

Doing We Can  
*Citizen Climate Action*  
doingwhatwecan.org

June 10, 2015

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IDAHO PUBLIC  
UTILITIES COMMISSION

Idaho Public Utilities Commission  
Attn: Jean Jewell, Commission Secretary  
472 W. Washington  
Boise, ID 83702

RE: IPUC Case Nos. IPC-E-15-01, AVU-E-15-01, and PAC-E-15-03 / Public Comment

To the Commissioners of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission:

I write on behalf of Doing What We Can, an Idaho-based citizen action group recently organized to fight climate change. Our growing membership includes Idaho residents and also residents of Arizona, New York, Illinois, and Oregon with ties to Idaho. Our organization wishes to provide comment in the consolidated cases before the Commission, Case Nos. IPC-E-15-01, AVU-E-15-01, and PAC-E-15-03.

We are concerned that limiting contracts under PURPA to two years, as sought by the petitioners, will impede, or even effectively eliminate the development of solar energy in Idaho, and possibly other forms of green energy as well. Solar energy projects require longer-duration contracts in order to attract investors. We believe that furthering solar and other forms of green energy is essential to the health of Idaho citizens and the economy of Idaho, in view of climate change, which has reached a crisis level.

We believe that at this juncture in the progression of climate change, it is imperative that we listen to the scientists. According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, global warming is already having harmful effects on our communities, our health, and our climate. <http://www.ucsusa.org/our-work/global-warming/science-and-impacts/global-warming-impacts#.VXeJ7-9FBow>. Such effects include rising sea level, increases in the number and size of wildfires and dangerous heat waves, extreme storm events including heavy precipitation and flooding, and severe droughts. The recently published book *Climate Change in the Northwest, Implications for Our Landscapes Waters and Communities* (Oregon Climate Change Research Institute) Island Press (2013), written by experts, including scientists and university professors, paints a dismal picture of the future of the Northwest if climate change continues unchecked. Similar to the conclusions of the Union of Concerned Scientists, *Climate Change in the Northwest* projects an increase in heat extremes; hydrologic impacts on reservoir systems, hydropower production, irrigated agriculture, freshwater aquatic systems and water-dependent recreation; negative impacts on forest health and

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fish survival; increased wildfires and heat waves; an increase in morbidity and mortality of humans due to heat-related illness, extreme weather hazards, air pollution and allergenic disease exacerbation; and emergence and exacerbation of infectious diseases. *Id.*, “Executive Summary,” pp. xix-xl. This excellent book reports numerous efforts in Oregon and Washington to limit fossil fuel emissions to combat climate change, as well as to assist citizens and communities in adapting to climate change, but is hauntingly silent on efforts in Idaho to do our part to combat climate change.

Most scientists agree that rising CO2 levels in the atmosphere, now globally at 400 ppm, far in excess of the 350 ppm considered “safe” for human life (*See* <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2014/07/01/3455026/400-ppm-carbon-dioxide-three-months/>), are moving us toward a future where life on Earth is increasingly at risk. To avoid this catastrophe, global carbon emissions must fall 40-70% from 2010 levels and to 0% by 2100. (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)) <http://phys.org/news/2015-06-path-emerges-thorn-climate.html>. Electricity as currently generated contributes 31% of greenhouse gas emissions. <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/sources/electricity.html>. As a significant step toward solving the climate crisis, we must immediately expand green energy (such as wind and solar) for generating electricity, not discourage and impede its production by limiting the duration of energy contracts in Idaho to a time-period that makes such contracts non-viable.

The above-referenced consolidated cases currently before the Commission provide an opportunity to take a significant step forward in addressing climate change by furthering, rather than impeding, the expansion of green energy in Idaho. Doing What We Can urges the Commission to deny the electric utilities’ requests to limit contracts under PURPA to two years or other unreasonable time period. Surely a way can be found to address the electric utilities’ reasonable concerns in ways that do not limit the expansion of green energy in Idaho, which is crucial to a sustainable future. The future of our children and our grandchildren, not to mention ourselves, hangs in the balance.

Sincerely,

DOING WHAT WE CAN

By: 

Alyson Rene’ Martin, J.D.

Climate Reality Leader/Climate Reality Project, and

Founder: Doing What We Can