

Presented to the Bellevue City Council in regular session, January 12, 2015

My name is Larry Johnson, I'm a retired trial lawyer residing at 8505 129th Ave. SE in Newcastle. To date myself, one of my former law partners was Governor Albert D. Rosellini. Last March I founded "Citizens for Sane Eastside Energy," a Washington nonprofit, with a website at www.sane-eastside-energy.org. Though I live in Newcastle, Bellevue as Lead Agency for Energize Eastside will make decisions permanently affecting all of us on the Eastside. So thank you for letting me speak.

I am here to talk about this city's *process* in dealing with citizen action groups in a broader perspective and not about the many flaws in PSE's proposed project. Process, and how democracy at the local level ought to work. As I will explain, I don't think local democracy is working here the way it should.

I have two points:

First, you need to establish and stick to your own timetable for any project you have the power to permit, regardless of how powerful the permit applicant may be and what they think the timetable should be.

Second, please be fair with the public, especially with informed and passionate citizen activist groups. Allowing a few minutes for speakers' "public comments" at council meetings borders on patronizing your constituents, giving them a chance to blow off steam and little else. You put no obligation on yourselves to respond or interact with us publicly.

Many on the Eastside believe this city has far too cozy a relationship with PSE. But I can't believe that, given PSE's long history of misdeeds, some bordering on the criminal. Here is a list:

- [2007: the UTC fines PSE \$1 million for illegally selling 65,000 customers' private data to an outside marketing firm;
- [2008: the UTC fines PSE \$1.25 million for intentionally falsifying gas pipeline safety inspection records over the course of 4 years, the biggest fine ever imposed on a utility in Washington State;
- [2008: PSE settles with the UTC for \$500,000 for failing to resolve 67 gas pipeline safety violations dating back to 2003;
- [2010: fined again \$250,000 for violating an order to correct specific customer accounts;
- [2011: fined again another \$104,300 for continuing the same violations among low-income customers;
- [2012: fined again \$430,000 for improperly charging residential disconnect-visit fees;
- [2013: fined again \$275,000 for violating gas-safety rules when responding to gas leaks in Seattle, where due to those violations a family's house exploded -- fortunately, nobody was killed;
- [2014: just last month, December 14, the Attorney General sued PSE, claiming this "private

utility's ... profit margins are unjustifiably high. Customers are collectively being *overcharged by about \$35 million a year.*"

- [PSE generates nearly a third of the energy it sells to ratepayers via the Colstrip dirty coal plant in Western Montana, making PSE a major air polluter and the 8th largest greenhouse gas emitter in the U.S.

Google "WUTC fine" and you'll find most hits are about PSE. PSE is a serial bad actor not to be trusted. It may go bankrupt from the AG's lawsuit and Colstrip fines or shutdown alone. No wonder PSE is so frantic to get this project permitted ASAP.

You can impose as many moratoria as you need to until you have complete information from PSE.

Being fair and engaging us citizens more.

The City of Newcastle has set a good precedent. Last June after PSE gave the Newcastle council its 45-minute sales pitch, Newcastle allowed equal time for opponents, including a half hour to CENSE. The council engaged the presenters with thoughtful questions, and a real dialogue ensued. At the end of the dialog, Mayor Steve Buri announced that this is the biggest issue by far now facing Newcastle.

Can't you, Bellevue, do at least as well? Why can't informed citizen action groups be given time and access equal to that given PSE? Why do opponents to Energize Eastside have to speed-read prepared statements before you in ridiculously small time segments, with no meaningful public feedback or dialog from you?

Here is an excerpt from what the City of Newcastle had to say about the whole phony PSE-rigged CAG process and Energize Eastside:

"...the CAG process did not offer sufficient depth or breadth of data, analysis or alternatives to determine the best solutions to these needs. If pursued, the resulting recommendation would have significant and irreparable impacts on homes and businesses along the routes and to our entire community..."

Please don't be guilty of creating your own version of another phony CAG-like process. Please give the citizens of the Eastside more time and meaningful involvement to engage with you and your staff openly and publicly about a project of such magnitude.

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