

From: [David Van Holde](#)
To: [UTC DL Records Center](#)
Cc: [Quakers: David & Deborah Townsend](#)
Subject: Comment on PSE's 2017 Integrated Resource Plan, Docket numbers UE-160918 and UG-160919 by group of Ratepayers
Date: Monday, February 19, 2018 10:19:57 AM
Attachments: [Vashon and Eastside Religious Society of Friends - Minute on PSE IRP Process w Respect to Coal Transition.pdf](#)
Importance: High

To the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission:

This is a comment on PSE's 2017 Integrated Resource Plan, Docket numbers UE-160918 and UG-160919. The comment is pasted below AND ATTACHED AS A PDF.

The comment represents the shared perspectives of two Quaker faith worship groups, members of which reside in the Puget Sound Energy service area: 1) The Eastside Friends Meeting (Bellevue) and 2) The Vashon Friends Worship Group. The total number of ratepayers represented by this communication exceeds 30.

The letter is titled: "A Request from Some Members of the Religious Society of Friends Regarding Puget Sound Energy's Current Integrated Resource Plan."

If you need to contact me with questions or concerns about this communication, I am available at:

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Thank you for your consideration of our views on this important matter.

David Van Holde, Clerk, Vashon

===== TEXT OF ATTACHED MESSAGE, ALSO ATTACHED AS PDF =====

**A Request from Some Members of the Religious Society of Friends
Regarding Puget Sound Energy's Current Integrated Resource Plan**

*Respectfully Submitted to the Washington Utilities and Transportation
Commission and Puget Sound Energy, February 2018:*

We, members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) are a faith-based group who share a *moral conviction to stand for care of our mother, Earth, to the best of our*

abilities[1]. Therefore, we must offer our views and a request on the important matter of Puget Sound Energy's current Integrated Resource Plan. We speak not only out of concern for our own children and descendants, but for those less advantaged with no voice on our planet, whose survival is already threatened by climate change. Since we share one atmosphere, it is no overstatement to say that this plan will have truly global and historic consequences.

We understand and hope you agree that:

1. The overwhelming scientific evidence available indicates that humans are causing uncontrolled changes to the Earth's climate by releasing huge quantities of so-called "greenhouse gases" (principally carbon dioxide, through the combustion of fossil fuels). Notably, the generation of electrical energy with fossil fuels is a large contributor to these emissions.
2. An overwhelming consensus of informed experts believe that if we allow these emissions to continue at a high rate even 20 more years, the effects on life as we know it on Earth will be very destructive and effectively irreversible for hundreds of years and that effects on human civilization – as well as other life forms, which have unrepresented rights - are likely to be catastrophic.
3. Many of these and other respected experts have presented rational arguments and plans that, executed with coordinated efforts, can halt the release of greenhouse gases from utility electrical generation *using economical means* before the most serious effects of climate change take hold.

Using both our rational thoughts – as persons who practice risk management in our lives, especially where the welfare of our children and descendants are concerned - as well as our hearts, as convicted believers that we must act morally, minimizing harm to others when we can - we insist that Puget Sound Energy must develop and execute strategies to entirely eliminate such emissions as soon as possible, and certainly by 2040.

Puget Sound Energy is currently engaged with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission in a periodic Integrated Resource Plan process to update to its long-term energy resource portfolio decisions. *This plan spans the next 20 years, across the very period when most climate experts tell us that we must make revolutionary changes to our civilization's energy sources to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions in order to avoid catastrophic climate changes that are otherwise virtually certain.*

Our understanding is that the current proposed PSE Integrated Resource Plan includes a transition from coal combustion principally to natural gas as the replacement for retired coal energy in PSE's electricity generation portfolio mix. While we agree that it is necessary to cease coal combustion, we must point out that many respected studies indicate natural gas is not an acceptable alternative, given the risks this path would present. Most importantly, we simply do not have time in 20 years for a "bridge fuel" phase before ultimately transitioning to sustainable energy sources with zero greenhouse gas emissions from electrical generation. Adding to that concern, we understand that the fugitive emissions of methane extraction use are not

well understood. Given the far greater greenhouse gas impacts of methane compared to carbon dioxide, its substantially increased use is thus extremely risky. There are many strong arguments articulated in detail for a direct transition to renewables; we list just two here. We would be happy to expand on these if requested to do so, but believe others have adequately communicated them to this body.

As decision-makers in the WUTC and PSE, you are representatives of organizations that were chartered and franchised respectively to serve public needs and so are accountable to that public. Therefore, you should make decisions on electrical resource planning based on a least-risk strategy, taking into consideration all those you serve, the best scientific information available and the longest time horizon that can reasonably be considered. If that approach is used, only a plan that leads as quickly as economically possible to zero greenhouse gas emissions is defensible. The underlying science explaining atmospheric impacts of human greenhouse gas releases are as proven as any chemistry can be and are already abundantly evident in the global average temperature records over the last century. You as intelligent and informed stewards of the public trust can confirm these facts to be true if you are not already aware of them. Not to seek and act on that information would be a moral transgression against many generations to come.

Our mother Earth hosts us with the ultimate gift of sustaining our lives. As moral humans we must do our utmost to preserve and support that sustenance and to pass it on to our descendants. For that reason we respectfully request that the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission and Puget Sound Energy make and execute a forward-looking resource plan we all can be proud to have our descendants read. To do so, PSE's current IRP must chart the utility's course inexorably to zero greenhouse gas emissions before 2040.

Representing the shared opinions of Vashon and Eastside Society of Friends Meetings Attendees

[1] *“As people of faith, we are called to answer the moral challenge of climate disruption.”*
(*Friends Journal*, January 2015)