



PublicService Commission <psc@utah.gov>

Comment to IRP Docket 25-035-22

1 message

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Hello,

I am a Rocky Mountain Power customer and concerned resident. I have just learned that Rocky Mountain Power's 20-year plan involves continuing to burn their coal plants. I oppose this in every regard. This is not economically, environmentally, or efficiently sound. It disregards economic, job, energy, environment, and health data, while embracing a highly outdated form of energy.

Let's look at the facts.

According to 166 sources as reported by Ground News, renewable energy just surpassed coal in global energy production this year. This is part of a larger trend, where we are seeing countries end their reliance on coal altogether, and power themselves in large part (or entirely) by clean energy.

In the first half of 2025, worldwide fossil fuel energy production declined, while solar energy is up 31%, showing off its reliability, accessibility, and affordability.

In contrast, coal is the most declining form of energy in the world. According to the International Energy Agency, solar is expected to be the world's leading source of energy by 2033, while coal is on track to produce the least amount of energy as soon as 2050, compared to solar, wind, gas, hydro, and nuclear.

Unlike coal, solar is a clean energy, and has endless potential to go on existing infrastructure, like roofs, creating parking lots or canal shading, and even on railroad tracks.

According to the Department of Energy, there are even many benefits to using farmland for solar, such as

- "diversifying revenue and increasing farm profitability"
- "on-farm energy production"
- "reducing irrigation water needs by shading the plants"
- "improving crop yield, especially in dry or hot areas"
- "improving crop resistance to extreme weather, such as droughts"

Additionally, "shade under solar panels can also enable the production of high-value crops that may not normally be grown in the local market (e.g., lettuces in desert areas), providing further opportunities for revenue. Potential benefits for rural communities include creating jobs, expanding access to clean electricity, and improving food security."

Other studies show solar farms can benefit farm animals by providing shade, and native plants, meadows, and wildlife can thrive on solar farms.

Solar is better for human health, a massive economic and agricultural opportunity, is safer and less destructive for the environment, and there are even opportunities to recycle the parts.

So, the fact that Rocky Mountain Power's 20-year plan seems to disregard these global trends entirely, and instead chooses to rely on the most declining energy industry is baffling to me. Instead of seizing the moment, Rocky Mountain Power is walking away from billions in clean energy investments (trillions, if you're looking globally) that could lower bills, grow local economies, and create energy abundance. With just one year left to capitalize on the Inflation Reduction Act's clean energy tax credits, there is a critical window to build affordable wind and solar energy across the region, but so far, Rocky Mountain Power has not taken advantage of the discount.

Coal is a losing battle when you look at the numbers, and it is a shame for the longevity and relevance of jobs / job training to continue an energy plan with long-term reliance on coal. We are only setting the American people up for failure by not providing long-term, secure jobs and training in the overwhelmingly obvious future of energy.

The argument coming from a small minority of leaders that coal is a good thing for jobs in energy is false, or at best null. Solar or clean energy are also jobs in energy. We need to embrace the unmissable, worldwide shift that is happening to clean energy, which is more beneficial to our workers, our health, and our environment. Clean energy is proven to be reliable, is renewable, and will continue to become cheaper and more accessible due to simple knowledge of supply and demand.

In fact, it is costing me more for providers like RMP to continue plans lacking commonsense and progress in energy. My energy bills in the last year have been driven up to a historic high (even amid my changes to a smart thermostat and new, energy efficient appliances) to keep outdated fossil fuels on the grid, even when cheaper, cleaner energy alternatives are available. In 2023, they sought to raise Wyoming customers' rates by nearly 22%. 95% of the increase was directly tied to the high cost of coal and gas. In 2024, they sought to raise Utah customers' rates by 30%, with 85% of the increase coming from high coal and gas prices.

Now, there is another glaring issue with coal that must be considered if you want to be a logical and ethical leader.

Coal is the most harmful form of energy for human health.

According to sources like ScienceDirect, National Institute of Health, and UCDavis, coal has been shown to cause lung diseases like asthma and chronic bronchitis, is linked to increased risk of heart attack and stroke, increases risk of lung cancer, can harm the nervous system of developing children, and has been shown to lead to premature death.

According to a recent Reuters article, "Berkshire's coal plants are estimated to cause up to 260 deaths and \$3.9 billion in health expenditures." As a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway, a majority of Berkshire's coal plants are operated by Rocky Mountain Power, harming Wyoming and Utah residents with their toxic pollution.

In Utah, we could benefit tremendously from these pros of solar. We are a state plagued with heat waves, drought, and water conservation struggles, which would be helped by solar. In addition, the benefits could help our rural communities, energy demand, water availability, economy, and farmers. We are also a state with high rates of sunny days, more than most of the United States. Investing in solar would contribute to our energy grid and jobs, while not polluting the air and destroying the views by our highly visited natural landscapes, public lands, and economically-boosting National Parks.

I call on you to reject Rocky Mountain Power's expensive energy plan. The utility would better meet our state's needs by adopting more reliable, renewable energy sources to create energy abundance and lower bills. Please oppose polluting our communities with coal emissions and instead publicly support factual, commonsense, and long-term solutions of investing in energy like solar on Utah land, which would have countless benefits.

Thanks,
Braden Kellams