

Whipple, Amanda (UTC)

From: Kouchi, Roger (UTC) on behalf of Public Involvement (UTC)
Sent: Wednesday, October 09, 2013 7:37 AM
To: UTC DL Records Center
Subject: FW: Puget Sound Energy Integrated Resource Plan (UE-120767)

From: Marianne Edain [mailto:mattp@re-sources.org]
Sent: Tuesday, October 08, 2013 1:45 PM
To: Public Involvement (UTC)
Subject: Puget Sound Energy Integrated Resource Plan (UE-120767)

Chairman Danner, WA Utilities and Transportation Commission, We have the misfortune to be customers of PSE. As customers of a foreign owned, investor owned utility we have the distinction of paying the highest rates in Washington and having some of the poorest service. Things were bad enough a few years ago that we residents of Whidbey Island attempted to form our own Public Utility District to address those problems. Suddenly PSE had plenty of money, and threw millions into a political campaign to convince voters to vote against their own interests – and they did. The situation today is: ~ our rates/kwh are increasing +/- 10% / year to pay for the leveraged buyout. ~ we have only limited access to the home solar installation program because PSE has written the rules in such a way as to make the entire process prohibitively complicated, difficult, and potentially costly. ~ while PSE is generating wind energy east of the Cascades, that energy is being sold to California at a premium rather than being used here in Washington. ~ measures which would increase power reliability (a huge issue here on Whidbey where outages are common) are deemed ‘too expensive’ so are not implemented. ~ while tree trimming is a standard practice to prevent limbs from bringing down power lines, PSE has repeatedly rejected offers of help in designing a program which would lower costs and reduce the amount of vegetation impacted. In effect, PSE’s program is creating wind tunnels along power line corridors which then exacerbate the problem rather than ameliorate it. ~ PSE believes (and acts on that belief) that their power line routes are sacrosanct and far more important than mere native plant communities. Thus it has no qualms with clearcutting sensitive wetlands, paving over critical areas, and generally causing large amounts of unnecessary and often counterproductive environmental damage. ~ and now we understand that PSE’s promise to separate itself from the Colstrip coal plant in Montana is being abrogated. We propose the following steps as partial solutions: ~ require that PSE divest itself of environmentally damaging energy sources such as Colstrip and the small interest it has in nuclear generated power. ~ require that PSE abide by the spirit as well as the letter of the law regarding distributed sources of solar and wind power. ~ require PSE to consult with restoration ecologists in the design of their powerline right of way maintenance program, and require that PSE actually abide by the recommendations of those ecologists. ~ require that PSE use mitigation sequencing, giving top priority to avoiding impacts, and forcing them to justify each step down the sequence (avoid, minimize, restore, mitigate). ~ do not allow PSE to use the excuse of increased cost as a reason not to avoid adverse environmental impacts. The cost is passed on to the customer in any case, so such cost savings merely shift the cost of the impact to the general public. ~ require PSE to justify rate increases with more than just increased profit to shareholders and paying off the leveraged buyout. ~ require that solar and wind generated electricity be used in Washington rather than being sold out of state. While this may reduce PSE’s profit, it will also reduce the need for dirty sources such as Colstrip and nuclear. ~ above all, require that PSE actually listen to and respond to its customers. We are the victims of a monopoly who are ignored until and unless we take drastic action. We should not be forced to that extreme. Thank you for considering these comments. We would appreciate hearing the ultimate outcome of this review.

Marianne Edain

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