

A City-Owned Electric Utility Would Provide Much Better Reliability than PSE's Terrible Record

Let's be clear from the outset: Puget Sound Energy (PSE) provides terrible electric utility service in much of their area.

Reliable electric service depends on investments in maintenance of electric lines and poles. The Pacific Northwest has many trees, so pruning tree branches away from electric lines improves reliability of electric service during bad weather.

Although the State of Washington guarantees PSE a 9% profit for their return on investment, PSE does not get credit for tree maintenance. Since PSE does not invest in adequate pruning, this leads to more frequent power outages – and longer outages. PSE's negligence hurts customers.

PSE and other investor-owned utilities in Washington State are regulated by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC), a three-person commission appointed by the governor. The WUTC deals with electric utility rates, reliability and customer service.

The electric power industry uses measurement tools to regulate private companies as follows:

1. **SAIDI: System Average Interruption Duration Index:** This confusing formula is calculated as the total customer minute interruptions (outage duration in minutes, multiplied by number of customers impacted by the outage) divided by the average number of electric customers served typically over the course of a calendar year.
2. **CAIDI: Customer System Average Interruption Index:** CAIDI gives the average outage duration that any given customer would experience. CAIDI can also be viewed as the average restoration time. It is usually measured over the course of a year. The median value for North American utilities is 1.36 hours.
3. **SAIFI: System Average Interruption Frequency Index:** SAIFI describes the average number of outages a customer experiences.

Regulated electric utilities must file reliability reports at least once a year. The report must identify the total number of customer complaints about reliability and power quality made to the utility during the year, and must distinguish between complaints about sustained interruptions and power quality. The

report must also identify complaints that were made about major events.

Puget Sound's reliability is getting worse. The following data come annual reports:

<u>SAIDI</u>	<u>SAIFI</u>
2002: 99	2002: 0.80
2003: 106	2003: 0.71
2004: 115	2004: 0.77
2005: 124	2005: 0.93
2006: 163	2006: 1.05
2007: 143	2007: 0.91
2008: 155	2008: 0.98
2009: 145	2009: 0.94
2010: 124	2010: 0.87
2011: 144	2011: 1.23
2012: 120	2012: 0.83
2013: 125	2013: 0.86
2014: 154	2014: 1.00
2015: 163	2015: 1.04
2016: 154	2016: 1.02
2017: 175	2017: 1.12

The WUTC's staff reviewed 2017 reliability reports and identified significant inconsistencies in the types of information utilities were reporting as well as categories of information included in the reports that were largely unrelated to reliability. The WUTC's staff began a broader review of reliability reporting with the goal of improving the reports' usefulness and eliminating data unrelated to reliability.

“Olympia Public Power” is a local campaign seeking to create a publicly owned electric utility for the City of Olympia that would replace PSE's service within city limits (and perhaps later beyond).

Olympia Public Power invites people reading this article to research information about SAIDI and SAIFI regarding the publicly owned utilities in the state of Washington – and to compare their reliability data with that of PSE.

Please e-mail your findings to us through Olympia Public Power's new website. (We'll announce that URL when the website is ready to become publicly available.)

Thank you for reading this information about electric utility reliability.

Thank you for your efforts to educate the public so more people will see that publicly owned and managed utilities are better than those run merely for profit.