrape by, you know what I  
17 mean?

18 It's not that easy out there. There's  
19 not -- there's not much help, you know. It's a rental,  
20 you can't get -- get any -- any of these deals of  
21 getting the -- you know, it's a cheap rental, so it  
22 doesn't have insulation very much. And we have  
23 baseboard heating, but we're not even -- you know, we  
24 don't turn it on.

25 So it's a -- it's amazing how much the --

1 the price is. You know, if they got rid of -- they're  
2 asking for an increase in the rate of return -- return  
3 on equity of the shareholder investments from 9.5  
4 percent to 9.8 percent. Well, they just shut down our  
5 local billing station. You know, and that's where I pay  
6 my bills. You know, I hate to say it, but it's like  
7 I'm -- I'm -- gotta wrangle up the -- the share of the  
8 bills from three other people who don't have, you know,  
9 much money and some people get paid in tips, you know,  
10 and so they're paying me with cash, and I'm running it  
11 down there. You know, I used to just run it down there,  
12 you know, every month and now I have to figure out how  
13 to -- how to go to the bank, put it in there, make sure  
14 I have the money, it's going to clear. And -- and it  
15 makes -- it makes it just that much more difficult for  
16 me to manage all of that sort of stuff.

17 I'm not -- I'm not the -- you know, I know  
18 some people who have all their bills ready and just  
19 automatically deducts and that's all fine and dandy,  
20 but, you know, that's not how it is for people who don't  
21 have a lot. And I don't understand why they have --  
22 they get a rate of return that's so high in general.

23 I mean, you know, I -- I guess -- you know,  
24 what's the rate of return on a savings account? It's  
25 like, what, .2, .3 percent? You know, I think an

1 electric monopoly, it's privately owned should be able  
2 to -- you know, it should be like this -- the return on  
3 a savings account or a return on a long-term bond, you  
4 know. What's the rate of return on a long-term bond  
5 that -- you know. It should be like the sort of thing  
6 that -- that -- I think there -- the people -- the  
7 shareholders, the people who own the Puget Sound  
8 Holdings, you know, are they going to throw their -- you  
9 know, their shares in the trash because they're making,  
10 you know, half a percent?

11 I mean, and there's been times in recent  
12 years when people have -- people bought negative returns  
13 on bonds, you know, negative percentage rating on --  
14 because it was a -- it was a safe investment, you know.  
15 So I -- you know, I think we could bring it down  
16 drastically. I did notice that the Public Counsel says  
17 that they want to reduce the rate from 9.5 to 8.85  
18 percent, and they've also recommended the rate decrease  
19 of \$36 million, which, you know, I am glad to hear that.  
20 I think it can go much lower, though.

21 That's a -- one of the reasons I think that  
22 is because I was part of the public power campaign in  
23 Thurston County 2012. There were public power campaigns  
24 in 2008 in three counties. You know, they spent, you  
25 know, according to the PDC about almost a million

1 dollars in 2008 defeating those -- those three. They  
2 were -- they spent six hundred -- around \$650,000  
3 according to the PDC of our -- of our money on trying to  
4 defeat it in 2012. It was the most ever spent on a  
5 countywide election by -- you know, about -- I think the  
6 most spent before that was a hundred thousand dollars  
7 for a commissions race.

8           So it was -- it was a huge amount, and you  
9 know what the PDC doesn't count was PSE's  
10 self-promotion. At every -- every event in -- in  
11 Thurston County for the -- for the entire spring and  
12 summer, Puget Sound Energy had to stand there just  
13 talking about how great it was, how green it was, how  
14 corporate, how responsible it was. That doesn't get  
15 measured in the PDC reports, right, because they're  
16 just, you know, hey, we have to promote ourselves, we're  
17 a business that doesn't have any competitors, but for  
18 some reason they have to do ads saying how great and  
19 green and wonderful they are and responsible.

20           Well, I don't buy it. And if they've got  
21 enough money to throw at things like that, then they  
22 should get rate decreases. They should get -- their --  
23 their profits are too high. I -- you know, if they're  
24 giving away things like this -- election year, this is  
25 just a Puget Sound Energy little light, flashy light,

1 you know, they just toss these away at every little  
2 event in town. They're just already starting doing that  
3 right now. Last time they gave away little shower heads  
4 and light bulbs for free. They haven't done -- they  
5 haven't done it since then, they just happened to do it  
6 the year we were running a campaign against them to  
7 bring in public.

8           So, you know, if they've got money to burn  
9 on stuff like that, then that's -- that's -- you're  
10 all -- you all should be investigating that. And you  
11 should calculate is this where -- where ratepayers'  
12 money should go? And I don't think it is.

13           And, you know, another thing is how many --  
14 how many legislators do they give money to in their  
15 campaign fund? I mean, I've heard in the 22nd District  
16 as soon as you become a -- you get elected or something  
17 like that, you just automatically get like 500 -- \$500  
18 from PSE. You know, it's like welcome to being a public  
19 official, here's \$500 from PSE for your next campaign.

20           I mean, I've heard -- other people have said  
21 that they have given money to over 600, 600 people's  
22 political campaigns. I mean, that's -- that's a lot  
23 of -- that's a lot of money to spend, and what's it  
24 being spent on, you know, and where do they get that  
25 money? And if we want to ever have PSE -- there's a way

1 to make PSE actually something that -- that like at the  
2 end of the day, I wouldn't try and, you know, run  
3 against -- and that's by bringing their -- their --  
4 their profit rate to -- to Canada. It's not like before  
5 in 2008 where it's, okay, paying shareholders a lot that  
6 live in Washington or at least the United States. But  
7 now they're all in Canada or Europe. You can't even  
8 figure it out, where they're -- who owns them anymore.  
9 It's so hard to track it all down. It's like, you know,  
10 house of cards trying to figure it out.

11           And so none of it comes back to us. It's  
12 like why do we -- why do we allow them to send any of  
13 that away? You know, it just didn't make any sense to  
14 me. And I feel like, you know, if you brought it down,  
15 if you were like to -- right now, we're at the end of  
16 this case, we've decided we're going to bring your rate  
17 of return to zero, to zero or .1 or .2 or whatever the  
18 savings account is, what's going to happen? They're  
19 going to be like, that's unfair. We can't buy out the  
20 legislators in the state anymore, you know. We can't  
21 give away -- you know, we can't greenwash our image  
22 rather than invest in -- in -- in -- in actual green  
23 energy.

24           You know, they spend so much money just  
25 telling us that they're green and responsible with

1 advertising campaigns. It's very expensive ones. And,  
2 you know, you brought it down to zero, they wouldn't be  
3 able to do that. Public utility districts, they don't  
4 do that. They're not out there every day saying -- with  
5 billboards saying how wonderful they are. They're not  
6 trying to pretend to sell themselves to us.

7           So anyway, I just -- just think we need  
8 to -- to -- to treat them more hostile and -- than we  
9 currently are.

10           CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Thank you very  
11 much.

12           Okay. We have a number of people still  
13 wishing to speak. At this point, we swore in folks to  
14 speak who had arrived early, but I think now we're at  
15 the point where we've had a number of late arrivals who  
16 did not -- we did not swear in to testify. So if you're  
17 intending to swear -- you're intending to speak to us  
18 tonight but you have not raised your right hand, I would  
19 ask you to stand and raise your right hand now so that  
20 we can swear you in.

21           (All persons testifying sworn.)

22           Thank you very much.

23           So Laura Slagger?

24           MS. SCHLEYER: Schleyer, it's really hard to  
25 say.

1 CHAIRMAN DANNER: How is it?

2 MS. SCHLEYER: Schleyer.

3 CHAIRMAN DANNER: That's a Y, not a G, then.

4 MS. SCHLEYER: Don't worry. The rare person  
5 gets a prize if they say it right.

6 CHAIRMAN DANNER: I'm sorry. Often it's a  
7 matter of me trying to read.

8 MS. SCHLEYER: Thank you. I am a customer  
9 of PSE. I happen to live close to the office, but the  
10 old office. Anyway, my concern is that PSE currently  
11 already has some of the highest rates in the state, and  
12 I'm -- really don't feel at all that they have some of  
13 highest service in the state currently. So I don't feel  
14 very generous towards wanting to pay more on my bill.

15 The things that -- that I have noted is that  
16 the PUDs are -- get power back up much faster than PSE  
17 does, and I have heard and I -- I believe this to be  
18 true that the PUDs have not bottom-lined their staff,  
19 and so their staff knows their area and can get around  
20 to the problem areas where the power lines are down much  
21 faster; whereas the PSE bottom-line their staff, they  
22 contract to get power back up. And sometimes the  
23 contractors are from far away and they're sitting around  
24 with their GPS, Google thing trying to find where the  
25 heck it is.

1           And Olympia has a really squirrely layout  
2 where one street will stop at a park and then you don't  
3 know exactly how to get around to get to the part of  
4 that street. And I've lived here 44 years and it's  
5 really hard. So I -- I think that that doesn't really  
6 make me feel like they deserve to get a higher rate when  
7 their service is not very good on that.

8           I had a personal experience at my house that  
9 I was building where before I built my house, I -- I was  
10 very concerned because the power line -- I had -- well,  
11 there's one typically where I live in northeast Olympia  
12 eastside, the -- there's usually just one power pole per  
13 block. And then so it's the lines string out, string  
14 across streets and all kinds of ways. And, you know,  
15 that is what it is. I'm not wishing there was more  
16 power poles. They're not particularly nice to look at.

17           But what it meant in my case was that the  
18 lines strung right across the middle of my -- my  
19 property where I wanted to build. And actually not just  
20 one, but three, because it just happened to be the way  
21 they -- oops, excuse me -- strung to this neighbor, that  
22 neighbor and this neighbor. And that happened -- I  
23 mean, it was like that and it was less than the 12-foot  
24 minimum from the ground. So when I -- I could  
25 practically touch the lines, and if I stood up on my

1 raised bed, which, yeah, I didn't usually need to do  
2 that, but I mean, I could practically touch the line.

3           And then the way the -- our street is,  
4 the -- some of the people on the east side of the street  
5 have kind of a raised property just in order to level  
6 it, and there's an -- an elder woman who lives across  
7 the street. And her -- the way the line comes straight  
8 across, her property comes up, and so her line is even  
9 closer to the ground, and that just concerns me for her  
10 sake.

11           So the -- the other thing that doesn't make  
12 me feel very comfortable about the service from PSE is  
13 that we had an ice storm, and these lines were  
14 already -- some of them were already exactly as I've  
15 described, and at -- they restrung it exactly the same  
16 way. And it seemed to me that since the power lines  
17 were down, they had every opportunity to rectify where  
18 those were placed. And so that -- I didn't appreciate  
19 that.

20           I -- these lines that go across my property,  
21 other service providers -- you know, we have that --  
22 the -- the public service utility six feet from the  
23 street over to where the sidewalk and your property  
24 technically begins. That's where PSE should be having  
25 their utility lines run. And Comcast and some of the

1 other service providers do exactly that, they run right  
2 along the street, you know, parallel, and then when they  
3 need to cut in, they cut in in a perpendicular way  
4 instead of stringing across people's property. And  
5 Comcast calls it aerial trespass when they go across a  
6 property like that.

7           So I'm not sure why PSE feels that it was  
8 within their right to charge me to move all three of  
9 those lines for my neighbors before I could build my  
10 house. I also had to pay for the intermediate pole,  
11 which they chose the design of. I thought they should  
12 at least -- if I'm going to pay for it, I would like to  
13 vote or something, you know, to like do it the right  
14 way, just perpendicularise [sic] it rather than string  
15 it yet again at a diagonal across my property. I'd  
16 rather just not have it across my property at all.

17           And so all of those things, I mean, that was  
18 really expensive. It cost me \$8,000 for the  
19 intermediate pole and the restringing. And so, you  
20 know, I -- that doesn't feel right to me, to give more  
21 money to a service provider that is not doing a better  
22 job than -- than other service providers like PUDs. So  
23 yeah, thank you.

24           CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Thank you very  
25 much.

1 And, William Kupinski? Did I get that  
2 right?

3 MR. KUPINSKI: William Kupinski, yes.

4 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Okay.

5 MR. KUPINSKI: My name is William Kupinski,  
6 and I am resident of Tacoma. I'm a PSE ratepayer as  
7 well.

8 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: I'm sorry, could you  
9 turn on your microphone?

10 MR. KUPINSKI: Oh, yeah, I'm sorry. Is it  
11 not on?

12 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Just press until it  
13 turns green. There you go.

14 MR. KUPINSKI: How are we now, better?  
15 Thank you. My name is William Kupinski, and I live in  
16 Tacoma. I am a resident there, and I also am a PSE  
17 ratepayer. And I'm -- I'm here to speak against the  
18 request that PSE has made for a rate increase. And I  
19 want to speak more generally about the greater economic  
20 and environmental landscape under which this request is  
21 being made.

22 This is the second time that I have  
23 testified before you all. When I was here last time, it  
24 was in 2016, I believe, and Puget Sound Energy was  
25 asking for a waiver of the ring-fencing requirement so

1 that they could not just be a public utility, but they  
2 could enter the private for-profit LNG market. Not that  
3 they're not making enough profit already apparently.  
4 And your counsel I believe recommended against that, the  
5 Public Counsel, and yet that waiver was granted. And I  
6 now live near an eight-million gallon LNG fracked gas  
7 refinery and storage tank that is built on unsteady soil  
8 in a residential area very close to residential areas on  
9 the traditional lands of the Puyallup Tribe and near an  
10 ICE facility.

11 So today we're here to talk about the fact  
12 that Puget Sound Energy wants another rate increase. I  
13 believe they just got a 14.2 percent increase for gas  
14 this past November, and now they're asking for more.  
15 And your -- Public -- the Public Counsel is once again  
16 making a recommendation. This recommendation is that  
17 electric rates go down and that there be a much more  
18 modest increase in the -- in the gas rates.

19 Now, I know this is looking a bit ahead that  
20 Puget Sound Energy will very soon be asking you to  
21 permit them to pass along the cost of this LNG facility  
22 that's built in Tacoma. 43 percent of a \$310 million  
23 facility that will provide at most 2 percent of peak  
24 shaving to residential customers, yet the residential  
25 customers you've indicated your initial likelihood of

1 approving residential customers paying \$133 million,  
2 which is a tremendous amount of a project that they're  
3 going to see very little for.

4           If you do the actual math and the peak  
5 shaving would only go for ten years, what you would  
6 actually get, assuming that the peak shaving is even  
7 necessary, there's plenty of reason to believe that it's  
8 not. They have lots of gas for new commercial projects.  
9 But even if that were necessary, what that would work  
10 out to be for those ten years for the 2 percent would be  
11 about \$1.5 million, not 133 million.

12           So if you go ahead and approve this rate  
13 increase, which you will be asked to do soon, and I'll  
14 be back here again, and now I know where your new  
15 facility is so I will have an easier time getting here.  
16 So they're going to be asking for that as well from --  
17 from all of their ratepayers.

18           What concerns me is my first encounter with  
19 the UTC, you were the only thing standing between the --  
20 the exploited behavior of a monopoly that -- that sells  
21 something that people need, right? They need to -- to  
22 heat their homes, although hopefully we'll not be  
23 heating with fossil fuels for very much longer. We  
24 can't afford to do that because of the climate crisis.  
25 But you're the only thing that's standing between us and

1 the worst abuses of a monopoly.

2 And based upon my experience with you in  
3 2016, I am not all that encouraged. I think that what  
4 we get here often is the appearance of justice without  
5 actual justice. We have sort of filling out the forms  
6 in very much the same way that PSE makes itself look  
7 like it is a responsible corporation when, in fact, it  
8 is anything but that.

9 The international [sic] Panel on Climate  
10 Change issued a report that we have 12 years to avert  
11 the absolute worst case scenarios from climate change.  
12 We need to be building no new fossil fuel  
13 infrastructure. We need to be retiring it now, and all  
14 of the financial calculations should be going towards  
15 how do we make that transition and how do we build it  
16 down.

17 So when PSE asks for money for natural gas,  
18 I would say -- I would deny every rate increase  
19 that's -- moving in that direction that is not directly  
20 moving us toward zero carbon energy sources in the  
21 future. I really ask you to look at the bigger picture.  
22 I think the best thing in the world that would happen  
23 would be for Puget Sound Energy to get out of the  
24 Washington energy business, for us to have public, truly  
25 public nonprofit utility companies that -- the ones that

1 there are already have a much better record of using  
2 renewables, they have much lower rates, and they have  
3 better service. And that's where we need to be going.

4 So you're regulators, regulate. This is  
5 your chance to do something important. This is  
6 something to do -- chance to do something your  
7 grandchildren will remember you for. This is a chance  
8 to do something that matters. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Okay. Thank you very  
10 much.

11 Barb Churdy?

12 MS. CHURCH: Church.

13 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Church, all right. Good  
14 evening. Thanks for coming.

15 MS. CHURCH: Thank you for letting me speak.  
16 My name is Barb Church -- this is on, right? And I am a  
17 resident of Tacoma. The previous speaker said a lot of  
18 what I am going to say, but I wanted to respond to what  
19 I have heard too, and I hear people saying things about  
20 the poor service that they received and -- and how  
21 expensive the service is and how a lot of the money goes  
22 to Canada that's running for office.

23 I know I am from Tacoma and our mayor got  
24 thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars from  
25 Puget Sound Energy. I know that when I turn on the

1 television I see advertising -- I could see it daily  
2 only I realize that they were advertising -- Puget Sound  
3 Energy was advertising about liquified natural gas and  
4 how much cheaper it's going to be and how much cleaner  
5 it's going to be. I listen to it every day. I just --  
6 I just don't listen to that channel anymore because I'm  
7 just so tired of hearing it.

8 Puget Sound Energy donates to -- they will  
9 donate to everybody. They donate to our chamber, they  
10 donate to our Urban League, they donate everywhere. So  
11 if you wonder where Puget Sound Energy is spending their  
12 money, they're spending it in places where they can have  
13 political clout.

14 What I -- I do think it's valuable, though,  
15 to repeat especially to the ratepayers and the  
16 ratepayers here wondering where Puget Sound Energy is  
17 spending their money and to also address one of the main  
18 drivers is on capital investments. And we have an LNG  
19 plant in the city of Tacoma that, as Bill said, is going  
20 to be costing the ratepayers an estimated \$133 million  
21 and -- of the \$310 million cost of just building this --  
22 this facility when, you know, they're -- they're only  
23 going to be -- well, depending on what you want to  
24 determine the return on the investment, there are two  
25 views to show that this is currently or extremely

1 profitable for Puget Sound Energy.

2           And I'll just repeat this because I think  
3 it's really worth repeating, and I really think that  
4 people need to know and they don't know that -- that  
5 this 133 million of the total 310 million of this  
6 project, it would give Puget Sound Energy a return on  
7 investment of 43 percent. Now, this 133 million is what  
8 our ratepayers are paying when they're only, in fact,  
9 ultimately going to be using 2 percent in ten years. So  
10 I'm just sharing this information and hoping that you  
11 will deny any rate increase. Thank you.

12           CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Thank you.

13           Stacy Oaks?

14           MS. OAKS: Hello. Hi, my name is Stacy  
15 Oaks. I'm an organizer with 350 Seattle, and just want  
16 to say thank you for having us here today and good to be  
17 here today with you on the land of the Coast Salish  
18 people.

19           I want to -- I want to say that I agree with  
20 a lot of the sentiments that have already been said  
21 here, so there's a lot of points that I don't feel like  
22 I need to -- to speak on too deeply, but I want to echo  
23 the -- echo a lot of the thoughts around what's been  
24 shared on some of the things PSE's been spending their  
25 money on and how it must feel to people scraping by to

1 know that this company can clearly spend money on all of  
2 these things, yet if there's a gas explosion, we have to  
3 cover that. Yet if they want to build projects that are  
4 likely to be stranded assets, we have to cover that.  
5 There is no options, there's no chances.

6 We are in a monopoly system over unnecessary  
7 commodity, and to see that entity out spending money in  
8 such a way while also asking for more on such a frequent  
9 basis, you are the people to protect us from that.  
10 You're in such a unique position to do that, and when we  
11 factor in all of the other things associated with some  
12 of PSE's choices, it's an even bigger deal that goes  
13 beyond making sure that the public's money is taken care  
14 of.

15 You know, for me personally, I really care  
16 about where my money goes. I try and look into  
17 companies before I buy products. You know, I -- I don't  
18 want to, you know, give -- give money to someone I -- I  
19 know does things that I think are immoral, and I think a  
20 lot of us try and do that. And so to be forced to give  
21 money to a company that you know is doing really immoral  
22 things, you know, that's -- that's an extra thing that  
23 we need you to protect us from in this particular  
24 circumstance unfortunately.

25 And a couple of those things are actually,

1 you know, connected to the gas use in general and to  
2 that Tacoma LNG project. When we talk about gas use in  
3 general and continuing that after having these dire  
4 warnings for a year and a half now from the  
5 international [sic] Panel on Climate Change, we do this  
6 knowingly. When we continue to use gas knowing that  
7 most of it comes from fracking and fracking is poisoning  
8 our already shrinking clean drinking water supply, we do  
9 that knowingly. When we're complicit in companies that  
10 choose to make these decisions, we're a part of that.  
11 If my money is going to that, I am complicit in that.  
12 If you're making the decision that they can charge us  
13 that, you are complicit in that.

14           When we talk about continued fossil fuel use  
15 and we talk about fracking, we're talking about missing  
16 and murdered indigenous women and the incidents of that  
17 that follow these man camps at these extractive types of  
18 sites. It's a culture of behavior within these  
19 companies that has not been corrected, yet we continue  
20 to do it. We're complicit in knowing that there are  
21 refineries being built to deal with this gas. We're  
22 complicit in knowing where most of those refineries are  
23 located such as the Tacoma LNG project.

24           Where is that being sited? Right on the  
25 edge of the Puyallup Tribe's reservation? Within less

1 than a mile from homes? Within less than two miles of  
2 the Northwest Detention Center where over 1500 people  
3 have to breathe in all of those fumes every day in a  
4 for-profit immigration prison.

5           And we go back to the same City Council  
6 people in Tacoma taking money from both the people  
7 locking up those poor people in Northwest Detention  
8 Center that are also taking the money from PSE, yet  
9 they're allowed to make decisions that give contracts to  
10 these companies. Yet it's okay for PSE to spend all  
11 this money on campaign contributions. So in a certain  
12 way, we're paying to do this to ourselves because we  
13 keep allowing these rate increases knowing what they're  
14 doing. We are complicit in all of that behavior.

15           That project is being built on treaty land  
16 against the consent of the Puyallup people in an unsafe  
17 location. So not only are they having refinery issues  
18 right there in a place where people are already  
19 suffering from massive health issues, but there's a  
20 safety issue there. They're being forced to live next  
21 to what pretty much is a ticking time bomb. Part of  
22 this rate increase is being asked for because of a gas  
23 explosion, yet we're supposed to believe that this is  
24 safe, reliable, and clean.

25           We do this knowingly when we make decisions

1 at this point in time to continue gas use. We make this  
2 knowingly when we allow a company that builds without  
3 their permits on treaty land against consent. We are  
4 complicit in the continued genocide of indigenous people  
5 on the other end of that pipeline. I'm not sure if  
6 you're aware, but up in B.C., Canada, there's a group of  
7 people called the Unist'ot'en people. They were  
8 forcibly evacuated at gunpoint from their unceded treaty  
9 territory a couple months ago for a gas pipeline from  
10 the general area where gas would come from for this  
11 project, for the proposed Kitimat project. This is  
12 still happening today, and recently it was released that  
13 the RCMP up there were ready to use deadly force on  
14 those people if they did not leave of their own accord.

15 We are complicit in this behavior when you  
16 accept continued rate hikes for fracked gas. We can't  
17 keep doing this, and we can't keep doing business as  
18 usual when we know where we're at with the climate. So  
19 not only are there all those social justice issues,  
20 which we just talked about there, but the global  
21 scientific community says keep it in the ground. Please  
22 help the public to move away from fossil fuels.

23 Puget Sound Energy is part of one of the --  
24 the group that was created that's spending a million  
25 dollars in the Pacific Northwest on a PR campaign to

1 push back against any efforts to stop gas in new  
2 residential buildings and anything else that can limit  
3 gas infrastructure. They're using our money to do that.  
4 Please help us. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. Thank you very  
6 much.

7 John Carlton?

8 MR. CARLTON: Good evening, and thank you  
9 for allowing me to share my thoughts. I want to say I  
10 really appreciate everybody who showed up tonight and  
11 spoke -- has spoken out against this proposal to  
12 increase profit for Puget Sound Energy at the cost of  
13 ratepayers.

14 One word comes to mind when I think of Puget  
15 Sound Energy and it's corruption. Here we have a  
16 monopoly. There's no challenging their monopoly of  
17 power in Washington State. I can't go to another  
18 company to get whether it be gas or electricity  
19 depending on where I live, there's -- there are no other  
20 options. And so to -- to give them a greater amount of  
21 profit is just -- it's corrup- -- all I see is  
22 corruption.

23 And I hope that -- and I know that not  
24 everyone is involved in -- in the corruption, but the  
25 machine is lubed as we've heard tonight from multiple

1 people that they -- they are financing every winning  
2 campaign in Washington State. They're -- even losing  
3 campaigns. They're pushing money in every direction  
4 because that's how they know that they can have their  
5 way.

6           And so this money is going to be spent to  
7 lube corruption. That's what they need this extra money  
8 for as well as profit for the investors elsewhere. But  
9 this is not in the interest of the public that they're  
10 going to make -- that we would allow them to make more  
11 profit is -- is of no value to us at all. It's going  
12 to -- it's going to make it worse for us. Not only is  
13 it money out of our pocket, but it's -- it's -- it's  
14 granting more power to this -- this corrupt monopoly.

15           So I hope you will take this opportunity to  
16 put the clamp down on this company and not allow them to  
17 continue to -- to make more and more profit at our  
18 expense.

19           And for me, there are many things wrong  
20 with -- with Puget Sound Energy. I live in Tacoma and  
21 I've been following what's happened with this liquified  
22 natural gas refinery that most people spoke on.

23           They actually took me to court when I did a  
24 public records request to find out what the safety  
25 issues were, that I had one day to prepare for court.

1 Fortunately, I had done my own research already. I  
2 didn't have a lawyer, but I can tell you Puget Sound  
3 Energy did. They had the most expensive law team from  
4 Seattle come down and make spurious arguments that --  
5 why I should not receive the information that I had made  
6 a request for. And, you know, that cost them a lot of  
7 money to try to keep public records from the -- from the  
8 public. And they failed, but they -- that's what they  
9 want to spend this money on. They -- this is not to the  
10 benefit of the public that they're seeking. They're  
11 seeking more profit, they're seeking more control, and  
12 it's time to put the clamp down on these guys.

13           And also, this is for -- this is -- for gas,  
14 the time is now. This is a climate crisis. Australia  
15 is going through an apocalypse right now. I can tell  
16 you what science is telling us -- and it's not just me.  
17 Everyone -- science is uniformly telling us that we have  
18 to stop pulling fossil fuels out of the ground  
19 immediately. If Puget Sound Energy wants to make more  
20 money on gas, no. This is our chance to say we're not  
21 going to allow you to make more money on gas. You need  
22 to find other alternatives, sustainable energy sources.

23           So anyway, I appreciate you taking the time  
24 listening to us, and please don't allow them to increase  
25 rates on this.

1 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you, sir.

2 Claudia Riedenous, did I get that wrong?

3 MS. RIEDENER: Almost. Almost right. Hi.

4 Good evening. My name is Claudia Riedener, and I am  
5 from Tacoma. And I want to say thank you for hosting us  
6 and thank you for not having a big time clock clicking  
7 away that makes everybody nervous, so thank you for  
8 that.

9 I also want to acknowledge that we are on  
10 indigenous land and indigenous people indeed are  
11 suffering tremendously from extractive industries like  
12 we already heard. The Washington State Board of Health  
13 did a study on indigenous women and asthma and  
14 respiratory illness, and they suffer four times worse.  
15 So that LNG facility in Tacoma situated inside a tribal  
16 reservation is a -- is a tremendous hurt to indigenous  
17 people.

18 I also want to say I'm not paid to be here,  
19 and I will bet most people that speak here are not paid  
20 to be here, but we know PSE is here and they're very  
21 well paid to be here.

22 So I -- I am not sure how they are allowed  
23 again to even ask for gas money increases. We are  
24 really fortunate in Tacoma, we have Tacoma Public  
25 Utilities. It's our -- it's our own utility. We -- we

1 have transparency. We manage to get to go talk with  
2 them, we have our questions answered. I don't know  
3 if -- if you have ever talked to residents, and when  
4 they try to talk to PSE, it's not very easy.

5           So I -- I'm not sure how they can ask for  
6 more money for gas. The gas prices over the last 12  
7 months have collapsed by 50 percent. That is such a  
8 tremendous drop to where you would think we -- we as --  
9 as gas utility monopoly ratepayers would get a windfall  
10 from this. But instead, just two months ago they got  
11 over 14 percent increases. And why? Because the  
12 Canadian gas pipeline blew up. So even though the  
13 market prices for gas are collapsing, we are now forced  
14 to pay for Canadian infrastructure because a Canadian  
15 interest company purchased PSE. Something's really not  
16 right here.

17           And also, if PSE wants to have more money  
18 for investors, it's the Canadian pension investment  
19 fund. Do you know that your staff here at Washington  
20 State, those pensions are not allowed to be invested in  
21 fossil fuels because fossil fuels are killing the  
22 planet. But yet you ask of us to pay more to feed  
23 foreign pension funds in a fossil fuel gamble in a -- in  
24 a fossil fuel racket? Please, please don't.

25           In 2018, PSE paid no federal taxes. How

1 many millions? 68-, 69-? Where did that money go? I  
2 can tell you where we see the moneys going in Tacoma.  
3 We get glossy brochures, we get lie upon lie upon lie  
4 told about this LNG refinery. We get push-pulls, we get  
5 PSE calling people, thousands of people at home telling  
6 the people, complaining about the Puyallup Tribe and  
7 basically glorifying the politicians they're supporting  
8 in push-pulls, calling into the phone lines to people's  
9 homes to people's ears. We pay for that.

10 We see PSE with -- with banners and posters  
11 and TV advertisements. It cannot be turned off. It's  
12 ridiculous. It's on -- on every platform. We don't  
13 even have a TV, and yet still because we get washed with  
14 all this PSE spending money like there is no tomorrow  
15 because maybe in their mind there might not be a  
16 tomorrow.

17 I -- I -- I beg of you. I don't know how  
18 many times you have not allowed an increase. I don't  
19 know how many times you ever have decreased a demand of  
20 increase by this monopoly. I beg you now to -- to -- to  
21 do what's right, to do what's right in the interest of  
22 the people of this state. It's -- it's urgent. It's  
23 urgent on so many levels. And the fact that -- that --  
24 that very soon if you approve the 43 percent share of  
25 this LNG, you will hoist it upon us too.

1 I don't know if you know -- if you speak  
2 ever to -- to PSE customers and what happens when their  
3 gas gets turned off. It's hundreds and hundreds and  
4 hundreds of dollars to turn it back on. And -- and who  
5 is paying for this? The poorest of the poor, the ones  
6 who can least afford it. So please do not allow this  
7 hurt to go on.

8 PSE shut all the -- all the customer  
9 offices, all the customer offices in the entire region,  
10 they're all shut down. And do you know where PSE is  
11 sending customers if they have any -- any way to pay the  
12 bills? Payday loan stations. It's beyond symbolic.  
13 It's beyond symbolic. Is this really where you want to  
14 go? And every time the community rises up out of their  
15 own time with -- with their own effort, with their own  
16 goodwill and tries to create a public utility, you know  
17 what PSE does? They swarm. They clobber them. They  
18 knock them down, they beat them down, and then they turn  
19 around and ask for more money. Please, you must stand  
20 in the way. It's -- it's time. Just say no. Thank  
21 you.

22 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much.

23 Carol King?

24 MS. KINDT: Good evening. My name is Carol  
25 Kindt, and I want to emphasize that I was asked to speak

1 under oath. I am going to be speaking under oath about  
2 my own experience with public and private utilities.

3 I'm not a native of Washington. I moved  
4 here in the year 2000. So I have been a customer of  
5 Pacific Gas and Electricity otherwise known as PG&E,  
6 SoCal Edison, Sacramento Utilities, which is public,  
7 Avista when I lived in Spokane, and now I am not a  
8 customer, I am not a ratepayer of PSE because I live in  
9 senior HUD housing and my electricity is provided by  
10 Tacoma Public Utilities. I will reiterate the testimony  
11 of the people who came before me from Tacoma about PSE's  
12 campaign. They are always -- they just don't contribute  
13 to campaigns, they are on a constant campaign to  
14 greenwash our community.

15 I live, as I said, in senior HUD housing. I  
16 am not a ratepayer and neither are any of the tenants  
17 who live in that apartment complex, and yet we receive  
18 six- and eight-page glossy brochures, you know,  
19 oversized glossy, full color postcards. You know, who  
20 pays for this? I don't know. You know, do you know?  
21 Do you know how much is paid for the campaigns that PSE  
22 continually puts out on TV, on Internet, in cards,  
23 brochures, mailers on a constant basis, and now they  
24 want a rate increase for their shareholders?

25 This is not a local company. It does not in

1 any way benefit local consumers. And I know that the  
2 Public Utilities Commission in California did a grave  
3 disservice by allowing PG&E to go on unabated, unwatched  
4 for decades until tragedies happened. The same thing  
5 will happen in this state with PE -- PSE if it is  
6 allowed to continue as it has been. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you.

8 All right. Nikie Walters?

9 MS. WALTERS: Hi, my name's Nikie.

10 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Nikie, okay. I'm sorry  
11 about that.

12 MS. WALTERS: It's okay.

13 So I bought my first house in Tacoma back in  
14 2016, and I am originally also from Southern California.  
15 I've been there my whole life, and California is the  
16 land of my ancestors. I moved here because of the  
17 climate in California. I was planning on moving to  
18 Oregon, and I ended up here instead because of job  
19 transfers. So I guess in that sense, you can refer to  
20 me as a climate refugee.

21 As soon as I moved to Tacoma, I realized  
22 there was something wrong, and so I attended my first  
23 City Council meeting. Around that time, right before  
24 that, I -- I went to the -- there was a -- like a home  
25 show over at the -- at the convention center, and I just

1 bought my home, you know, and so I thought I'd go down  
2 there and check it out.

3           And there was a booth there that was from  
4 PSE, and I didn't know anything about, you know, pretty  
5 much everything out here. I -- I had just moved out  
6 here. And they were offering like somebody to come over  
7 to my house, like a third-party person or something like  
8 that, to come over to my house and evaluate if my home  
9 was energy efficient. And so it was free, I was like,  
10 heck, yeah, you know, I want to find out where I can  
11 save money.

12           And they came, the guy came, and he  
13 evaluated my home, and the only -- the only appliance in  
14 my home that -- that ran off of gas at that time was --  
15 was my furnace. Everything else was electric. And that  
16 was actually one of the selling points for my home  
17 because -- for me because I was interested in eventually  
18 putting solar on my house. And I thought, oh, you know,  
19 that -- that won't be a huge conversion if I were to  
20 have like, you know, stove and water heater and  
21 everything else, you know, that could be gas.

22           But anyway, this man came, and he tried to  
23 talk me into converting my appliances into gas, telling  
24 me that, you know, how much cheaper it is than  
25 electricity and -- and everything. And that was pretty

1 much his evaluation of my home, that my home was pretty,  
2 you know, insulated really good and everything. But  
3 anyway, so I was like, no, I don't know about that  
4 because I -- I want to go solar at my house eventually.  
5 That -- that's not going to work.

6 So upon like attending my first City Council  
7 meeting, I figured out that there was actually, indeed,  
8 a big problem in Tacoma, and it was that LNG refinery  
9 that was being built down there at the tide flat -- on  
10 the tide flats. And that was a -- well, there are some  
11 other issues too, but that was -- that was one of them.

12 And anyway, upon -- upon learning about PSE  
13 and, you know, the way they go about their business, it  
14 pushed me to go ahead and put solar on my home. So it's  
15 been two years now since I've had solar on my home. I  
16 decided that I was -- you know, like Stacy was  
17 explaining, you know, that, you know, I'm -- I'm one of  
18 those type of people that like to look into the type of  
19 companies that I'm -- that I'm financially supporting.  
20 You know, I feel like I have a moral obligation to do  
21 that. And so I decided to go ahead and put the solar in  
22 a lot sooner than I was planning just because I was  
23 having a moral conflict with giving this company my  
24 money.

25 And I'll tell you what, when that pipeline

1 exploded up in B.C. and everybody was told to cut back  
2 on their gas and -- and don't take a shower, you know,  
3 don't -- don't run any hot water in your -- in your  
4 washing machine, I'll tell you what. I went outside --  
5 when -- when I saw that was happening, I went outside to  
6 look at my meter and it was running backwards.

7           So, you know, I felt like, you know, why do  
8 I get the privilege to, you know, not have to cut back  
9 on my consumption when everybody else has to, you know.  
10 And why -- and -- I was -- I was able to, you know, do  
11 my laundry, I was able to -- to do my dishes, I was able  
12 to do anything I wanted that a lot of -- in my home that  
13 a lot of other people couldn't do for -- I don't  
14 remember how many days that was.

15           But, you know, I feel like, you know,  
16 companies like PSE, they -- they try to make people feel  
17 like that they're -- that they're -- they're needed, and  
18 they're not. It's more of a forced dependancy issue  
19 that we're having with these nasty fossil fuels that are  
20 killing our earth. And, you know, as -- as John  
21 explained the corruption, they're -- you know, we need  
22 to be honest. We need to be honest with each other, we  
23 need to be -- and companies need to be honest with the  
24 people that, you know, they're providing services for.

25           And PSE is not doing that. That's why I

1 took the initiative to do my part and defund them out of  
2 my home. I had them come cap the lines off in the  
3 street and remove their rusted meter off the side of my  
4 home, because I'm one of those people that I won't, I  
5 won't.

6           There's alternatives, there's other ways.  
7 We don't have to keep feeding these monsters. And I ask  
8 you to please help the people that don't have the  
9 privilege that I have that -- that I -- that I afforded  
10 myself. Thank you.

11           CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much.  
12           Joe Hiss?

13           MR. HISS: You actually pronounced my last  
14 name correctly.

15           CHAIRMAN DANNER: I think that's the first  
16 this evening.

17           MR. HISS: Joe Hiss, yes.

18           Many people have already spoken to the same  
19 issue that I came here thinking that I might be the only  
20 one left to address it, and that was how our actions  
21 today are affecting global climate change. And they've  
22 certainly spoken about that much more eloquently than I  
23 could do, so I'm just going to try to fit my  
24 presentation into a few more specific things, which all  
25 are motivated by my interest in climate protection.

1 First of all, like the previous speaker, I  
2 have installed solar panels on my house with reversed  
3 metering, and I know full well that that's not all that  
4 I should be doing. So I -- every day I have to examine  
5 my conscience and say, what more can I do?

6 So what I want to do tonight is this bro- --  
7 this flyer that you have here called Clean Energy in  
8 Washington State, I think that it's heartening to hear  
9 the Utilities and Transportation Commission is putting  
10 out such an item, which specifies Washington State's  
11 goals for the next -- well, 2045, and the question is,  
12 will this be enough? Will we have to phase out fossil  
13 fuels only when we get to 2045 or should we be furiously  
14 working on this to get the -- the job done a lot  
15 quicker? I think a lot quicker seems to be the obvious  
16 conclusion of most of the people who have studied the  
17 issue.

18 Secondly, I would say on this -- this second  
19 page, there's clean energy plans and rulemaking, and  
20 then there's Utilities and Transportation Commission  
21 support of reporting and advisory committees. And  
22 curiously, first paragraph under Clean Energy says the  
23 act requires Washington's investor-owned utilities have  
24 to develop clean energy implementation by January of  
25 22 -- of twenty twenty -- 2022. But then UTC support

1 reporting advisory committees says that their first  
2 report won't come out until 2024. And it seems to me  
3 that it -- since the reports appear to me to be covering  
4 similar material, they ought to have the same years when  
5 they're required.

6 Then it says, second sentence under Clean  
7 Energy Plans, every four years is when the updates are  
8 due, but the last sentence, first paragraph, that UTC  
9 support reporting advisory says every two years. So I'm  
10 just wondering why are there different deadlines for  
11 reports? We seem to have the same material in them.

12 Finally, I think that the clean energy  
13 rulemaking plans, it says, (as read) In its review of  
14 what the companies do, the utilities and transportation  
15 committee will consider the safety and reliability of  
16 grid, the lowest reasonable cost for electricity, and  
17 identify impacts to low income customers and the  
18 environment. The last word of that sentence is really  
19 the key thing. The environment can't wait. So we ought  
20 to at least implement the current legislation to the  
21 fullest. And after that, let the chips fall where they  
22 may. We don't have time to waste.

23 So I'll close by saying I spoke briefly with  
24 a representative to the County Planning Commission from  
25 Puget Sound Energy, and she was saying that they're

1 working fast and furious to change their plans since  
2 they know that the 2018 plan is no longer going to be  
3 possible. And they assured me that they were going to  
4 take radical action. So far so good.

5 I only spoke briefly with that person, so I  
6 need your help to make that come true to make sure that  
7 you hold their feet to the fire and have them convert  
8 from fossil fuels to renewable fuels just as soon as  
9 possible. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Thank you very much,  
11 Mr. Hiss.

12 All right. Bradley Thompson?

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He wasn't speaking.

14 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Okay. Thank you very  
15 much.

16 And that takes us looks like to the end.

17 Mr. Yoos, we do not have a sign language  
18 interpreter available. We had asked that those -- if  
19 you needed that to contact us in advance, and I regret  
20 that we don't have a person here tonight unless there is  
21 someone in the audience.

22 Tom Nogler, are you present?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Person passed away  
24 recently.

25 CHAIRMAN DANNER: Oh. Could someone else

1 read what he wrote?

2 Mr. Yoos --

3 Should we take a video of him and have it  
4 translated for the record?

5 So this is what I suggest, Mr. Yoos.

6 Andrew, can you write down for him?

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thanks. I'm  
8 accustomed to being silenced.

9 CHAIRMAN DANNER: So what I would like to  
10 propose -- yeah, let's -- can -- can we take a -- we'll  
11 take a short break, and then we will come back to you,  
12 Mr. Yoos, because we do want to hear what you have to  
13 say. I think that one option we will have, Mr. Pertner  
14 is in the back.

15 Do you have a cell phone that is video  
16 capable? Can you take a video of Mr. Yoos' testimony  
17 and then we can have someone take care of it and get it  
18 into the record?

19 So, yeah, we will take a -- we'll take a  
20 three-minute break and then we'll get that set up. Is  
21 there anyone else who has signed in to speak tonight?

22 MR. ROBERTS: There's two on the line.

23 CHAIRMAN DANNER: There's two on the line?

24 All right. So we'll be back in just a few minutes,  
25 then. We're off the record.

1 (Break taken from 7:36 p.m.

2 until 7:45 p.m.)

3 CHAIRMAN DANNER: We're back on the record.

4 Andrew, did you say they're there?

5 MR. ROBERTS: They're gone now.

6 CHAIRMAN DANNER: They're gone now, all

7 right.

8 Okay. We are off the record.

9 (Pause in the proceedings.)

10 CHAIRMAN DANNER: All right. So we're going

11 to conclude tonight. We will take Mr. Yoos' comments in

12 written form, and then we will adjourn for the evening.

13 We have another public hearing that will be on January

14 22nd at the Bellevue City Hall at 6:00 p.m., and then we

15 begin the evidentiary hearing in this case on February

16 6th and 7th. So with that, we will be adjourned. Thank

17 you.

18 (Adjourned at 7:48 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF WASHINGTON

COUNTY OF THURSTON

I, Tayler Garlinghouse, a Certified Shorthand Reporter in and for the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, skill, and ability.

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Tayler Garlinghouse, CCR 3358