

May 2023 Meeting Minutes

Attending: Barbara Menne, Chuck Jensen, Ginny Lohr, Elly Claus-McGahan, Jason Berkowitz, Carolyn Queener, John Platt, John Doherty, Peggy Lovell Ford, Ashley Moser, speakers Marty Gibbons and Don Marsh. This ZOOM meeting screen was enhanced with closed captioning.

Action Team Report

Tabling, Barbara Menne—Report and assessment of our tabling at the April 22nd **South Sound Sustainability Expo**. The two booths looked great and attracted people—with excellent posters and eye-catching charts, the “don’t be a fossil” dinosaur, a kids’ craft, and “6 Americas” interactive felt board. Quite a few new members signed up as a result! The visitors were engaged and enthusiastic, stayed awhile and asked questions, especially about the IRA funds pertaining to them. There were helpful handouts on various topics; we could use more copies of those. Many thanks to [Linda Cohan](#) and other tabling committee members on their great work!

Speaker, Marty Gibbons

Marty Gibbons is the lobbyist on climate for the WA state board of the **League of Women Voters** and is about to become vice president of that board. The League believes that climate change is a serious threat facing our nation and planet and that a stable system for future generations is essential for democracy. The **Climate Interest Group** of the League is comprised of 1500 members, with teams such as Mitigation, Local Action, (Marty is chair of the Renewable Energy team). It coordinates study in order to effectively speak with one voice. His program tonight first discusses **methane**, then gives an overview of the **2023 State Legislative** session.

METHANE (CH₄)

Methane comprises 70-90% of natural gas. It is naturally occurring, colorless, a compound of carbon and hydrogen, and lighter than air. Its flame burns blue and produces a great deal of heat. Combustion produces water vapor and CO₂ but also particulates and nitrogen dioxide which are pollutants that degrade human health. **It is a very potent greenhouse gas**, contributing to climate change through burning and leakage. It has 80 times the warming effect of CO₂ in the first 20 years.

40% comes from natural emissions—wetlands, oceans, termites, gas hydrates in deep ocean ice, and thawing permafrost. (wetlands can be both a carbon source and sink)

60% comes from human activity—

AGRICULTURE (36%) cow burps and waste. *Agricultural practices can be improved to lower this.*
NATURAL GAS AND PETROLEUM (32%) *Leaks during extraction can be reduced considerably. There are watchdog groups (Environmental Defense Fund) using satellites to find and monitor their locations, as well as ruptures and abandoned wells that are leaking.*

LANDFILLS (17%) Rotting food waste. *It can be composted properly instead, and much wasted food can be diverted to food pantries, etc.*

COAL MINING (7%) Leaks.

Methane at home--Electrify! Gas stoves are always emitting methane, **and it is a poison.**

Recent WA legislation on methane--**HB1663** and **HB1799** reduce methane from landfills and manage organic materials.

2023 STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

Check out the [League of Women Voters update](#) for more information.

Major climate bills that have passed:

HB1181 Climate components to update the GMA Growth Management Act. Comprehensive planning for how we develop/cluster housing, to address climate and environmental justice concerns.

SB5165 Improving electric power system transmission planning. To obtain the additional transmission infrastructure for clean and renewable energy sources will require comprehensive forecasting, planning and efficient permitting.

HB1170 Integrated Climate Response Strategy updates for climate resilience. The current Climate Response Strategy was completed in 2012, so is due for an update. This bill will increase the focus on climate justice considerations.

HB1176 Creating a Washington Climate Corps. Project to create climate-related service opportunities for young adults and displaced workers, to build low-carbon and climate-resilient communities and ecosystems while providing education, workforce development, and new career pathways.

HB1216 Consolidates and streamlines the siting of clean energy projects. Streamlines the permitting process for Clean Energy Projects of Statewide Significance.

A word to voters/citizens who wonder if their advocacy makes a difference: ***“they do pay attention,”*** and you never know when it can make a difference. The recent introduction of remote testimony to sign in on a bill on the [website](#) is a huge step forward. Try signing in as a group, that is even better!

Speaker, Don Marsh

Don Marsh is part of the **WA Clean Energy Coalition**, keeping an eye on **Puget Sound Energy** for several years. The coalition is a group of environmental stakeholders and civic organizations that have been participating in **PSE’s Integrated Resource Plan** advisory groups for many years. It has been a very frustrating process because they have given PSE all sorts of feedback and good ideas, and most of it just really doesn’t make much impact in their plans. So eventually

they said they should get together to act as a more unified voice. A big accomplishment was to get PSE to include climate change in their forecasts.

Several graphs were shown illustrating the projected plan and costs. PSE's 2024-2050 projection (for approval from the **WA Utilities and Transportation Commission**) includes the same continued demand for gas, with a huge expenditure in carbon allowances (over \$10.3 billion out of a total \$20 Billion plan!) **It totally ignores the state's expectations for electrification and emission reductions.**

When compared to a plan with an **electrification scenario**, there is a large improvement in reducing emissions and the cost efficiency per reduction of emissions is **10 TIMES** better. The cost for carbon allowances would be \$2.4 vs. \$10.3 billion.

A graph was shown about levelized costs for natural gas:

\$3.70 for one unit of gas distributed

\$4.61 added for carbon allowances per the Climate Commitment Act

\$6.57 in "social costs of greenhouse gases" (damage to the environment)

\$1.34 in cost of "upstream carbon" (leakage at wellhead)

Put simply, **"when we burn one dollar's worth of gas, we are causing two dollar's worth of harm."**

This situation reveals a flaw in the cap and trade (carbon allowance) program, unfortunately. They expected companies to want to work toward reducing emissions and to avoid the costs of carbon allowances. Yet PSE's plan shows that some companies will just pass it on to their customers, to the tune of a 14% rate increase.

Why doesn't PSE, which is also an electric supplier, welcome electrification? The problem is that over half of their gas customers get their electricity elsewhere. If natural gas use were reduced, they would lose over half of their customers entirely.

In conclusion, PSE plans to spend billions of dollars to buy carbon allowances and keep polluting rather than to actually do anything about getting to net zero by 2050. Kicking the can down the road, so to speak. Morally questionable at the least!

The coalition has created a [petition](#) so that every ratepayer and concerned individual can comment on this horrible plan. It can show the commission that people are upset and are paying attention. It needs to be signed by June 5, 5pm.

WCEC's introduction of their petition

*"Customers of Puget Sound Energy as well as a healthy environment and future generations would be harmed by the company's plan to continue emitting **huge quantities of greenhouse gases** for the next 26 years.*

*Instead of addressing the problem, PSE would charge customers **\$10 billion** to pay for carbon allowances required to permit these emissions. That's more than the*

*company would spend maintaining and modernizing our energy grid during the next quarter century! Although PSE claims its plan is the "second lowest cost" option of the alternatives it studied, PSE uses an accounting trick to defer the costs of reducing emissions until after 2050, placing that burden on the shoulders of our **children and grandchildren**.*

*Fortunately, PSE's analysis shows a cost-effective option is less risky for customers, better for the environment, and more fair for future generations. **Washington Clean Energy Coalition**, the sponsor of this petition, has submitted detailed comments and recommendations to PSE's regulator, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission.*

*By signing this petition, you are urging the Commission to **reject PSE's terrible fossil fuel powered plan**. Join us in our call for a cleaner energy future, lower and more stable energy costs, a healthier environment, and a lighter burden for our children and grandchildren."*