

Burdet, Kevin (ATG)

From: Gafken, Lisa (ATG)
Sent: Tuesday, February 4, 2020 8:33 PM
To: Burdet, Kevin (ATG)
Subject: FW: PSE Rate Hikes - Indigenous Social Costs

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hi Kevin –

For inclusion in the public comments exhibit.

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From: Stacy Oaks <stacy@350seattle.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2020 8:27 PM
To: comments@utc.wa.gov
Cc: Gafken, Lisa (ATG) <lisa.gafken@atg.wa.gov>
Subject: PSE Rate Hikes - Indigenous Social Costs

Hello, I'm opposed to the rate increases Puget Sound Energy(PSE) is requesting for gas and electric residential customers. One reason to deny this reimbursement for bad fossil fuel infrastructure investments is the social/human costs and violation of legal rights experienced by indigenous communities when we support or are complicit in continued fracked gas investments.

Land Theft, Destruction, Violence

As I mentioned in testimony at the recent hearings, we know that First Nations up in BC Canada are still being removed from their rightful lands for gas corporations, in some instances, such as the ongoing case surrounding unceded Wet'suwet'en territory, at gunpoint by RCMP's who have been authorized to use lethal force even though the Wet'suwet'en are unarmed. The land in question has been cared for in a way that they can still drink clean water from the river, subsist on hunting and trapping game and gathering, and is home to an established treatment center for people to heal from colonial violence and addiction, and has many sites of cultural significance. What do you suppose this territory will look like after the gas company is finished with it? How clean will the water remain? How much game and habitat will be lost to pollution, roads and infrastructure? How many burial sites will be desecrated?

It is beyond unacceptable for the state of Washington to force gas & electric customers unlucky enough to live in PSE service areas, to be a part of this behavior and violence.

Here are links to articles that give more details on this particular situation. We know that if PSE's proposed Tacoma LNG refinery and storage tank becomes operational, according to permit documents, they would get all the gas for the lifetime of the project from BC Canada.

[Day 31 Video Update: We're Not Leaving](#) 02/18

[Exclusive: Canada police prepared to shoot Indigenous activists, documents show](#) The Guardian 12/19

[What cost are human rights worth?' UN calls for immediate RCMP withdrawal in Wet'suwet'en standoff](#) The Narwhal 01/20

Man Camps & the MMIW Crisis

Another human cost of continued fracked gas investments, is the connection to the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women (MMIW). When pipelines and fracking wells are being constructed, the large, transient, mostly male workforces are set up in what are known as "man camps". Statistics have shown that spikes in the incidence of missing and murdered indigenous women follow the construction routes. In fact there is one path up in Canada even referred to as "The Highway of Tears". These man camps also disrupt indigenous communities by bringing with them an increase of domestic violence, drug abuse, human trafficking, and homelessness via inflated rent markets, to the small towns nearby, which are often indigenous communities, unequipped to handle this influx of workers with no ties to the community, no family nearby, large paychecks, and emotionally and physically difficult job stresses.

We cannot pretend we don't know this. When we are tasked with determining sources of energy and infrastructure with the "least cost" we must count those stolen sisters.

[Why Aren't Fossil Fuel Companies Held Accountable for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women?](#) Yes! Magazine 10/19

[The Darkest Side of Fossil-Fuel Extraction: It leads to violence against, and the trafficking of, Native women](#) Scientific American 10/19

Sacrifice Zones & Turning a Blind Eye

The Puyallup Tribe has not been meaningfully consulted by a single agency involved in the entire permit process of the proposed Tacoma LNG refinery, storage tank and bunkering facility being constructed on Medicine Creek Treaty Territory, on the border of the Puyallup Reservation. Fracked gas refineries like this one emit toxins and carcinogens 24 hours a day, including xylene, toluene and benzene, which can cause cancer, asthma, birth defects, neurological disorders and other serious health impacts. Fossil fuel refineries are disproportionately located on or next to indigenous communities and reservations, the Port of Tacoma, on MCT Territory, is a prime example; US Oil, Targa, & Westrock, with expansion papers filed and Puget Sound Energy's LNG on deck to occupy part of the Occidental Superfund site, one of many Superfund sites nearby. No cumulative air testing is measured for toxins, no public health assessments are ordered before projects & expansions are rubber stamped, nobody stops construction that began long before obtaining the necessary permits. Salmon runs are all but gone from what was once a thriving and abundant estuary filled with nourishment and drinkable water. Puyallup are Salmon People and have cared for these lands, waters and creatures since time immemorial, with this stewardship inseparable from cultural and spiritual practices.

[Press Release - Puyallup Tribe - PSCAA Permit Decision](#) - 12/19

Reimbursing Puget Sound Energy or other fossil fuel companies for new or expanded gas infrastructure when we have evidence of all these costs, goes beyond turning a blind eye, it funds the continued institutional racism & genocide that has been an ugly part of our state's & our nation's history for far too long. As Commissioners, you sit in the unique seat of being able to change history

with the stroke of a pen, at a time when change is desperately needed. Please count all the costs, not just those associated with a dollar sign.

Stacy Oaks
Organizer with 350 Seattle
Living in Tulalip, WA