



PublicService Commission <psc@utah.gov>

Re: UCARE: What in Blazes, Utah?

1 message

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To: psc@utah.gov

Wed, Aug 12, 2026 at 4:30 PM

I think this is something the Public Service Commission needs to start addressing.

On Aug 12, 2026, at 10:53 AM, ucare@xmission.com wrote:

What in Blazes is going on, Utah?

"[Ready, Set, Go](#)" may be this summer's most memorable mantra. Wildfires ravage the American West. Utah sometimes leads with the largest blazes. The free [Watch Duty](#) app has become popular to track fires region-wide and get notifications when one ignites nearby. Be ever ready! Save what matters most and fits in your car! Adjust to the new overheated, smoke-filled normal...and be ready to run. Is this the Spirit of '76 for America 250? That's the message from Utah officials.

Often lost in the surge of disturbing news about extreme heat, megadrought, wildfire evacuations, and [firefighter deaths](#) is any real discussion of what's causing this crisis. And how individuals can do more than just prepare to flee. The core problem is human caused [climate change](#) [global warming], with its costly negative impacts and our failing leadership. Must we acquiesce to this?

Climate change is real and driven by human activity. Cornell University's analysis of 88,000 [climate articles](#) found 99+% agreement. Our burning of coal, oil, and methane ("natural gas") ultimately fuels wildfires. Those who blame forest [mismanagement](#) for the wildfire crisis deflect our focus from the fundamental cause: climate change.

We're all part of the problem. We burn climate-heating fossil fuels: directly, through the vehicles we drive, and indirectly through the carbon-fired electricity we buy from Rocky Mountain Power (RMP).

With the Utah Legislature's blessings (via [statute](#)), and the Public Service Commission's (PSC) [okay](#), RMP can keep [burning coal](#) past 2040 while thumbing its nose at Utah's burgeoning geothermal assets and pretending that nuclear is a near term, clean energy solution. The utility's [20-year plan](#) cites the connection between climate change and wildfires; but the only acknowledgement that RMP-PacifiCorp's greenhouse gas emissions are driving climate change comes from public [stakeholder](#) comments, not the utility. As preemptive power outages become common and homeowner [insurance costs](#) skyrocket, RMP would have us believe it's fossil fueled electricity meets PacifiCorp's "least cost, least risk" pledge.

Our tax dollars subsidize the fossil fuel industry through government agencies like the Governor's Office of Energy Development (GOED), Utah Inland Port Authority (UIPA), Community Impact Fund Board (CIB), and Public Service Commission (PSC): all with funding and directives from the carbon-friendly Utah Legislature we elect.

Utah's Office of Energy Development ([GOED](#)) touts an "[all of the above](#)" energy policy that in practice aligns with RMP's fossil fuels preference and the uncertain nuclear future of Governor Cox's [Operation Gigawatt](#). Development of wind, solar, geothermal, and energy storage resources is mostly left to [private initiatives](#) while coal, oil, and methane businesses receive government funds and incentives like reduced coal extraction [royalty](#) fees. The Rural Utah Infrastructure Coalition (RUIC), publicly funded by Utah's Community Impact Fund Board (CIB), supports a Uinta Basin [oil railway](#) and a similarly controversial West Coast [coal export](#) terminal.

A recent Tribune [op-ed](#) by Utah Inland Port Authority (UIPA) Director Ben Hart offers an opportunity to discuss how Utah's political leaders have embraced energy development policies that undermine our quality of life. UIPA exemplifies the problem.

Since 2018, UIPA has grown to 15 [project areas](#) statewide and touts itself as essential to ensure "exponential economic growth." Hart's op-ed focuses on UIPA's support for freight rail that "keeps energy flowing" for Utah: fossil fuel energy. Evidence includes UIPA's [Black Gold](#) project boosting Uinta Basin oil exports. UIPA's [Castle Country](#) project favors Savage Energy's coal/oil export facilities plus [foreign-owned](#) Wolverine Fuel's coal mine. [Central Utah Agri-Park](#) project gives coal a railway loadout near Nephi. Mr. Hart mentions pending congressional legislation ([H.R. 8870](#)) that could support UIPA's rail agenda. It might also be used to resurrect the [Central Utah Rail Project](#) linking Wolverine's coal to the Agri-Park railhead. Unimpeded, UIPA will continue to fuel climate change wildfires.

Governor Cox [warns Utahns](#) about triggering those wildfires through carelessness, even as we carelessly trust him and other state officers and agencies that would lead us down the fiery path. Responsible citizens can take action, though, to change the current downward-spiral dynamic. Utah's congressional delegation will vote on H.R. 8870. It can be amended to prohibit freight rail funds for fossil fuels. Otherwise, they might begin to imagine Utah's 2034 Winter [Olympics](#) [cancelled](#) for lack of snow due to global warming. The Congressional switchboard number is: 202-224-3121

The [CIB](#) should heed its mission and deny RUIC additional funds for the proposed Uinta Basin oil railway and Oakland coal export terminal. Why squander more public funds to enrich corporations and their legislative allies when rural Utah communities [are denied](#) sustainable economic development and basic services? Citizens in [Colorado](#) and in [Oakland](#), California actively oppose Utah's climate-busting coal and oil exports. How about more Utah voices?

Where do your state representative and senator stand on climate change and fossil fuel subsidies? Ultimately, our legislators set behavior standards for Utah's climate change enablers: the CIB, the PSC, UIPA, RMP, GOED, and certainly Governor Cox.

"Go" bags and evacuation centers treat symptoms, not the disease. USU researchers' [eight-step action](#) plan to save the 2034 Olympics from environmental failure also applies to climate change. "Expand renewable electricity". "Invest in education outreach" that's critical since only [half of American](#) adults believe climate change is human-driven.

After the "Go" bag, try making two wildfire-related phone calls to your state legislators. Ask: "With more [firefighters killed](#) and [\\$29 million](#) already spent this year, how will you address the core wildfire cause: global warming?" "Why do you let RMP invest my money in coal and gas rather than clean energy renewables?" "What are you doing to reduce climate change' wildfire smoke [risks to pregnant](#) Utahns?" "Will you schedule a public hearing to hold UIPA accountable for its agenda fueling climate change?" Click [here](#) to find your state legislators.

Email the PSC [psc@utah.gov] about what's missing from RMP's just-released Utah [Wildfire Mitigation](#) Plan ([Docket #26-035-35](#)). Have your neighborhood community council adopt a resolution addressing climate change wildfires, then share with local, state, and federal officials.

Now is a good time for Action. Save what you value that won't fit in the car.

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