Puget Sound Energy is at a crossroads with their Colstrip coal plant in Montana. Either they will be forced to spend hundreds of millions in environmental clean up or they will invest in cleaner alternatives. There is a better way. The question for all Thurston County PSE ratepayers is this: Do you want your energy dollars going into dirty old coal or do you want more clean energy?

The country and the Northwest are rapidly moving beyond coal but not PSE. Across the country there are now 128 coal plants slated to close, including the two plants in Washington (TransAlta) and Oregon (Boardman). Colstrip is the last of the big coal plants in the Northwest.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ranked Puget Sound Energy’s (PSE) Colstrip coal plant as the 8th largest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitter in the United State and 1st in the West.¹ PSE is the single largest owner of this dirty, dangerous and increasingly-expensive coal plant.

Colstrip accounts for the majority of PSE’s coal-powered electricity supply with coal providing one-third of PSE’s electricity. Because of PSE’s reliance on coal, they account for half of GHG emissions in Washington State from electricity consumption.

Colstrip is not only the dirtiest plant in the West, it stands heads and shoulders above all other polluters in Montana. Colstrip has twice as much haze-causing nitrogen and hazardous sulfur as the next nine industrial sources combined. Colstrip has hundreds of acres of toxic coal ash waste ponds that leak into surface and ground water. PSE already had to pay part of a $25 million fine to ranchers and residents around Colstrip and the problem continues to get worse.

Climate change, air pollution, water pollution and toxic waste make Colstrip one of the dirtiest facilities in the country. Very few ratepayers even know PSE uses coal, let alone that it is the financial anchor for this dirty bucket of bolts. Yet PSE is perceived as a clean, green leader for energy supply but as ratepayers learn more about PSE’s reliance on dirty coal, they are shocked and disappointed to learn about this dirty little secret.

Make your voiced be heard. Let PSE know that you don’t want your electric bills going to prop up this dirty, dangerous and increasingly-expensive coal plant. To get involved, please contact the Thurston County chair of the Sierra Club: Susan Macomson susanshaf@comcast.net or 360-923-0108