

Columbia Generating Station Cost of Power *Unpublished Letter to the Editor of The Seattle Times* *(Sent July 6)*

Columbia Generating Station is an affordable energy resource for our region. Unfortunately, the article “Weighing plant’s costs, benefits” (July 3) used incomplete data to show a higher-than-actual average for the facility’s cost of power.

Columbia’s average cost of power during the last ten years (2001-2010), using a standard, industry-wide formula, was 3 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh). Even with debt service included, that average cost of power is about 4 cents/kWh – still significantly lower than reported.

Of note, Columbia’s construction debt would have been paid off next year had we not partnered with the Bonneville Power Administration to reduce their higher-interest federal debt – a refinancing partnership that saves ratepayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

Furthermore, Columbia’s projected cost of power for the next four years will average 3.8 cents/kWh. Besides hydropower, there is not another clean, baseload source of energy that touches that.

Energy Northwest owns and operates a diverse mix of clean energy resources because that’s how Washington state will meet future energy demand and environmental goals. Columbia is a critical part of that mix – an incredible resource for the Northwest. With renewal of its license, Columbia will continue producing clean, cost-effective, baseload energy – safely – for another 30 years.

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