

The Energy Activist

Spring 2017



The Spring 2017 Clean & Affordable Energy Conference

May 5, Boise

Integrating renewables in the energy system, getting Montana wind power to western markets, and solutions for salmon recovery are all on the agenda . . .

**PEOPLE'S
CLIMATE
MARCH**
April 29, 2017

It's Marching Season!

The People's Climate March is a watershed event and you can be part of it wherever you are. Find the march nearest you . . .



It's spring and the salmon are back . . . in federal court

The latest on the campaign to persuade the Bonneville Power Administration and federal agencies to seriously consider all options for salmon recovery . . .



Microsoft and PSE settle on direct power purchasing

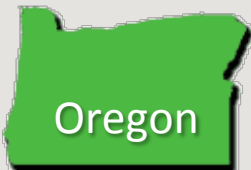
Agreement increases commitments to renewable energy, energy efficiency, and bill assistance and home weatherization programs that help low-income customers.

Your Monthly Electric Bill				
Account Number	Account Name	Service Address		
0123456	Joe Wattwatcher	123 Main St., Anytown, OR 99999		
Service Period		Meter Reading		
Start	Finish	Previous	Present	
2/1/2017	2/28/2017	25072	26072	
Your Electric Charge Details (all taxes)				
Line Item		Rate & Unit	Charge	
Basic Charge		\$7.87 per month	\$7.87	
Electricity				
Tier 1 (First 400 kWh used)		\$0.075 400 kWh	\$30.00	
Tier 2 (Above 400 kWh used)		\$0.090 400 kWh	\$36.00	
Other Electric charges/credits		\$0.010 200 kWh	(\$2.00)	
State Utility Tax			\$5.00	
Total Charge			\$91.87	

Utilities promote new rate design model

. . . with which the Coalition has issues.

State Updates:



NW Energy Coalition
for a clean and affordable energy future

NWEC Events & Staff Updates

give
BIG
WEDNESDAY, MAY 10
SEATTLE FOUNDATION

Introducing new colleagues

Oriana Magnera
Outreach & Policy
Associate

Lucas Cometto
Development
Manager



The Spring 2017 Clean & Affordable Energy Conference May 5, Boise

Maximizing the full breadth of clean energy resources, getting Montana wind power to west coast markets, and restoring salmon populations while providing clean, reliable, low-cost electricity will be among the topics explored by experts from the environmental community, utilities, and the Bonneville Power Administration.

Boise Mayor Dave Bieter will open the conference and introduce Boise Public Works director, Steve Burgos, who will describe how municipalities are leading decarbonization efforts in the northwest.



Steve Burgos

[See the agenda
And REGISTER](#)



Dave Bieter

Thanks to conference sponsors

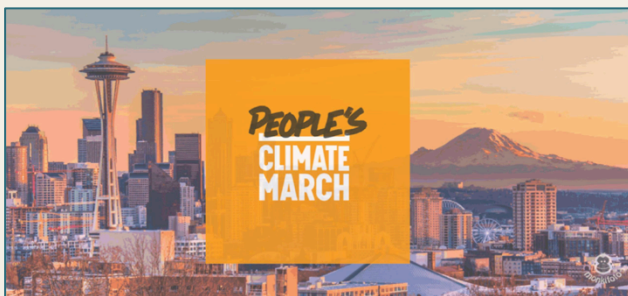


Community Partners include the Alternative Energy Resources Organization, the League of Women Voters, the Snake River Alliance, the Sierra Club Idaho Chapter, the Idaho Clean Energy Association, the Idaho Community Action Partnership, and the Idaho Conservation League.

Also, please join Coalition board members and staff for a pre-conference reception at 5PM on Thursday, May 4 in the Aspen Room at the Grove Hotel, 245 South Capitol Blvd., Boise.

*[Click Here to learn about
more events and conferences](#)*

It's Marching Season!



The Peoples' Climate March – April 29

The main march will take place in Washington, but there are dozens of sister marches throughout the region. Here's a partial listing.

[Click here to see all sister marches in the Northwest](#)

Oregon

- Bend – 12PM, Drake Park Bandshell
- Brookings – 10AM, 619 Chetco Blvd. (Hwy 101)
- Eugene – 1PM, Wayne Morse Federal Courthouse, 405 E. 8th Ave.
- Portland – 12PM, Dawson Park, N. Stanton St. & Williams Ave.

Idaho

- Boise – 12PM, Idaho Capitol Bldg., 700 W. Jefferson St.
- Ketchum – 11AM, Ketchum Town Square, 480 4th St. E.
- Moscow – 11AM, Friendship Square, Main Street
- Sandpoint – 1PM, Farmin Park, 300 Oak Street

For more climate action news,
see this feature on the
**Deep Decarbonization
Pathways Project**

Washington

- Ellensburg – 1PM, SURC Central Washington Univ., 400 E. University Way
- Seattle – 10AM, Occidental Park, 117 S. Washington St.
- Spokane – 12PM, Spokane Tribal Gathering Place, 353 N. Post St.
- Walla Walla – 10AM, 1st Congregational Church, 73 S. Palouse St.

Montana

- Billings – 12PM, Yellowstone County Courthouse, 217 N. 27th
- Bozeman – 1PM, Lindley Park, 900 E. Main St.
- Missoula – 1PM, Downtown, N. Higgins Ave.
- Glacier National Park – 11:30AM, Lake McDonald Lodge, 288 Lake McDonald Lodge Loop

It's spring and the salmon are back in federal court

Judge orders increased spill, but stops short of halting capital expenditures on lower Snake River dams



Mother nature and US District Court Judge Michael Simon had good news for salmon. On March 26, Simon found that salmon populations attempting to return to their spawning grounds would be irreparably harmed unless the US Army Corps of Engineers increase spill at eight dams.

Judge Simon ordered the Corps to increase spill starting in 2018. That's later than fish advocates would have liked, but Mother Nature has come partially to the rescue by dumping enough snow and rain on the region last winter to produce larger volumes of water that should help fish populations until spill is increased next year.

Judge Simon did not grant an injunction against continuing capital expenditures that could extend the life of the dams. Fish advocates sought to halt the expenditures because improvements to the dams could bias assessments of their value at a time when the Corps and the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) are under court order to conduct "a full and fair" assessment of whether the dams should be removed.

However, the judge did order BPA and the Corps to notify the court and the public of planned capital expenditures and left the door open for those expenditures to be challenged by the plaintiffs.

The assessment of whether the four lower Snake River dams should be removed will be part of a court-ordered National Environmental Policy Act EIS Review that is not scheduled for completion until 2021. A preliminary draft, to be published in 2020, will provide fish advocates an opportunity to assess whether the federal agencies are in fact giving the option of dam removal full and fair consideration. In the meantime, NOAA Fisheries and the Corps must submit a new biological opinion (BiOp) in December 2018 that proposes a roadmap for how the agencies plan to protect salmon and steelhead from dam system that has been found to violate the National Environmental Policy Act.

During that time, advocacy organizations led by Save Our wild Salmon (SOS) and including the

continued . . .

NW Energy Coalition, Earthjustice, the National Wildlife Federation, Pacific Coast Federation of Fisheries Associations, Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association, and Idaho Rivers United, will work to hold the federal agencies accountable through interaction with those preparing the review and the biological opinion. At the same time, advocates will reach out to members of Congress and key stakeholders whose interests might be affected by dam removal to explore the impacts and address their concerns.

One of the issues sure to be raised in those conversations is the question of whether the Northwest's access to low-cost, reliable, and carbon-free energy will be reduced by dam removal. The Bonneville Power Administration has claimed on multiple occasions that the power currently generated by the four lower Snake River dams would most likely have to be replaced by new natural gas powered generating plants that would be costly to construct and operate and that would also increase carbon emissions.

In response to that claim, the NW Energy Coalition is examining the roles that the lower Snake River dams and other resources play in assuring reliability for the power system and the ability of new renewable energy resources such as wind, solar, and energy efficiency to meet that need at an affordable price.

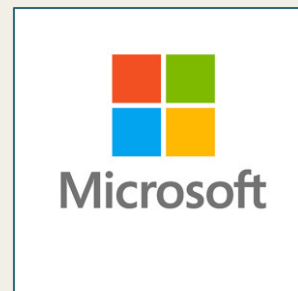
The Coalition will share its findings with the Corps and federal agencies to aid them in fulfilling the court's mandate that they fully and fairly consider viable alternatives, including dam removal.

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Settlement achieved in Microsoft bid to buy energy directly

For the last several months, the Coalition has been involved in a case at the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) in which Puget Sound Energy (PSE), in response to a request from Microsoft, proposed to establish a tariff under which large customers would be eligible to purchase electricity directly from the market while relying on PSE only for distribution and transmission services.

We are pleased to announce that a settlement agreement has been reached by all parties in the case including Microsoft and PSE, along with the Coalition, the Public Counsel Unit of the Attorney General's Office, the Energy Project, the Industrial Customers of Northwest Utilities, the Northwest & Intermountain Power Producers Coalition, and companies including Walmart Stores Inc.



If it is approved by the UTC, the agreement will allow Microsoft to purchase energy directly from the wholesale market under a special contract that includes extensive provisions that guarantee continued compliance with Washington's renewable portfolio and energy efficiency standards, increased funding for bill assistance and home weatherization programs, and a transition fee that insures remaining PSE customers will not have to absorb additional costs for stranded assets.



Microsoft will be required to:

- 1)** Continue to participate and contribute to PSE energy efficiency programs as if they remained a customer under their existing schedule. This will ensure that PSE and Microsoft pursue all cost-effective energy efficiency.
- 2)** Continue to make payments at the current rate to PSE's low-income assistance programs, and in addition, contribute another 50% of its current payment to a separate fund to expand access to energy efficiency and renewable energy for low-income customers.
- 3)** Meet 25% of its power needs with Energy Independence Act eligible renewable resources from 2018-2020, 40% eligible renewable resources from 2021 forward (matching any additional increase if the RPS requirements are legislatively increased). Remaining power needs will be met with carbon-free sources.
- 4)** Make a \$23,685,000 transition payment that PSE will pass along to remaining customers in order to hold customers harmless from the costs of Microsoft deciding to decline PSE's power services.

Also, the terms specifically state that the special contract does not address or resolve Microsoft's potential obligation to contribute to recovering costs associated with the decommissioning, remediation, or accelerated depreciation of the Colstrip generating units.

(Continued . . .)

The Coalition entered the case because the original tariff proposal could have opened the door for large customers to move toward direct retail access. Such a trend could result in reduced investment in renewable resources and energy efficiency, reductions in funding for low-income bill assistance and home weatherization, and the shifting of stranded costs to remaining customers.

Instead, the special contract agreement fulfills Coalition principles of ensuring that direct retail access results in a win-win outcome in which customers and the environment see increased benefits as compared to the status quo.

While the agreement allows Microsoft to meet its corporate goals for sustainability and carbon neutrality and ensures that the company provides meaningful commitments to state policy goals for renewable energy, energy efficiency, and low income assistance, it does not specifically encourage or give sanction to other cases in which large customers pursue the ability to purchase energy directly. Should such cases arise, the agreement reinforces the need and provides a template for addressing public interests.

For more information, please contact Wendy Gerlitz, wendy@nwenergy.org, or Joni Bosh, joni@nwenergy.org.

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*See this related feature on a new rate design model
being proposed by public utilities*

“Non-Proportional” Rate Design

Some utilities are proposing a new approach, but is it fair?

This past January a major Northwest public utility submitted a rate proposal that would have shifted a substantial portion of its revenue base from volumetric charges (the rate per kWh) to the monthly customer charge, which applies equally to all customers. A second Washington utility is preparing to propose the same kind of shift later this year. A third public utility in Oregon is exploring the possibility as well.

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State Utility Tax			\$5.00
Total Charge			\$91.87

A change in rate design philosophy

However, what they're proposing isn't just an increase in rates. It's a change in rate design philosophy based on the principle that a utility's fixed costs should be recovered through a flat monthly charge that requires all customers to pay the same amount regardless of usage and regardless of their ability to pay. By recovering costs through a mechanism that isn't in any way proportional to customers' level of consumption or the value they derive from the system, the new model creates serious inequities.

Encouraging bad behavior, discouraging good, and unfair to boot

Because expenses for plant, equipment, and administration can make up as much as 40% of a utility's cost base, the new rates being contemplated or proposed would increase the fixed portion of customers' bills from roughly \$5 or \$10 per month all the way up to as much as \$40 per month. And, while the utilities are offering offsetting reductions in volumetric charges. The net effect of the change would be to cause 20%+ hikes in the bills of low-volume users, many of whom also have low incomes, while reducing the bills of high-volume users. At the same time, incentives for energy efficiency, home solar, and other forms of distributed generation would be greatly reduced as would customers' ability to manage their monthly bills.

For those reasons, the Coalition opposes the new model and is preparing analyses that will show that it not only fails to fulfill socially desirable goals of equity and customer empowerment, it is also economically inefficient and will lead to distorted energy investment decisions by both utilities and customers.

Let us know if you hear of other utilities going down this path

The earlier that we hear "non-proportional" rate proposals are in the works, the better chance we have of heading them off. So, let us know and, in the meantime, look for additional white papers and updates on this topic, which will be part of the agenda at our fall conference

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Coming report shows global warming goals are achievable

In 2015 delegates to the Paris Climate Summit announced that, to avoid catastrophic effects from climate change, it will be necessary to limit global warming to no more than 2° centigrade. Immediately skeptics declared the goal unachievable for a welter of economic, political, technological, and cultural reasons.

In response, the Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project, an international consortium of more than 400 scientists and experts, is examining regions, nations, and even states to identify technological and policy strategies that will achieve an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by the year 2050.

In December, DDPP completed analyses for the United States as a whole and for three states – California, New York, and Washington – that served as pilot sites. The draft report for Washington concludes:

- Decarbonizing Washington's energy system to achieve 80% GHG reductions by 2050 can be done at a reasonable cost, without early retirement of existing infrastructure and without the need for technology that has not yet been proven.
- Success will rely on 3 pillars – enhanced energy efficiency, electrification of end uses, and decarbonization of electricity generation.
- Costs for the transformation will often fall on hard-to-electrify sectors like industry and heavy-duty trucking. Mitigating policies may be required.

The Deep Decarbonization Pathways report for the US is available at the [DDPP website](#). The Washington report is not yet available, but will be released shortly. To stay abreast of what's happening with the Washington analysis and to follow other events, follow DDPP on Twitter.

ABOUT DDPP

The Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project identifies strategies that will enable the world to meet the goal of limiting global warming to no more than 2° centigrade.

The DDPP includes prominent scientists from more than 40 research institutions around the world and is convened under the auspices of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), an initiative of Columbia University's Earth Institute for the UN, and the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), a nonprofit policy research institute based in Paris.

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Happenings at the Coalition

Please welcome . . .



Oriana Magnera, Outreach & Policy Associate

Oriana focuses on building partnerships with low-income, disadvantaged, and environmental justice communities; strengthening consumer protections; and achieving energy equity. She has worked in education policy, focusing on career-technical education, workforce development, and dropout prevention and she is experienced in communications, digital storytelling, and even animal behavior. Oriana holds a BA in Women's and Gender Studies and Comparative Ethnic Studies from Columbia University. She volunteers as a Court Appointed Special Advocate and explores the mountains and coast with her three dogs.

Lucas Cometto, Development Manager

Lucas joined the Coalition as Development Manager in March. He is directs all fundraising activities including foundation grants, sponsorships, corporate partnerships, and individual giving. Prior to moving to Seattle, he worked in development for several New York City-based non-profit organizations including the Municipal Art Society and the Foundation Center. In his spare time, Lucas enjoys landscape photography and exploring the U.S. National Parks.



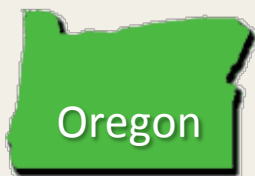
give
BIG
WEDNESDAY, MAY 10



Make a gift to the Coalition on May 10 and it will be compounded

It's the best day of the year to donate to the NW Energy Coalition because every gift you give will be partially matched by our board of directors. And it will increase our odds of winning additional funding from the Seattle Foundation, the sponsor of Give Big.

CLICK NOW
to schedule your gift



Legislature in session: Residential Energy Tax Credits at risk

Residential Energy Tax Credit (RETC)

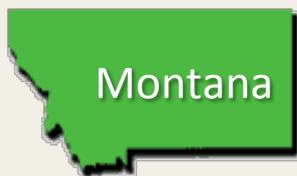
- **House Bill 2681**, that would preserve residential energy tax credits, made it out of committee. Rejection of 2681 would result in the loss of tax credits that have saved Oregon families \$2.5 million and reduced electricity use by more than 2 million kilowatt hours annually.

Rules Regarding Community Solar Projects

- **Docket AR 603** before the Public Utility Commission contains draft Community Solar program rules and is open for comments until May 9 with a hearing scheduled on May 22.

Portland General Electric (PGE) Integrated Resource Plan

- In its recent reply comment filing, PGE reduced its anticipated capacity requirement and announced that it has signed a contract for additional hydropower. The Company also signaled that other bilateral negotiations for hydro resources are actively ongoing and made a stronger financial case for early action on renewables. The Coalition hopes that bilateral negotiations combined with a renewables-only RFP will obtain sufficient capacity resources to satisfy PGE's near-term needs. A final commission order is scheduled for August 31.



Legislature debates how to respond to Colstrip closures

Reparations for the closure of Colstrip power plant units 1 & 2

- **Senate Bill 338**, sponsored by Sen. Jim Ankney of Colstrip would require the plant's owner, Puget Sound Energy, to pay for consequential damages from the units' impending closure that go far beyond those for which the utility can legitimately be held accountable. Coalition policy associate Diego Rivas authored an op-ed that describes how, by unfairly punishing PSE, would discourage future clean energy investments in Montana.
- **The Property Assessed Clean Energy Act (PACE) (SB 330)** that would have allowed banks and credit unions to provide financing for energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation upgrades to existing buildings died in the House Natural Resources Committee.
- **SB 7**, which would have encouraged private investment in renewable resources and enhanced energy diversification, passed the legislature, but was vetoed by the governor.



Legislature in session: Carbon tax, renewable portfolio standard, and building codes still in play

Bills affecting I-937 and the Renewable Portfolio Standard

- **The Clean Energy First Act** ((HB 1334), which was supported by the Coalition and would have provided for the continued transition to a cleaner electric system after I-937 goals are achieved in 2020, failed to get out of committee.
- A bill expanding the I-937 definition of qualifying renewable resources to include some **biomass** projects and upgrades was approved by both the house and the senate.
- An effort to expand the I-937 definition of qualifying renewable resources to include **incremental federal hydropower** is still pending as is a bill that would revise and reduce incentives for both **home solar and community solar**.

Carbon taxes

- Multiple carbon tax proposals are still alive, including one put forward by **the governor** and another in the form of a bill that's supported by the **Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy** (AJCE). Neither of these was embraced by Republicans in their budget proposal. If no carbon tax proposal emerges this session, there is a possibility that AJCE will take its proposal to the ballot in the form of a citizen initiative for the fall 2018 election.

Building codes

- Two building code revisions were proposed this session, but neither made it out of committee. The Coalition supported a bill (**HB 1622**) that would have increased funding for the State Building Code Council and streamlined processes. The Coalition opposed **SB 5500**, which would have resulted in delays in the implementation of new building code revisions and inhibited the council's ability to issue rules.



Intervening in the Intermountain Gas Company Rate Case. Ruling pending

Immediate conservation opportunities should be seized

- In response to an application to change rates for natural gas customers, Idaho Public Utility Commission staff recommended that Intermountain Gas Company increase the depth and breadth of its conservation portfolio as part of its upcoming 2019 Integrated Resource Plan. The Coalition, in partnership with the Idaho Conservation League (ICL), intervened to ask the Commission to order additional cost effective conservation programs immediately.
- The Coalition and ICL also recommended a series of improvements to the proposed fixed cost collection mechanism, including capping rate increases, removing per/month reconciliation, and exclusion of the 50 largest General Service customers. On rates, ICL and the Coalition recommended a lower customer charge for residential customers and, for the General Service class, rejection of a fourth block and retention of a declining block structure.

Upcoming Events



**May 9-11 – Portland OR
Portland Crowne Plaza
1441 NE 2nd Ave, Portland OR 97232**

The Oregon Solar Energy Conference is the fastest growing regional solar conference in the US. Over 400 people attended the 2016 conference. In 2017, we will offer an additional day of training, including business development sessions, hands-on installation training and electrical code change courses.



Save the date!

THE CLEAN ENERGY AWARDS GALA

**November 2, 2017, 6:30PM
Portland Crowne Plaza
1441 NE 2nd Ave, Portland OR 97232**

Bob Olsen Pacific Northwest Conservation Eagle Award
Headwaters Award
Doug Still Memorial Community Organizing Award
4 Under 40 Awards for Clean Energy Leadership