



PublicService Commission< psc@utah.gov>

**Docket No. 12-035-100**

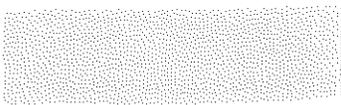
1 message

**Ben Mates**

Tue, Apr 23, 2013 at 1:30 PM

To: psc@utah.gov

Cc: mback@utah.gov, chrissparker@utah.gov



April 23, 2013

Utah Public Service Commission

Docket No. 12-035-100

Dear Utah Public Service Commission:

Thank you for calling for public comments on appropriate pricing for wholesale renewable energy to be purchased by Rocky Mountain Power in the coming years.

I recently invested in a three kilowatt photovoltaic system to offset the cost and environmental impact of the electricity I use to charge my electric car and to power my home. While more and more people are making choices similar to mine, an eventual and inevitable transition to renewable energy resources can be accelerated (for the highest good of all concerned) by effective policies that take a whole-system, long-term view of our future. Thus, I urge you to take into consideration aspects - public and environmental health, energy security, and the trend toward increasing expense of fossil fuels and decreasing expense of renewables- that have previously been excluded from the factors used to determine energy prices and policy.

The Wasatch Front has just come through one more winter of terrible air quality, much of which was caused by exhaust from internal combustion engines. That pollution could be mitigated or even eliminated altogether through the use of electric vehicles. While such vehicles are most effectively charged at night when the sun is not shining, wind turbines could provide a substantial portion of the electricity they require. Solar generation facilities of every size could largely obviate the need for peaking facilities that burn coal and natural gas, and leave efficient baseload facilities running on a reduced scale.

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Fossil fuels are non-renewable resources which will become more difficult and thus more expensive to extract as the years go by, all the more so if current subsidies are eliminated and/or a price on carbon-based fuels established. By contrast, wind and solar energy rely on the sun, which is predictably constant and abundant.

In a similar manner, renewables are not subject to price volatility and global supply chain vulnerabilities as fossil fuels are. We need not make war over resources that are abundant and present everywhere. Decentralized energy facilities are also far less vulnerable to attack from foreign or domestic enemies. Our national energy security stands to benefit from a fine-grained and widely-distributed network of diverse generation facilities.

Fossil fuels contain heavy metals and excessive amounts of carbon and particulate matter that foul our air, water and land with substances that are detrimental to our health and our quality of life. Except for the materials embodied in their equipment, renewables are clean and have minimal impact on our environment and our health.

Fossil fuels contribute to climate instability, exposing Utah and the world to disasters – droughts, fires, heat waves and floods – that can be very costly in terms of economic impact, lives and overall human well-being. A transition to renewables is also a transition back to climate stability.

For all of these reasons, clean, renewable energy resources are worth more than just the dollars paid for the energy they generate. Taken from a whole system perspective, renewables provide for a high quality of life at an affordable and consistently decreasing cost.

I respectfully request that you implement policies and pricing that stimulate investment in renewable energy generating facilities. Energy pricing largely determines the time it takes to recover initial investments. The shorter that payback time, the greater the amount of investment and the sooner we can enjoy the benefits of clean, renewable energy. We have reached a point in our history where it makes increasing sense to forgo the time, expense and impact of extracting and burning fossil fuels in favor of developing clean, healthy, reliable, secure, renewable energy infrastructure. I urge you to institute policies to make renewable energy the preferred financial choice, as it is in practically every other way.

Sincerely,

Ben J. Mates