

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**Utility Idea  
can save costs***To the Editor:*

There are times when standing pat poses greater risk than making a change. We face this situation as Bainbridge Island considers creating a public power utility. Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) would provide our new power utility with low-cost Tier 1 power that is 1) the most reliable in the region, 2) cheapest available, and 3) generated carbon free. We'd gain local control to better serve the community, create about 25 well-paid jobs, realize lower long-term electricity costs, and have options for expanded services such as broadband to compete with Comcast. If we delay, we risk BPA committing its quota for Tier 1 power to other communities.

PSE risks our climate by burning fossil fuels to generate electricity, deriving 35 percent from coal and 24 percent from natural gas (compared to 0 percent for BPA Tier 1 power).

We'd risk much higher costs if we stay with PSE, which last year raised their rates 11 percent! In addition to common rate hikes, ratepayers can expect to fund the high costs to close coal plants PSE operates (reportedly to require less than \$200 million). If a carbon tax is enacted it would apply to PSE, but not BPA Tier 1. Our lower electricity costs would allow paying the infrastructure purchase with a rate-funded bond while maintaining current billing rates.

I applaud the City requesting a consultant's report to detail the many considerations that all citizens may review and debate long before an election. We should welcome the opportunity to consider and vote on our own Bainbridge Island power utility.

**Tom Goodlin**

Bainbridge Island

**Island Power is  
a long-term gain***To the Editor:*

What will our grandkids be saying in 50 years about the actions we took in 2016 to address climate change. They will surely be living with the consequences of our decisions. Most climate scientists agree that coal-fired power plants are one of the biggest threats to our climate and are predicting that large swaths of the ocean will suffocate and coastal communities may be under water.

On Bainbridge Island, 34 percent of our energy comes from the Colstrip coal plant in Montana, one of the biggest polluting coal facilities in the country. As long as Puget Sound Energy is our energy provider, that is not going to change for decades.

I'm happy that some island citizens are now working to form our own community-owned utility that would get off coal and instead buy clean low cost power from the Bonneville Power Administration. With Island Power, we would have our own crews right on the island responding to power outages. Now we have to wait for off-island crews who must first respond to bigger Kitsap communities before they even get to us. The money that now goes to foreign corporation profits would be better spent here on the island.

There are 62 public utilities in Washington, the newest being Jefferson County whose rates after two years in operation are 5 percent lower than PSE. These public utilities have professionally trained and highly skilled engineers and staff.

When we're debating about the cost of studies for a community owned utility, please think of the long-term consequences of doing nothing.

**Vicki Johnson**

Bainbridge Island