

45th Legislative District Democrats
POB 2784
Redmond, WA 98073

April 7th 2017

**Puget Sound Energy
Bellevue WA**

Attention: Mrs. Kimberly Harris, Chief Executive Officer

Dear Ms. Harris:

Thank you for committing to retire the two most toxic boilers at the Colstrip coal plant. This decision is a tremendous victory for our climate, and we commend PSE for its leadership in moving the Northwest beyond coal. We now urge PSE to commit to a 100% renewable energy and energy efficiency replacement for Colstrip and no new natural gas.

Climate change is already disrupting everything from our water supplies to our food systems—fueling forest fires, damaging shellfish, and causing sea-level rise on our Pacific coast. We must transition off fossil fuels as quickly as possible to avoid global warming's most catastrophic effects. Gas is nearly as damaging to the climate as coal, given the significant risk of methane leakage at every stage from drilling to end-use combustion. Additionally, gas requires unsustainable amounts of water for hydraulic fracturing, refining, and pipeline and power plant operations.

Natural gas is also financially risky for PSE customers. History shows that gas fuel costs are prone to dramatic price swings, and the Energy Information Administration predicts future increases. Moreover, natural gas will ultimately be subject to rising carbon costs. PSE's corporate owners may bear little risk associated with fuel or carbon costs, but customers stand to pay significantly.

PSE's customers overwhelmingly demand renewable energy. Cities and counties that are home to hundreds of thousands of PSE ratepayers have called on PSE to reduce its fossil fuel dependence and transition to carbon-free resources. Major corporate customers, such as Microsoft, Starbucks, and REI, have joined the Renewable Energy Buyer's Alliance to guarantee their operations run clean. What is more, the Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Council's most recent projections demonstrate that new natural gas infrastructure is unnecessary to meet the region's energy demands for at least a decade. The Council has instead called on utilities to invest in 4,500 MW of conservation and 600 MW of demand response in its 20-year plan.

Rather than wasting millions of dollars on unwanted, unnecessary, and highly polluting new gas facilities, PSE should seize Colstrip's retirement as an opportunity to lead our region in clean energy development. PSE has already proven skilled at using energy storage and demand response to meet its

capacity needs. PSE has also piloted energy efficiency solutions that have reduced customers' bills across its service territory. More can—and should—be done to bring these measures to scale. Integrating conservation measures and demand response with investments in new renewable resources will enable PSE to meet its capacity and generation demands while minimizing environmental harm and financial risk for customers.


We need to get this right. To that end, PSE's replacement plan for Colstrip must reflect the following values:

- **Economic prosperity:** Clean energy creates three times more jobs for every dollar invested than fossil fuels. It is critical that green jobs be family-wage, union jobs with equitable pathways for local residents, communities of color, and lower-income communities. Where a union workforce is not available, clean energy developers should prioritize local hire at the prevailing wage.
- **Equity:** PSE must minimize short-term rate impacts on lower-income households. It is also vital that, as we transition to a clean energy future, the community of Colstrip and its unionized workforce are not left behind.
- **Transparency and inclusivity:** Meaningful and transparent engagement with labor groups, lower-income communities, people of color, and other impacted communities in crafting your replacement plan is vital for ensuring equitable outcomes and worker and community protections.


PSE's decision to retire Colstrip is praiseworthy. Yet, the ultimate impact of Colstrip's retirement hinges on how PSE replaces Colstrip's power. A 100% renewable energy and energy efficiency replacement is achievable and economical—it is the only sustainable path forward.

We, the 45th Legislative District Democrats first debated signing onto this letter at our March 1st meeting with 143 people in attendance. To give adequate time for investigation we waited until our April 5th meeting to vote on writing you. Our Endorsements Committee recommended the letter. We require a 2/3 vote for adoption. It received vigorous debate of about 10 minutes and we authorized signing it with a vote of 68-1 with just over 100 people attending.

Sincerely,



Ken Albinger, Chair 45th LD Democrats



Dave Williams, 45th Endorsement Committee Chair