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STATE OF WASH.
UTIL. & TRANSP. COMMISSION

From: Cecil Joe Tomlinson
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Subj: Proposed Puget Sound Energy (PSE) Rate Increases

To: WUTC (Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission)
P.O. Box 47250
Olympia, WA 98504

Re: Dockets UE-190529 (electric service) and UG-190530 (natural gas service)

I am a PSE customer and use both electricity and natural gas. I am 73 years old and have been retired for eight years. Since my retirement, the dollar has decreased in value and is worth today only 83% of what it was worth when I retired, and that is not surprising. I expected that. My social security and pension have not kept pace with inflation by far, nor did I expect them to. However, I did expect my energy bills to go up each year, approximately equal to inflation, and they have done so. But now I get notice, in my December bill, that I can expect both my electricity and natural gas bills to each go up by about 7.5% this year, which is more than three times the rate of inflation. That is alarming. I must ask WHY? And is it really justified? What is driving that, other than greed? There must be some real justification, I would hope.

I looked at the justifications provided by PSE in their flyer in the December bill, and I see the following three bullets. I will write my comments as if I were talking to PSE rather than to WUTC:

- Technology systems such as self-service tools that can allow customers to interact with PSE at their convenience.

My comments: What?!? Don't buy that for me, please. I would much rather talk to a person than a computer. I hate those systems. And, if they don't save money by eliminating some highly paid customer representative positions, then they are money losers, worse than worthless. Don't buy that crap for me, please. Hire people instead. What's wrong with you?!? We need more jobs for people, not more talking computers that have no brains and can't understand English. They are very frustrating.

- Accommodate increasing levels of residential solar, battery storage and electric vehicles with electric infrastructure investments, cost recovery of electric depreciation expenses.

My comments: This stated "justification" for rate increase just tells me that you are being forced by liberal politicians to unwillingly subsidize electric vehicles, and you are passing that cost on to me. In a capitalist economy, which I would hope we still have, you should be making money from electric vehicles, not subsidizing them. After all, it is your business to sell electricity, isn't it? So, put

meters on those charging stations and have the electric vehicle owners swipe a credit card to recharge. If I pay for fuel at the gas pump, electric vehicle owners should pay for electricity at charging stations. If residential solar is hurting your business rather than helping it, then don't permit it. Don't ask me to pay for your costs in accommodating solar panels. This second "justification" sounds like a really flimsy excuse at all levels. Quit letting the socialists control your business, run up your costs, and then pass those costs on to me, your good paying customer.

- Improved reliability with natural gas infrastructure investments, cost recovery of natural gas depreciation expenses. "... and provide the opportunity for shareholders to earn a fair return on their investment."

My comments: You must realize that the same eco-socialists who are requiring you to subsidize electric vehicles are also proposing to eliminate natural gas as a fuel for heating homes. They are proposing that a ban be put in place prohibiting all new home construction from having natural gas service. So, why on earth would you be investing in natural gas infrastructure? And you know very well that "depreciation" is in your favor and does in no way require "cost recovery". Nevertheless, the clerical costs for doing that cost recovery are minuscule compared to what you are asking for. Who are you trying to fool? In my humble opinion, the phrase I quoted above from the paragraph which is below your third bullet says it all. Your shareholders, who are mostly in Canada by the way, want rich Uncle Sam to give them a comfortable retirement at my expense. Please don't triple your dividend payout at my expense. I am retired too, and on fixed income.

All of the stated "justifications" are not only flimsy, but even if they were true they would not justify the huge requested rate increase. None of them state the real reason for the requested rate increase. Concealing that real reason from your customers, and the public, is patently dishonest. PSE is hiding something; so is WUTC. We the people are not so dumb as to fall for the lie. Here is the truth:

Due to political pressure from Governor Inslee and the eco-socialists of Washington State, PSE was persuaded to sell, nay, I should say **give away**, their interest in the coal-fired Colstrip Power Plant in Montana to South Dakota-based Northwestern Energy for \$1, as if it were a pariah that needed to be disposed of quickly and quietly. See: <https://www.king5.com/article/tech/science/environment/puget-sound-energy-colstrip-power-plant-shares-northwestern-energy-sale/281-b18cb1dc-114f-43c1-8c9d-7aecea5a4249>.

That huge coal fired power plant was the second most economical power source for Washington State, second only to the big hydroelectric dams. It was an important part of our base load generation capacity. This political act of self-depredation, while being very pleasing to the state's eco-political masters, leaves PSE with a loss of over 8% of its total generating capacity. PSE doesn't have any excess capacity to give away to begin with. This loss in generating capacity must be made up in some way. Their thinking is to replace the lost capacity with so-called "renewable" energy sources, primarily wind. That capacity replacement will take several years to accomplish, if it is accomplished at all. And the project will be very, very expensive.

This proposed rate increase is only the beginning. Many more and greater rate increases will be required before the lost generating capacity can be replaced by renewable energy resources. In the meantime, the fallback plan is to have a cash reserve available with which to buy electricity from other states during periods of very hot or very cold weather on the West Coast, when we need additional electricity for heaters or air conditioners. Else we will have blackouts like California is experiencing now. It should be noted that when our state experiences weather extremes requiring more electricity, so does California, and we will be competing with California in the free market for the purchase of that additional power.

So, by this letter I wish to protest, not only the huge rate increase, but also the reason for it, which is the awful, for political purposes only, truly awful business decision to give away PSE's interest in the Colstrip Power Plant in Montana.

California is learning an important lesson about power grid management. Mainly it is that bureaucrats and politicians cannot manage electric power grids. The politicians forced PG&E to dedicate all their operating revenues to building windmill farms and solar farms, while neglecting power line right-of-way maintenance. So, trees grew up under the power lines and caught fire during the dry season. PG&E was sued into bankruptcy for the fires that ensued. It will inevitably become a publicly owned company. The eco-socialists took no blame whatsoever for the lost property and lost lives that they caused; it was, of course, all the private power company's fault.

Let us, in Washington, not repeat California's mistake by letting the eco-socialists direct PSE's management to prematurely give up our coal fired, economical generating capacity, as is currently under way. Stop it now before it is too late. We do not want the rate increases, nor do we want the inevitable blackouts that will occur if we get rid of our coal fired power generation so prematurely, before any substitute power comes on line. The two proposals are joined like Siamese twins. PSE knows they cannot give up the Colstrip Power Plant without getting the rate increase. Stopping the rate increase will stop the giveaway of the Colstrip Power Plant, hopefully.

Sincerely,


Cecil Joe Tomlinson