

**RESOLUTION NO. M-1816**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OLYMPIA,  
WASHINGTON, RELATED TO PUGET SOUND ENERGY'S CONTINUED RELIANCE  
ON COAL-FIRED POWER PRODUCTION AND PROPOSED LEGISLATION BEFORE  
THE WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE**

WHEREAS, Puget Sound Energy (PSE) is the largest energy utility in Washington State with more than one million customers and a power-generating capacity of about 3,000 megawatts; and

WHEREAS, PSE's sources of power are diversified, to include hydroelectric, natural gas, coal, wind and nuclear; and

WHEREAS, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined that the soot and smog produced by coal plants are linked to asthma, lung disease, and premature death, and these findings have resulted in recent rulings by the federal administration and the United States Supreme Court to limit coal power emissions for new and existing power plants; and

WHEREAS, coal power production results in large quantities of air pollutants which are harmful to public health, including sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, mercury, and fine particulates that lodge deep in the lungs; and

WHEREAS, in 2014 the Olympia City Council joined with numerous other Washington jurisdictions, organizations, and private citizens to petition PSE to move away from coal-based power production. This sentiment was reinforced by a guest editorial in The Seattle Times, which encouraged PSE to step away from its involvement with coal power and turn to a green future of renewable energy in an opinion piece signed by the Mayors of the cities of Olympia, Bainbridge Island, and Mercer Island; and

WHEREAS, Washington State's Representative for the 40th Legislative District, Jeff Morris, has introduced legislation which would provide a possible pathway for PSE to close its coal-fired power plants, including the second-largest coal-fired generating facility west of the Mississippi River located in Colstrip, Montana, with carbon emissions equivalent to half the cars in the State of Washington, or essentially three million vehicles and more than 800 acres of toxic coal ash waste ponds; and

WHEREAS, Representative Morris's legislation, known as HB 2002 and SB 5874, "The Closure of Coal-Fired Electric Generation Facilities," provides a valuable springboard for further consideration of how best to move beyond coal power generation for Washington State citizens; and

WHEREAS, this proposed legislation, as written, would not set a timeline for closing any PSE coal-fired plant, but instead would allow PSE up to ten years to submit a plan and another 20 years to implement the plan, if they alone choose to proceed; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation would prevent the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) from taking any action to address coal plant closures, giving this authority to a private industry and disarming the public's principal regulator; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation provides that any costs associated with closing a coal plant, including cleanup costs, would be borne by the rate payers, providing the WUTC with no authority to review or audit such costs for reasonable application; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation is a first step which begins to respond to substantial public pressure for closure of PSE's coal power plants and is a work in progress which, though with flaws, opens the door for public dialogue and greater citizen involvement;

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1.** The City of Olympia strongly urges Washington State to adopt legislation which sets a clear and certain pathway for the expedient closure of the coal-fired power plant in Colstrip, Montana and PSE's divestment from other coal-based power sources.

**Section 2.** The City of Olympia strongly urges the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission to account for the full economic, environmental and public health costs of coal-fired generation when considering the economic viability of the Colstrip, Montana plant or other similar coal-fired PSE investments.

**Section 3.** The City of Olympia strongly urges Puget Sound Energy to continue as a trusted partner and utility provider by redrafting its Integrated Resource Plan to more fully reflect the public interest of promptly and efficiently moving away from coal-based energy, and by rethinking its current reliance on coal power so that PSE can continue leading the way on clean energy and climate change mitigation.

**Section 4.** The City of Olympia strongly urges the Washington State Legislature, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, Puget Sound Energy, and the people of this great state to capitalize on the opportunities for continued innovation and job creation through energy efficiency and renewable energy, prompting thousands more family-wage jobs from the transition away from coal for power generation to clean and efficient solar, wind, and other methods of renewable and sustainable energy.

**PASSED BY THE OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL** this 24<sup>th</sup> day of February 2015.

  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
CITY ATTORNEY