

## Citizens for Sane Eastside Energy (CSEE)

To the Newcastle Planning Commission:

Thank you for your hard work. CSEE agrees with CENSE: we must never lose sight of the importance of clearly establishing NEED for any project BEFORE deciding whether any particular facility is “essential,” or indeed whether a “facility” — a big construction project — is necessary or the best choice. Are there better and easier ways to meet the real need, **if any**? PSE would like you to change the rules to avoid that discussion. Need is wrapped up in the word “essential” — how can anything be essential if it is not needed? But let’s keep the clarity as set out in our current ordinance. Because PSE has shown it will use every dodge and semantic trick available to get Energize Eastside approved because the project represents hundreds of millions of dollars of guaranteed profits to PSE’s Australian and Canadian owners.

One favorite semantic trick of PSE’s is to play a familiar shell game. Before some regulatory bodies and decision makers, Energize Eastside is supposedly “needed” to preserve **system reliability**. In other words, at very rare moments, such as extreme cold weather at a time when usage may peak, there has to be enough available reserve power — or robust measures put in play (such as conservation or drawing power from other regions of the country in a rare reliability emergency) — to avoid what could probably be only a few hours of brownouts or blackouts. We have not had an extreme moment like that in years, and **actual overall electricity usage has gone down, not up, despite rapid growth on the Eastside**. So the real issue here is: How do we handle such rare peak moments that challenge reliability, so that we meet federal regulatory standards on that subject? CENSE’s independent experts did tests to show Energize Eastside is not needed to meet the legitimate, actual, manageable reliability challenges. So now PSE in its ads and PR efforts says with a straight face that what Energize Eastside is about is a “needed upgrade” to a system “that hasn’t been updated since the 1960s.” That is a bold-faced lie. As CENSE demonstrates in its submission to you today, PSE’s equipment on the Eastside has been steadily and systematically upgraded and expanded over the last 50 years.

PSE’s so-called “upgrade” would replace wooden poles that do not conduct electricity with much larger steel towers that do conduct electricity, and in storms or an electrical malfunction those steel towers can damage aging pipes in the Olympic pipeline and cause them to rupture, or to corrode them to the point where they will fail. Take note that though it has been repeatedly asked to respond to such facts, Olympic Pipeline Company showed up at only one publicly held meeting back in 2014, when Project Manager Kim West said she thought the proposed route PSE favors — including right here through Newcastle — poses dangerous risks and that Olympic preferred a route elsewhere. Since then neither she nor Olympic have been heard from.

It is frustrating that PSE is given the benefit of so many doubts. This is the same company that in 2008 was fined \$1.25 million for deliberately falsifying — over a span of four years! — gas pipeline safety inspection records. Not just any records, **but gas pipeline safety inspection records**. And we are now to “trust them” to put up gigantic heavy steel towers almost atop the gas pipelines in the hopes they don’t wind up killing a number of us, in the same way 3 boys were killed in the Olympic Pipeline explosion in Bellingham in 1999? Please don’t aid and abet that probable outcome by not acting to keep us safe — not just in Newcastle, but throughout the 18 miles PSE wants to put its outrageous project through the population-dense Eastside.

The EFSEC route would have been the efficient, fair and intelligent way for PSE to go in seeking siting approval for Energize Eastside. EFSEC has the expertise and broad jurisdiction to look at the big picture and determine if this project is even necessary. Knowing that, PSE chose to try to hoodwink 5 city councils it thought it could dazzle and bulldoze into rubber stamping a project they first started promoting back in 2007 when it was then called something different (“Snohomish-Lakeside-Talbot”) for entirely different purposes — to provide more power transmission for Canada. Magically under a new name, this is now supposedly a “local” project, but it still includes providing Canada with 1500 MW of power Canada had made clear as early as 1999 that it does not need. Energize Eastside is an expensive, dangerous and unneeded boondoggle. Thank you for your efforts to keep us safe.

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