



November 12, 2021

Amanda Maxwell  
 Executive Director and Secretary  
 Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission  
 621 Woodland Square Loop SE  
 Lacey, WA 98503

*Re: Draft CETA Rules, Docket UE-210183*

Dear Ms. Maxwell:

NRDC appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft CETA Rules proposed in this docket. We fully subscribe to the comments submitted by the Northwest Energy Coalition. In addition, we want to express particular concern with the language that will enable a party to use RECS from the generation of renewable energy while the energy itself is sold to a third party as “null power.” We take particular exception to the term “null power” in all circumstances, especially this one, as implying that there are no greenhouse gas or other emissions associated with this power and it can be represented as such.

Using RECS in this way becomes a shell game in which **both** the retainer of the “clean” power attributes — who used it to offset an equivalent amount of fossil generation — and the buyer of the renewable-generated energy now without the RECS, and now characterized as harmless “null” power that in used to displace some part of the buyer’s dirtier power, will come off as cleaner than they actually are. This becomes, effectively, the double-counting that we at BEF<sup>1</sup> argued against for years. In any honest accounting, either the seller or the buyer has to take responsibility for the fossil fuel emissions that do not disappear. Of course it is tempting for both parties to wish those emissions away; with the defined “null power” from renewable resources, they miraculously vanish from the transaction. They do not, however, fail to enter the atmosphere.

If a renewable generating project needs integration resources but sufficient storage is not available so it has recourse to a gas turbine, then it should be obliged to report the associated emissions. The pea never really disappears; it’s always under one of the shells, or in the huckster’s hand.

Respectfully,

Angus Duncan, PNW Consultant representing NRDC

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<sup>1</sup> The Bonneville Environmental Foundation, where I served as founding President and CEO from 1999 to 2005, was an early developer and marketer of RECS (or “Green Tags” as we called them). BEF argued that the generated power from which the REC was “unbundled” or stripped must then carry the emissions attributes of the fossil power that was being offset by the RECS buyer, and this should be reported as such by the seller.

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