

Commissioners Support Operation of Columbia Generating Station, a Carbon-Free Source of Affordable Electricity

April 20, 2017

The Clallam PUD Board of Commissioners adopted Resolution Number 2082-17 at their Monday, April 17, 2017, regular public commissioner meeting.

Resolution in Support of the Operation of Columbia Generating Station, a Carbon-Free Source of Affordable Electricity

WHEREAS, over 30,000 customers in Clallam County rely on PUD #1 of Clallam County (Clallam PUD) for a reliable supply of electricity at affordable prices.

WHEREAS, Clallam PUD is committed to providing its customers with as much of their electricity as economically possible from carbon-free generating resources.

WHEREAS, Clallam PUD is a member of Energy Northwest, a Joint Operating Agency of the State of Washington that is committed to producing electricity from carbon-free generating resources.

WHEREAS, Energy Northwest operates the Columbia Generating Station, a nuclear power plant that is the largest source of carbon-free electricity in the State of Washington after the state's indigenous supply of clean hydroelectric power.

WHEREAS, the Columbia Generating Station is a publicly owned nuclear facility operated by a Washington State not-for-profit operating agency since 1984, capable of delivering 1,150 megawatts of continuously available power to the grid, sufficient for a million homes, while emitting virtually no greenhouse gases;

WHEREAS, Columbia Generating Station power is generated at a sustaining cost of 4.2 cents per kWh, which is competitive with natural gas and less expensive than wind and solar power;

WHEREAS, Columbia Generating Station has an exemplary record of safe and reliable operation.

WHEREAS, the greatest part of the spent nuclear fuel from the Columbia Generating Station is safely contained in dry cask storage on site, and the Columbia Generating Station is currently building additional capacity to store thirty additional years' worth of spent fuel casks, so that the Columbia Generating Station could operate throughout its useful life without a national spent fuel repository;

WHEREAS, Columbia Generating Station power is continuously available regardless of weather conditions, and is therefore well suited to support reliable power grid baseload and capacity demand, including backing up increasing levels of intermittent renewable wind and solar power;

WHEREAS, shutting down the Columbia Generating Station would likely result in an immediate shift of our power to CO₂ power sources such as natural gas to meet increasing power demands while supporting the power grid baseload; increasing the state's CO₂ emissions from natural gas, making attainment of Washington's greenhouse gas emission goals more difficult, and making Washingtonians pay more in potential carbon taxes;

WHEREAS, the replacement of Columbia Generating Station by a similarly reliable source of electricity would add at least 3,000,000 tons of carbon to the atmosphere each year, which would adversely affect efforts to combat climate change. (1)

WHEREAS, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, following extensive safety and environmental technical reviews, and onsite inspections, found that the Columbia Generating Station can continue its safe and reliable operation through 2043.

WHEREAS, Columbia Generating Station represents an investment in a large, continuously upgraded, and successfully operating low-carbon electrical baseload power plant with at least a thirty year expected remaining lifetime;

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Clallam PUD has found that the operation of Columbia Generating Station is essential to ensuring that its customers receive a continuing supply of affordable, carbon-free electricity.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Commissioners of Clallam PUD resolves that Energy Northwest should take all possible steps to ensure the continued safe and reliable contribution of Columbia Generating Station, through its lifecycle, to the northwest clean energy mix, as approved by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.