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To: [PUC GR-COMMISSIONERS](#); [PUC PUC.FilingCenter * PUC](#); [HERB Kim * PUC](#)
Subject: FW: Testimony to PUC Docket UM 2179
Date: Tuesday, July 12, 2022 4:11:47 PM

UM 2179 Comments

Kristi

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From: Jane Stackhouse <jane@janestackhouse.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 12, 2022 4:08 PM
To: PUC puc.publicmeetings * PUC <PUC.PUBLICMEETINGS@puc.oregon.gov>
Subject: Testimony to PUC Docket UM 2179

To: Chair Decker, Commissioner Tawney, and Commissioner Thompson

Date: July 12, 2022

RE: Docket UM 2179 Future of Gas

From: Jane Stackhouse, former NW Natural Gas Customer

Thank you for your work and the work of the PUC staff reviewing the future of methane gas in Oregon. I am in full support of Governor Brown's EO 20-04 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and appreciate the willingness of the PUC to look at ways to reduce emissions from utilities while protecting lower income rate payers from increased costs related to decarbonization of our utilities. I am a member of the Metro Climate Action Team and urge you to review the testimony from our organization that was written by Dr. Pat DeLaquil. Dr. DeLaquil has extensive background in energy planning and decarbonization. I am adding additional comments from my personal perspective.

I am a retired corporate trainer who selected climate action as my primary retirement volunteer activity. I have always had an appreciation for our environment having grown up in our beautiful Pacific Northwest. In 1961 when the Space Needle was being built in Seattle my father managed public relations for the regional gas company. There is no longer a perpetual gas flame from the top of the Space Needle, the gas company he promoted has merged and been sold to foreign investors. Times change.

I have seen our climate change. My research indicates that we are very close to an unrecoverable tipping point and that methane is a significant contributor to immediate global warming. Not only is the piped 'natural gas' under discussion in this docket 95% methane, there is a huge supply of methane that will be escaping from tundra and arctic waters. The IPCC's latest report stressed the need to limit methane emissions immediately.

The draft report and the statements by NW Natural Gas and other gas providers in Oregon fail to embrace these concerns. If they did, they would be looking at how to phase out their product rather than ways to continue to pipe some mixture of gas into homes and buildings. The future of methane gas is to turn it off. Yes, this is an extreme view and I realize that there may be some valid uses of methane gas during the transition off gas.

In 2020 I changed my owner-occupied duplex from gas heat and cooking to full electric. I can vouch for heat pumps and electric induction cooking. My heat pump air handler puts warm or cool air into the existing 1925 duct work. Like many in the Northwest I had not had air cooling before. My new induction range provides highly responsive and cleaner cooking. I have not set a hot pot holder on fire and often do not even need to use one. I am no longer plagued by concerns of gas leaks and the need to have a safety valve to shut off the gas in case of an earthquake. In fact, I no longer have a

meter because I asked NW Natural to cut the gas off at the street. The cost for this full conversion per unit was \$15,333 dollars. Because I 'fuel switched' there were no rebates available. I refinanced to cover the cost. Not everyone is able to do this and we need programs not only to promote fuel switching but to help finance them.

So how cost effective is conversion to electricity? Of course, I am a Blue Sky clean electric customer. In my case the electric bills average \$100 per month less than the prior total of gas and electricity. That computes to a long pay back unless we consider the longer-term cost of global warming and impacts on [health](#).

I urge the Commissioners and the PUC staff to look at the future of gas from the perspective of all of our utility needs and to help Avista, Cascade and NW Natural look at new business models.

- We will need gas during the transition to full electrification as we improve the electrical grid so we cannot simply turn it off today.
- We may need gas to generate electricity until renewable resources are able to cover the need and we should focus on clean solar and wind generation.
- Some industries with high energy needs may need methane gas until green hydrogen gas is more readily available.
- Always remember that renewable methane is still methane with the same dangerous emissions.
- Renewable methane from waste should be used. I suggest the methane be used only on site (rather than piped where leakage occurs) to operate the facility or for small electric generators that can feed the grid.
- Localized use should include carbon capture. Widespread distribution systems only provide opportunity for leaks and not for carbon capture and storage.
- All the gas pipes and pipelines can be phased out and perhaps put to other use. <https://electrical-engineering-portal.com/understanding-underground-electric-transmission-cables>
- The same tools and staff that expand gas pipes can be used to install geothermal and ground heat pumps.

No one is trying to put NW Natural, Avista, or Cascade Natural Gas companies out of business and they clearly need help with visioning a new business model and ways to use their existing resources to reduce total carbon emissions and avoid stranded assets. Soon all customers will be choosing electric homes just as we choose LED light bulbs and mobile phones. Times change and so must we if we are to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

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