

1 BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
2 OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

3 -----

4 REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT

5 -----

6 Docket No. 24A-0442E PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING

7 -----

8 IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE
9 COMPANY OF COLORADO FOR APPROVAL OF ITS 2024 JUST
10 TRANSITION SOLICITATION

11 -----

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12 Pursuant to notice to all parties of
13 interest, the above-entitled matter came on for
14 hearing before CHAIRMAN ERIC BLANK, COMMISSIONER MEGAN
15 GILMAN and COMMISSIONER TOM PLANT, commencing at 11
16 a.m., on April 28. 2025, at Remotely, said proceedings
17 having been reported in shorthand by Harriet S.
18 Weisenthal.

19 Whereupon, the following proceedings were had:

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1 CHAIRMAN BLANK: We're now on the record.
2 It's 11:08, on Monday, April 28th, 2025. Again, this
3 is a Public Comment Hearing, in Proceeding No.
4 24A-0442E, Public Service Company of Colorado's Just
5 Transition Solicitation Plan filing, or JTS.

6 I am Eric Blank, the PUC Chair. I just
7 want to start off by thanking everyone for coming out,
8 and I'm very much looking forward to hearing your
9 comments.

10 I might have more to say, in a few
11 moments, about how this process works, but, first, can
12 my colleagues introduce themselves, for the record.

13 Commissioner Gilman.

14 COMMISSIONER GILMAN: Good morning.
15 Commissioner Megan Gilman.

16 COMMISSIONER PLANT: Good morning.
17 Commissioner Tom Plant.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thanks. Before we begin
19 taking comments, I want to briefly explain how a public
20 hearing works. There's a court reporter, who is
21 listening to this proceeding, taking down what you say,
22 for the record. This Public Comment Hearing is formal,
23 like a court proceeding, and we ask that the audience
24 be respectful of the public comments today.

25 In our role, as Commissioners, at this

1 stage of the process, we're here to listen and learn
2 and to make sure your comments are reflected on the
3 record. We will not answer questions or respond do
4 statements. Like a judge, we cannot engage in dialogue
5 on a case pending before us.

6 This case is ongoing, and we will not
7 make any decisions, until after the evidentiary hearing
8 in June. If you want to speak, please use the raise
9 the hand icon, or just turn on your camera, and I will
10 call on people in order, starting with the elected
11 officials.

12 We have almost 80 people registered for
13 this Public Comment Hearing, and almost 60 people on
14 the Zoom. So, to allow everyone time to be heard, I
15 request that each commenter limit themselves to roughly
16 three minutes.

17 In addition to the remote comments today,
18 another in-person meeting has been scheduled, for the
19 City of Hayden, on May 1st, from 4 to 6, and another
20 virtual Public Comment Hearing is set for Thursday,
21 June 5th, 5 to 7.

22 The Commission equally weighs public
23 comments we have received written or orally. So, we
24 encourage you to follow up by filing whatever you would
25 like, in written form. Written comments can be filed,

1 through the Commission's e-filing system, via the
2 on-line comment form, or e-mailed to DORA underscore
3 PUC underscore website@state.co.us. In each case,
4 specify proceeding, 24A-0442E.

5 As I said before, we very much look
6 forward to the comments. We certainly don't have all
7 the answers. That's why this process, hearing from
8 you, is so important. With that, I want to thank you
9 all for taking the time to be here and to share your
10 comments.

11 Commissioner Gilman, any preliminary
12 comments before we jump into it?

13 COMMISSIONER GILMAN: Yeah. Good
14 morning, again. Thank you all for joining us. Really
15 look forward to hearing your comments today, in this
16 important proceeding; and certainly hope folks will be
17 available to come and join us later this week, in
18 person as well, as the Chair mentioned.

19 So, really appreciate those of you who
20 are joining us, for bringing your time and expertise
21 and passion and comments to us today, and look forward
22 to hearing them. Thanks.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Commissioner Plant.

24 COMMISSIONER PLANT: Yeah. I would just
25 echo that. Thank you very much for participating

1 today. As you heard from Ms. Castle, it's a pretty
2 extensive hearing, and an extensive process, and we
3 have a lot of intervening parties that represent
4 various members of the public and businesses and things
5 like that.

6 But, this is a great opportunity for us
7 to hear directly from the public that's impacted by the
8 decisions that we make. So, really appreciate you
9 taking time out of your day, to participate in this
10 way, and look forward to hearing the comments.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. We'll start
12 with Ms. Emily Baer, from Erie, I think.

13 MS. BAER: Good morning. Thank you for
14 taking time to hear from the public about Xcel's Just
15 Transition Solicitation. My name is Emily Baer. I am
16 a council member for the Town of Erie, and I am here,
17 today, speaking on my own behalf.

18 This electric resource plan relies on a
19 technical analysis, partnered with public
20 participation, to achieve a plan for a electric supply
21 that is affordable, reliable and, importantly,
22 environmentally conscious. All three of those things
23 are important and cannot be compromised.

24 I want to highlight and appreciate that
25 this plan reaches for a 92% carbon emission reduction,

1 from 2005 levels, by 2031, and 93% renewable energy by
2 2031. Those are admirable and achievable goals. In
3 Erie, we're reaching for 95% renewable energy use by
4 2050.

5 Xcel should support municipalities in
6 reaching their renewable energy goals. 44% of energy
7 consumption, and in 2025, was from the municipalities,
8 with 100% renewable energy goals.

9 It is concerning that this plan proposes
10 more gas plants than before. This has the potential
11 for setting the state back on our goal of achieving
12 100% clean energy by 2040, and does not support local
13 communities, as we reach for our own clean energy
14 goals. Gas plants emit nitrogen oxide, and other
15 localized pollutants, that contribute to health issues
16 and accelerate ozone windows in the ozone nonattainment
17 area.

18 This plan proposes to site new gas plants
19 in coal-stranded communities. These communities are
20 disproportionately impacted. It's not just to further
21 expose these communities to increased air pollution and
22 its accompanying negative health impacts.

23 In addition to the concerns over
24 emissions and health impacts, the gas plants are
25 expensive to build and fuel. Wind and solar have no

1 actual costs or emission concerns. As Colorado
2 approaches our 100% renewable energy goal, by 2050, new
3 gas plants will become obsolete, leaving ratepayers to
4 foot the bill for decades to come.

5 Xcel should explore expanding clean
6 energy choice programs, in order to maximize clean
7 energy, support municipal clean energy goals, and
8 protect our residents from harmful emissions. This
9 will also support Xcel's goal to be carbon neutral by
10 2050, and we can do all of this, while protecting
11 ratepayers, within the competitive solicitation
12 process. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Ms. Renee
14 Chacon.

15 MS. CHACON: All the ones that came
16 before and all of the ones to come. We live in the
17 land of the Ute, Cheyenne, Arapho, the Shoshone, Kiowa,
18 the Comanche, the Jicarilla, Chicano, the 48 tribes
19 that still live and travel through this space.

20 My name is Renee Chacon. I am co-founder
21 of Women from the Mountain, on the EJ Action Task
22 Force, Co-Commissioner with Beatrice, that drove the
23 equity analysis of cumulative impacts. And I am also a
24 Commerce City Council Member, for Ward 3. These words
25 are my own.

1 I thank you for taking my comments into
2 consideration as you determine Xcel Energy's Just
3 Transition Solicitation. Local governments across
4 Colorado are setting ambitious and vitally important
5 clean energy and clean climate goals, but we cannot
6 reduce emissions in a meaningful way, unless our
7 electricity provider provides us with emission-free
8 energy. That's why communities, like mine, are
9 counting on Xcel Energy to lead, not fall behind, in
10 its transition away from fossil fuels.

11 I appreciate all of the renewable energy
12 outlined in this plan, but, unfortunately, it's not
13 enough, when you live in a disproportionately impacted
14 community. Xcel must act decisively to acquire as much
15 new clean energy resources as possible, without tying
16 us in anymore to obsolete sources, such as gas.

17 Xcel must be a leader in reducing
18 greenhouse emissions, and ensure that Colorado
19 communities can meet our climate commitments, for the
20 sake of our community members and the sake of the
21 planet, who are suffering right now.

22 What I am suggesting is that Xcel should
23 prioritize replacing the Comanche 3 and Hayden coal
24 units, with wind, solar and battery storage, especially
25 in coal-impacted communities like Pueblo and Hayden.

1 These communities should be the priority, especially
2 from cumulative impacts that can be transformative,
3 when we're transitioning to a Just Transition, that
4 also delivers real economic and environmental benefits.

5 Xcel should be a leader in replacing coal
6 with renewables and storage over new gas, as clean
7 energy becomes increasingly affordable, while fossil
8 fuels are only to going to rise. Thanks to advances in
9 storage technology, wind and solar already are the
10 cheapest energy sources in Colorado.

11 My husband actually works as a solar
12 engineer, and he educates youth on this every day in
13 all the different ways it can help. We can now power
14 our grids, even when the sun isn't shining or the wind
15 isn't blowing. Clean Energy also brings economic
16 opportunity. Wind and solar industries can employ over
17 500,000 Americans, in good-paying jobs, many of which
18 won't require a college degree.

19 Colorado, with world-class solar and wind
20 resources, has a potential to create thousands more
21 jobs, right here, and the ability to access educational
22 access for disproportionately impacted communities who
23 are being left behind.

24 New gas plants, by contrast, are a
25 dangerous step backwards. They emit pollutants that

1 harm public health, especially in vulnerable
2 communities like mine, that I suffer from as well.
3 We're talking about severe migraines, nose bleeds,
4 anemia, asthma, cancer, it just worsens.

5 And it contributes significantly to
6 climate change, which we were able to actually pass a
7 climate proclamation -- an emergency climate
8 proclamation, here in Commerce City. The Colorado
9 Front Range communities are already suffering severe
10 health effects from ozone pollution and cannot afford
11 more fossil-fuel infrastructure.

12 Gas plants are also a bad economic deal.
13 Volatile prices lead to higher bills, and new plants
14 risk becoming stranded assets, as the state phases out
15 carbon pollution. And we're still not looking at the
16 severe cumulative impact that communities have to deal
17 with every day, if they live by transportation spaces.

18 Xcel should also expand
19 clean-energy-sourced programs, that include zero
20 emission technologies. The source plan should protect
21 ratepayers, with a competitive solicitation process for
22 new energy sources and equipment.

23 The PUC should also make sure that this
24 plan focuses on clean, proven technologies, not risky
25 expensive ones, like carbon capture or nuclear. And

1 the company should not shift the costs of powering new
2 corporate data centers onto Colorado ratepayers. Our
3 clean energy must benefit communities, not corporate
4 profits.

5 Our communities are currently dying.
6 Colorado needs leadership from our largest utility, and
7 Xcel must rise to the occasion. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

9 Ms. Erica Sparhawk.

10 MS. SPARHAWK: Good morning. My name is
11 Erica Sparhawk. I am on the Carbondale Town Council,
12 speaking on behalf of myself.

13 I am a resident of Carbondale and
14 business owner. Western Slope Colorado thanks you,
15 Commissioners, for all the work you do for our state
16 and for our ratepayers. We truly appreciate it.

17 Carbondale has had a Climate Action Plan
18 in place since 2006. Carbondale has long been a leader
19 in clean and renewable energy. Carbondale is unique
20 compared to a lot of communities, because 1/3rd of our
21 residents get electricity from Holy Cross Energy, while
22 the remaining people from Xcel Energy; therefore, we
23 have experienced directly the differences between the
24 two utilities, and the work that they are doing to
25 achieve climate goals, the state's goals, and their own

1 utility goals.

2 Thanks to Holy Cross Energy's aggressive
3 and innovative approach, over the last number of years,
4 they are setting an example for all of the utilities.
5 They are achieving goals, while keeping the utility
6 rates the same for their customers, and it means that
7 we know exactly what is possible, so, we can ask Xcel
8 to do more, to be like Holy Cross Energy.

9 As one of the researchers for the Western
10 Colorado Clean Energy Network Solar Plus Storage Study
11 and Action Plan, we mapped out and identified
12 additional capacity for solar on private land in
13 Garfield, Pitkin and Eagle County, and we know there's
14 additional interested landowners and capacity to keep
15 building out solar resources and pair them with battery
16 storage.

17 In fact, we identified 52 megawatts of
18 potential, just in the Xcel territory, which is a very
19 small fraction of the available land in their
20 territory, in Garfield County. And it just shows, with
21 that kind of study, across their whole territory, there
22 is a massive amount of additional potential that they
23 could be taking advantage of.

24 I am also, like others have already
25 stated, most concerned with planning for building new

1 gas-fired power plants. This seems shockingly
2 shortsighted, and likely a waste of ratepayer money,
3 that should instead be going for innovation, like
4 increasing opportunities like geothermal
5 interconnections, long-term storage opportunities, and
6 looking at the big picture, and working across our
7 Western and Central Plains states, the whole region, to
8 expand transmission lines across our west and east and
9 across state lines, to better share renewables across
10 state zones, that helps everybody deal with peak
11 demand, in a better way. These would also provide
12 diverse jobs across the state, an important aspect of
13 everything that's part of this Just Transition.

14 So, I think we could all do better and
15 have a much better plan. We're so close to doing the
16 right thing. So, let's just make sure it's the right
17 thing for us and for the future. Thank you so much.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you, ma'am. Mr.
19 Don Cameron.

20 MR. CAMERON: Thank you, PUC,
21 Commissioners. Thank you for taking my testimony
22 today, on Xcel Energy's production plans going forward.
23 I'm Don Cameron, City Council, Ward 3, in Golden, and I
24 am speaking on behalf of my constituents and myself.

25 Golden residents have shown again and

1 again that they care about living in the world in a
2 sustainable manner. Golden measures have supported
3 aggressive, but doable plans, to align greenhouse gas
4 reductions with the Paris Accord, by 2050, to achieve
5 100% renewable energy for electricity, by 2030, and
6 100% renewables for heating by 2050.

7 To this specific feedback on Xcel's
8 energy production plans, I want to raise some concerns.
9 Back in 1959, Edward Teller, of the atomic bomb fame,
10 pointed out that carbon dioxide emissions cause global
11 warming in a 1965 speech, at a petroleum industry
12 conference, referencing a Lyndon Johnson era report;
13 that one of the most important predictions of the
14 report, is that the earth's atmosphere, by burning coal
15 oil and natural gas, will increase at such a rate, by
16 the Year 2000, that the heat balance would be so
17 modified as to possibly cause marked changes in
18 climate.

19 The data are clear. We simply cannot
20 keep burning fossil fuels bulked up.

21 Xcel Energy's production plans are on
22 shaky ground in two other areas that I see, at least
23 one, the prediction of energy use, particularly around
24 data centers, may not be accounting for the incredible
25 reduction in computing power needed for some of the

1 latest AI models; that can lead to continued
2 improvements. And adoption of tight building codes
3 will further reduce demands from the built environment.
4 So, the demand side may be overstated.

5 On the production side, there's a lot to
6 like about the plan. The use of long-term electrical
7 storage of wind and solar are laudable. However, to
8 close the gap of the projected needs with gas-fired
9 turbine production is the wrong approach.

10 One of the main challenges facing
11 Golden's goal of 100% electricity, by 2030, is the
12 already built environment and the built-in
13 inefficiencies and aging housing stock. But we're
14 rapidly moving to net-zero-ready construction and are
15 likely to improve net-zero construction codes soon.

16 Buildings that use fossil fuels for
17 heating or energy production, in the case of Xcel, with
18 life spans of decades, will simply tank the ability of
19 Golden to meet its GHG reduction goals and energy
20 goals.

21 There is no scenario that I can envision
22 in which building new facilities, at great expense,
23 and, therefore, long payback periods, will be retired
24 instantly in 2050. Net-zero GHG goals cannot be met if
25 new gas plants come on line.

1 Xcel needs to double down on research
2 that brings geothermal, dare I say, carbon capture and
3 sequestration, perhaps nuclear, and perhaps other
4 nonGHG technologies on-line at production scale.

5 Colorado's oil and gas industry, rather
6 than supplying natural gas, can provide the technology
7 and expertise to radically expand our geothermal use
8 and production. Golden itself is using geothermal
9 wells to radically cut the projected energy use of a
10 new municipal facility, as is Coors Tech, in their new
11 corporate headquarters. If Golden and local
12 manufacturers can innovate, at their respectable sizes,
13 just what can Xcel do, if it leverages its corporate
14 expertise.

15 Let's use the power of the PUC to move,
16 realistically, but aspirationally, to a cleaner
17 net-zero energy future. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you very much.
19 Mr. Chris Nichols.

20 MR. NICHOLS: Chris Nichols. Good
21 morning, Commissioners. I am the Mayor of the City of
22 Craig. I ask the Commission to closely review Craig
23 and Moffat County's Answer Testimony, and the impact
24 the coal industry, the Craig Station and Hayden
25 Station, have on our community workforce and tax base.

1 When compared to other coal transition
2 communities, Moffat and Craig face the biggest
3 proportionate loss of tax base and revenue, for vital
4 local government services, compared to other Colorado
5 coal communities. Craig Station has a Colorado power
6 plant, that is jointly owned by two of the Commission's
7 regulated utilities, Tri-State and Xcel. Tri-State
8 pays approximately 15% of the taxes at Craig Station.
9 Xcel is consistently a top five taxpayer.

10 Moffat and Craig want to ensure that the
11 meaningful and robust effects are considered by the
12 Commission. The Commission should disregard Xcel's
13 owner-operator argument, that attempts to shield itself
14 from providing Moffat County and Craig with Just
15 Transition, by finding that Xcel is both statutorily
16 and morally required to provide community assistance to
17 our community, based on its ownership interests in
18 Craig Station and Hayden Station. Tri-State is not the
19 sole owner of Craig Station.

20 The Commission should find in the public
21 interest for Craig and Moffat to receive a Community
22 Assistance Plan that accounts for these two components.
23 One is \$14,024,000, which accounts for 10 years of
24 Xcel's Craig Station share of annual property tax
25 payments.

1 No. 2, given the majority of the Craig
2 Station workers, and Hayden Station workers, live in
3 Moffat County, give Craig an additional 14,797,000 for
4 the direct labor income effects relating to the early
5 closure of the Hayden Station. This results in a total
6 community assistance request of 28,821,000, for the
7 city and county's Economic Development Fund.

8 Now, many other intervenors in this case
9 have raised the issue of Xcel paying its fair share for
10 its ownership interests at Craig Station, either
11 through community assistance payments or extending the
12 Just Transition model credits for Phase II bids to
13 Moffat County. Those parties include the Office of the
14 Utility Consumer Advocate, Colorado Energy Office, the
15 Office of Just Transition and the North Energy
16 Alliance.

17 I want to thank you for your time today
18 and commitment to the issues. And I hope you consider
19 all of these comments. Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you, sir. Thanks
21 for joining us. Ms. Nina Waters.

22 MS. WATERS: Can you guys hear me all
23 right?

24 CHAIRMAN BLANK: We can.

25 MS. WATERS: All right. Good afternoon

1 or good morning, Commissioners. Thank you so much.

2 My name is Nina Waters, and I am speaking
3 today on behalf of myself, and as a Summit County
4 Commissioner. I live in the mountains of Colorado, and
5 where our snowpack is the foundation of both our
6 environment and our economy. In the winter, it drives
7 our tourism and outdoor recreation. In the summer, it
8 feeds our rivers, supports our agriculture, and
9 supplies water to communities across the state,
10 including the Denver Metro area.

11 What our interests are, winters are
12 growing shorter, so, arriving later and melting
13 earlier, and wildfire seasons last longer. These
14 changes threaten not only our natural resources, but
15 the economic security of thousands of families in
16 Summit County and beyond.

17 And recognizing these risks, Summit
18 County, along with our towns and partners, have adopted
19 the Summit County Climate Action Plan, which is setting
20 goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030,
21 and 80% by 2050, and to achieve 100% renewable
22 electricity by 2050. We are not waiting for change in
23 Summit County. We are leading it.

24 We have updated and strengthened our
25 building and energy code to improve energy efficiency,

1 reduce emissions from new construction, and make our
2 buildings more resilient and affordable for the long
3 term. These local actions reflect our deep commitment
4 to a clean energy future, and we need our utility
5 partners to match that level of commitment.

6 This is why I am urging the Commission to
7 ensure that Xcel's Just Transition Solicitation
8 prioritizes clean energy and maximizes emissions
9 reduction as soon as possible. Investing in new gas
10 plants would undermine community climate goals across
11 Colorado, and risk stranding costly assets, placing an
12 unfair burden on our future generations.

13 It is also critical that our Just
14 Transition means avoiding replacement of new polluting
15 infrastructure, in communities that are already
16 disproportionately impacted by past decisions. Justice
17 demands that we move forward, not just simply shift
18 harm.

19 Affordability must remain central in this
20 transition. Residents in Summit County are already
21 grappling with high housing costs and rising utility
22 bills. Clean energy must be paid for, with some sort
23 of consumer protection, so all Colorado families
24 benefit from the transition, not just some.

25 Our snowpack, our economy, and our

1 communities depend on the choices we make today. I
2 urge you to help move Colorado towards a future that is
3 cleaner, more resilient and more equitable.

4 Thank you so much for your time, and I
5 appreciate the ability to testify today. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thanks for joining us.
7 Appreciate it. Mr. Eric Johnson.

8 MR. JOHNSON: Good morning. Thanks for
9 the chance to speak. I work as a Tri-Utility
10 Coordinator, for Affordable Housing Projects, in
11 Boulder County. That means I work side by side with
12 Xcel engineers, managers, and crews, in the field,
13 installing power to our workforce housing projects. I
14 appreciate these folks and their contributions to
15 getting our projects powered up.

16 I recognize Xcel's experience and
17 proactive corporate stance towards increasing renewable
18 energy in Colorado. Our projects are all-electric,
19 including heat pumps and efficient lighting. We are
20 reliant upon a robust electrical grid, but we are not
21 only energy consumers. We are also producers, with
22 rooftop solar on every project.

23 We're experimenting with battery storage
24 in resiliency hubs for our residents, and with EV
25 charging, including vehicle-to-grid technology. This

1 means that we are in a position to participate in
2 intelligent grid advances, with two-way flows of
3 energy, to mitigate peak loads.

4 So, I endorse the planning in the JTS for
5 Xcel to provide for increased demand, as we electrify
6 our buildings and transportation, but there's much
7 about the JTS ERP that concerns me.

8 The increasing reliance on centralized
9 generation, including fossil gas and nuclear, offers a
10 suboptimal future for our shared grid. Wind, solar,
11 battery storage and energy efficiency provide a more
12 cost-effective and resilient system for Xcel customers.

13 We should not be asking our housing
14 residents to compete with energy hungry multi-national
15 corporations for energy. We should not be asking them
16 to subsidize power plants and transmission lines for
17 speculative data centers, which way or may not
18 materialize.

19 I appreciate that the PUC is hearing from
20 Coloradans like me. I ask the Commission to reject the
21 current JTS, and require a revised solicitation, that
22 will provide for existing customers, enable beneficial
23 electrification, and make large new energy users pay
24 the entire cost of their energy needs with
25 emission-free sources. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Ms. Melissa
2 Cronin.

3 MS. CRONIN: Good morning. I am Melissa
4 Cronin. I live in Denver and I am an Xcel customer.

5 As someone who is deeply concerned about
6 the impact of burning fossil fuels, I am thrilled that
7 Xcel is going to be closing the Pueblo plant by 2031
8 and replacing that lost energy with renewable.

9 My whole family, including my three
10 children, live in Colorado. We love our local
11 communities, and we also enjoy spending time in nature;
12 however, we worry a great deal about the impacts of
13 poor air quality on our family's health.

14 There's so many days in Colorado where
15 it's not safe to be outside, and the number of air
16 quality alert days increases every year. However, I
17 try to maintain confidence in our state and local law
18 makers and officials to protect us from known health
19 risks.

20 I know everyone listening in today, on
21 this meeting, has a family, and wants to make the best
22 choices possible for them and their health. In this
23 case, luckily, the best choice for our health is also
24 the best, the most economical choice for Xcel and for
25 the customers paying their energy bills.

1 Wind and solar energy are the most
2 cost-effective resources to address Colorado's growing
3 energy needs. Combined with battery storage, that can
4 provide continuous, reliable power, that meets demand,
5 even when the sun is not shining, or the wind isn't
6 blowing.

7 I am definitely not an energy expert, so
8 I am not here to speak to the technical details of
9 Xcel's plans. However, I do understand that Xcel is
10 proposing 12 to 14 gigawatts of new energy, to replace
11 the Pueblo plant, which I understand is less than 1
12 gigawatt.

13 So, I have solar panels on my house. I
14 have an electric car, an electric stove, an electric
15 water heater, electric washing machine, in my house. I
16 can see how electrifying things changes our energy
17 needs, and I understand the importance of electrifying
18 everything, in terms of homes and buildings, to
19 transition away from fossil fuels.

20 But, electrifying doesn't take 12
21 gigawatts more energy. And, so, as a resident and Xcel
22 customer, I want our lights to stay on as much as
23 everybody else, but customers should not be expected to
24 fund large data centers that are not even built yet.

25 If politicians and business leaders

1 decide they want to, they can bring vendors to our
2 state, actually, that will give us a real opportunity
3 to be leaders and utilize these renewables.

4 So, in closing, I urge the Commission to
5 prioritize plans that put public health above business
6 interests, and hold Xcel accountable to their stated
7 goals of transitioning away from fossil fuels. As an
8 Xcel customer, I don't want to be charged for building
9 a gas power plant that I don't want.

10 I believe in our leaders to do right by
11 Coloradans, through energy-efficient policies,
12 renewable energy plants, and this will let Xcel replace
13 energy lost from the Pueblo plant, and add energy to
14 power the electrification we need across our state.

15 Thank you very much.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Chris
17 Hoffman.

18 MR. HOFFMAN: Thank you very much, sir.
19 My name is Chris Hoffman. I live in Boulder and I am a
20 customer of Xcel.

21 I thank you very much, Commissioners, for
22 this opportunity to comment today. I would like to
23 preface my remarks with news, from a recent headline
24 story, in The Guardian. And it turns out the
25 overwhelming majority of people in the world, between

1 80 and 89%, according to a growing number of
2 peer-reviewed scientific studies, want their
3 governments to take stronger climate action. Your
4 decisions here, about energy in Colorado, are in the
5 front lines of translating that desire into results.

6 I'll summarize my request. Other
7 speakers have spoken or will speak to some other
8 details about these points.

9 So, first, please do not support nuclear.
10 Please do not allow Xcel to overbuild on data centers.
11 Please do not make large investments in transmission,
12 that may not withstand extreme weather. Local solar
13 and storage may be more expensive upfront, but will
14 likely be best for long-term investment.

15 Please do ensure that increased loads are
16 shifted towards daytime use. Please do minimize the
17 acquisition of new gas turbines. We already have over
18 \$1 billion in stranded coal assets. Let's not allow
19 the same thing to happen with gas.

20 Please do recognize that outages have
21 serious costs and please account for those costs. The
22 Commission should start to account for the costs of the
23 outages, for example, by considering the value of the
24 lost load, and use those costs to help increase
25 generation and storage resources that are closer to

1 loads and less likely to suffer from failures of the
2 transmission and distribution system. And please do
3 support the Just Transition payments for Craig and
4 Hayden. Thank you very much.

5 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Ms. Meg
6 Reed.

7 MS. REED: My name is Meg Reed, and I am
8 speaking as a Xcel customer.

9 As we discuss Colorado's energy future,
10 without the Pueblo coal plant, we have a great
11 opportunity to create a vision that checks all of the
12 boxes: A power supply that does not require years to
13 develop, as it's already on-line and at scale, it poses
14 no danger to the environment of our beautiful state,
15 and it does not saddle utility consumers with a
16 crushing payback over decades.

17 Renewables like wind and solar are truly
18 a win-win answer to the question, what next, after
19 coal. Battery storage is the one weak link, but it's
20 still much more within reach than options like small
21 modular nuclear reactors.

22 These reactors are still a relative
23 question mark, with competitive and emerging technology
24 currently in use only in Russia and China. We likely
25 will never get an accurate picture of their efficacy

1 and safety, as both countries have an abysmal record of
2 caring for their citizens' health and safety or
3 transparency in disaster analysis.

4 Another huge problem with nuclear energy
5 is what to do with the waste. There currently is no
6 solution, except to store it. And if you wouldn't want
7 a nuclear waste storage facilities in your backyard, it
8 would be wrong to assign it to someone else's backyard,
9 even if or especially if you're paying them to take it.

10 Because we need a large amount of power
11 ASAP, it just makes sense to expand what is already
12 working well, while also improving battery storage
13 capability for 24/7 availability. Wind and solar are
14 stable sources, avoiding the volatility of gas.

15 And the provision of low-cost solar and
16 wind is the right choice, to protect us consumers, and
17 with its unmatched safety record, is the right choice
18 to protect our state's precious environment. Thank
19 you.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Ms. Heidi
21 Leatherwood.

22 MS. LEATHERWOOD: Good morning,
23 Commissioners. Thank you so much for hearing comments
24 today.

25 I am Heidi Leatherwood, Climate Policy

1 Analyst for 350 Colorado. We're a grassroots
2 organization, with 20,000 members, working locally on
3 the global threat of climate change. We have members
4 in Pueblo, and other coal plant communities, and in
5 Xcel's ratepayer communities.

6 We submitted our written comments on
7 April 10th, and intend to submit another written
8 comment, now that Answer Testimony has been filed. I
9 personally am an Xcel ratepayer in Denver, and I have
10 friends who live in Pueblo.

11 350 Colorado shares the concerns
12 highlighted by other groups; that nuclear energy and
13 gas plants, with carbon capture, will pollute Pueblo
14 and will raise rates for Xcel's customers elsewhere.
15 We're opposed to allowing Xcel to charge ratepayers for
16 slush funds, basically, blank checks. We want Pueblo
17 to have revenue replaced, with renewable energy, such
18 as outlined in the Energy Park Report, by Energy
19 Innovation, as a way of doing that. We support equal
20 revenue replacement for Craig and Hayden.

21 It is possible to power the world,
22 including Colorado, completely with renewables. I have
23 a 101-page document, with abstract, 100 peer-reviewed
24 studies, that support that statement, which I will
25 submit along with our next written comments.

1 The IREA, the International Renewable
2 Energy Agency, has a 2024 report, that analyzed five
3 scenarios for 1.5 degrees Celsius, including 100%
4 renewable energy scenarios, as well as scenarios that
5 do use a limited amount of fossil fuels. They conclude
6 that it is possible to mitigate climate change, and
7 it's economically and socially beneficial to do this,
8 by transitioning to renewable energy. The three 100%
9 renewable energy scenarios show that a fully 100%
10 renewable system will be socially, economically and
11 environmentally beneficial, efficient and
12 cost-effective, compared to the net zero alternatives
13 that include fossil fuels and nuclear?

14 They found that a 100% renewable energy
15 system creates more jobs. Their recommendation
16 reflects that, along with the 100% renewable energy
17 system, efficient and flexible decentralized
18 distributed energy is essential.

19 So, today, I am asking the Commission to
20 take a very critical look at Xcel's proposals and
21 assumptions. Our written comments support our request
22 that you do not take it as a given that their
23 assumptions about load growth are accurate. We also
24 need to ask ourselves, how can we reduce load even
25 further. Not only expanding renewables, but also

1 reducing energy use is absolutely necessary to achieve
2 climate goals.

3 Xcel does not credit energy efficiency
4 and distributed energy resources as having the cost
5 reduction and energy savings potential we know they can
6 have. We're counting on you to hold them accountable,
7 and to ask them to do something that is not in their
8 own interests, but in the interests of Coloradans,
9 namely, to build less stuff, to incorporate distributed
10 energy resources, and help customers use less energy.

11 Thank you, again, for your time today.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Mr. Ken
13 Cross.

14 MR. CROSS: Hello. Good morning,
15 Commissioners. My name is Ken Cross, and I am a
16 convener, and one of those people for the Colorado
17 Coalition for a Liveable Climate, or CCLC.

18 CCLC is composed of 54 organizations,
19 across the State of Colorado, dedicated to developing
20 and advocating for projects that reduce greenhouse gas
21 pollution ton levels to support a livable climate.

22 I am a resident of Fort Collins, which
23 receives electricity from the Platte River Power
24 Authority, or PRPA. For the past year or so, the CCLC
25 has been trying to prevent PRPA from building a new gas

1 plant, which would increase gas penetration capacity by
2 over 50%. At the moment, it appears that we have lost
3 that fight up here.

4 We believe that a just transition to
5 renewables should lean into storage technologies, not
6 the latest gas turbine technology. Municipal
7 governments, in Northern Colorado, were told that a new
8 gas plant could be converted to hydrogen, without being
9 provided with any costs for making that conversion.
10 And the fact that burning hydrogen, in new turbines,
11 would produce as much or more NOx as is produced by the
12 existing gas turbines received little to no
13 acknowledgement by the PRPA.

14 We believe that PRPA's new gas plant is
15 very likely to become a stranded asset in the next 10
16 to 20 years. We would hate to see the PUC allow PSCo
17 to make the same mistake, on a much larger scale.

18 When considering plans to build new gas
19 plants, we would ask that you do four things: First,
20 consider whether an existing gas plant could meet most
21 anticipated load, until long duration storage has been
22 proven to work and is available at scale.

23 Second concern, the impacts of extracting
24 gas required to operate the new gas plant on air
25 quality and public health. That's something that got

1 totally ignored up here in northern Colorado.

2 Require detailed estimates for the costs
3 of converting the new gas plants to hydrogen some day.
4 We anticipate that those would be prohibitively high.

5 And, four, the concern of the impacts of
6 burning hydrogen in any new gas plants on air quality
7 and public health. Let's make sure we don't repeat the
8 same mistakes that were made earlier during the
9 century, statewide, and, more recently, by PRPA
10 Northern Colorado, by overinvesting in fossil-fuel
11 generating resources.

12 Thank you very much for your attention.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Ms. Kirsten
14 Schatz.

15 MS. SCHATZ: Hello. Good morning. I
16 guess we're just barely still in the morning here.
17 Thank you for this public --

18 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Just under.

19 MS. SCHATZ: Thanks for this public
20 hearing and this opportunity to speak. My name is
21 Kirsten Schatz, Clean Air Advocate for CoPIRG. We're a
22 statewide consumer watchdog organization.

23 I am here to ask the Commission to ensure
24 that the replacement plan, for the Xcel Energy Comanche
25 coal-fired power units, is focused on renewable energy.

1 It sounds like a common theme here, among the comments
2 so far, but we want this replacement plan to be focused
3 on renewable energy, such as wind, solar and
4 geothermal, coupled with battery technology and energy
5 efficiency measures.

6 Please do not approve new gas power
7 generation. The goal, right now, should be to replace
8 fossil-fuel electricity with renewables as quickly as
9 possible, and have enough extra capacity to electrify
10 vehicles and our homes.

11 We know that electrifying transportation,
12 and our homes, has a lot of benefits. It uses much
13 more efficient technology, it's better for indoor air
14 quality, outdoor air quality, and, therefore, our
15 health.

16 Any plan to get this has to start with
17 conservation. The more we can cut energy waste and
18 reduce how much energy we need to produce, in the first
19 place, through energy-efficiency measures, the last new
20 stuff we need to build, and the more quickly we can
21 replace gas and coal with renewable energy.

22 Xcel's testimony, from the fall,
23 indicates that to meet the growth in electric vehicles
24 and cleaner homes, by 2031, we need about four to five
25 new gigawatts of energy, and in their preferred

1 options, that they mention, from the fall, they
2 indicate this could add about 10 gigawatts, just, of
3 solar and wind, more than enough to cover what we need,
4 especially with the incredible advances in battery and
5 storage that we have seen and will continue to see,
6 that can make these renewable sources go even further.

7 When it comes to going even bigger, so
8 that we can add large loads, like data centers, CoPIRG
9 advises that the PUC does not approve Xcel's plan for
10 adding additional capacity in this docket for large
11 loads such as data centers. There are just too many
12 questions that need to be answered around energy use,
13 water use, cost to consumers, all of that needs to be
14 answered, before Colorado approves new big increases in
15 energy capacity for these large loads.

16 From a consumer perspective, we believe
17 that replacing coal-fired power plants with renewables
18 versus gas is the right path as well. The cost of
19 renewable energy is competitive with gas, and gas power
20 has fuel costs that are just so volatile, and driven by
21 many factors outside our control, whereas renewables,
22 such as wind and solar, have no fuel costs and are not
23 subject to price volatility.

24 We understand that the Commission must
25 consider the impact of any proposal specifically on

1 Pueblo. On that note, we have submitted, into the
2 docket, 2,074 petitions, from Coloradans, mostly from
3 Pueblo, and a letter from 53 businesses, again, mostly
4 from Pueblo, in favor of the renewable energy solution
5 over new gas-powered generation.

6 We gathered these petitions and letter
7 sign-ons from businesses, talking one on one with
8 thousands of Pueblo residents and businesses. With a
9 combination of energy efficiency measures, and new
10 wind, solar and battery storage, we can ensure that
11 this plan replaces the coal-fired power plants, with
12 100% renewables -- and no new gas -- but also, adds new
13 capacity for the electrification of vehicles and homes,
14 and we believe that will be focus of the Commission
15 over the next few months.

16 Thank you so much for your time and
17 consideration.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you very much.
19 Mr. Julian Guevara.

20 MR. GUEVARA: Hello. Good morning,
21 Commissioners. My name is Julian Guevara. I am
22 speaking today, and I am a Latino community organizer,
23 advocate for environmental justice, for the residents
24 of Pueblo. I stand in solidarity with the City of
25 Pueblo, many of whom who have suffered decades of

1 pollution from the Comanche coal plant, while bearing
2 little of the economic benefit.

3 The Latino communities, across Colorado,
4 like those in Pueblo, have been treated as sacrifice
5 zones, expected to bear the brunt of polluting energy,
6 while decision-makers are prioritizing corporation
7 interests over public health and communities.

8 We have an opportunity today to break
9 that cycle. The future of Pueblo's energy should not
10 be built on unproven, high-risk technology, that could
11 saddle working families with sky-high energy costs and
12 long-term reactive waste concerns.

13 We have seen, in other states, that
14 nuclear facilities provide relatively new long-term
15 jobs, but once construction ends, those jobs are highly
16 specialized skills, that do not match the training of
17 the local workforce.

18 Latinos and families in Pueblo deserve
19 the same energy security and affordability as
20 communities across Colorado. That means rejecting
21 costly energy nuclear-fuel projects, and committing to
22 a Just Transition powered by renewable, rather than
23 gambling on expensive and risky nuclear technology.

24 Pueblo has a far better option, creation
25 of an Energy Park. By investing in solar, wind and

1 battery storage, Pueblo can build a clean energy hub
2 that drives reliable power, creates good local jobs,
3 and strengthens the economy, without endangering public
4 health.

5 These proven technologies can be deployed
6 quickly and affordably, offering residents now, not
7 decades from now, the benefits of an Energy Park model,
8 for how communities can transition away from coal,
9 while protecting both the environment and the economic
10 future.

11 Pueblo has given enough. Now is the time
12 to build a clean energy future, that truly benefits the
13 residents, not just big utilities and private
14 investors.

15 I urge the Commission to stand with the
16 people of Pueblo, and reject nuclear as a false
17 solution, and consider alternative renewable solutions.
18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Jamie
20 Geason.

21 MS. GEASON: Good morning, Commission,
22 and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you
23 today, as a Coloradoan and as an Xcel customer, who is
24 deeply concerned about the future of our state.

25 As you all know, Pueblo is an important

1 part of Colorado, not only because of its rich history,
2 but because of the people who currently live there. My
3 husband did fieldwork, outside of Pueblo, and he worked
4 for the Federal government, and we visited there for
5 various reasons, over the years, to see Hungarian folk
6 bands, to enjoy restaurants along the River Walk, for
7 example.

8 Economic revitalization is a real concern
9 for the 100,000 people who live there, and they deserve
10 to have a long-term solution, one that provides good
11 consistent jobs, both now and in the future. Solar and
12 wind provide those jobs, with proven technologies.

13 Further, as our energy demands grow, and
14 data centers are built, tax breaks should not be given
15 to these developers and these billionaires. Tax breaks
16 should be reserved for renewable energy that doesn't
17 add pollution, and they should be for local businesses
18 that keep the money in the community. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Ms. Jessica
20 Hamilton.

21 MS. HAMILTON: Hello, Commissioners. And
22 coming in under the wire with good morning still. My
23 name is Jessica Hamilton, Xcel customer, and in Fort
24 Collins. And I have lived here in Colorado my whole
25 life.

1 I have a family to look after, and, like,
2 basically, everyone these days, I keep track of every
3 dollar in our budget. And I worry about energy costs.
4 I am also deeply worried about polluting the air.
5 We're all breathing, up and down the Front Range, and
6 we're worried about the future we have created for
7 kids, like my seven-year old daughter.

8 For those reasons, I am deeply grateful
9 that Xcel and this Commission are planning for a Just
10 Transition, to close the Comanche coal plant. Now we
11 must make sure we're prioritizing renewable energy for
12 all of our electricity needs.

13 As others have alluded to today, one of
14 the tools or methods for addressing climate change is
15 to electrify everything, which means we now need a lot
16 more electricity. And, of course, we're all learning.
17 We also need more electricity for the data center boom,
18 but that electrification strategy to handle climate
19 change only works if that electricity is coming from
20 clean renewable sources.

21 Luckily, for all of us, the use of
22 renewables also reduces harmful air emissions and keeps
23 costs down for ratepayers, like myself. Renewable
24 energy is not only the environmentally responsible
25 choice, but the most economical one. Wind, solar and

1 battery storage are the least expensive technologies,
2 for new power generation, according to the Lazard 2024
3 Levelized Cost of Energy Report.

4 When it comes to data centers, it is not
5 this Commission's job to pass laws that regulate tech
6 companies, but there are state legislators, in this
7 country, that are already legislating that tech
8 companies can be required to pay for additional clean
9 energy to power their data centers, thus protecting the
10 grid and ratepayers from the demand created by their
11 operation.

12 And this Commission does have the power
13 to explore the renewable energy options, and energy
14 costs associated with data center build-out. And I
15 urge you to ensure that the new demand is met with the
16 lowest cost and cleanest options.

17 This Commission should demand a deeper
18 look at Xcel's model, because what we thought were the
19 energy requirements of AI, a few months ago, have
20 already changed significantly, as the tech gets rapidly
21 more efficient. And Xcel's modeling needs to keep up,
22 so that this Commissions can make informed decisions,
23 based on the latest information, not on outdated
24 speculation. Thank you for your time.

25 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Ms. Ciara

1 Fernandez Faber. Ms. Lisa Rosintoski.

2 MS. ROSINTOWSI: Hello, Commissioners,
3 and fellow voices on this topic. I am probably the
4 lone dissenter of this team.

5 Mark Twain once said, "It's easier to
6 fool people than convince them they have been fooled."
7 Closing coal plants and fossil fuels is not the answer.
8 There is over 300 years of coal on the earth.

9 The people of the world have been
10 experiencing climate shame, by the tyranny of the few.
11 Why? At times, it is for the benefit of the earth and
12 technology advances, but, at times, it feels like the
13 proverbial, "The sky is falling. We must act now or
14 the world is going to end."

15 Doomsday prophecies about the earth have
16 been stated for thousands of years. So far, the world
17 is still here, and, yes, the tyranny of the few still
18 pontificate humans are killing the earth, and it will
19 not survive, as if humans were that effective.

20 The climate has been changing for
21 millions of years, and will continue to do so. So, how
22 do we, regardless of politics, work together to manage
23 making the planet healthier and not vilify fossil fuels
24 through climate shame?

25 The grassroots mobilization for

1 environmental protection, that led to the first Earth
2 Day, in 1970, was built on nearly a century of efforts
3 to address the contamination of water, air and land,
4 caused by industrialization and urbanization. Today
5 there are 30,359 environmental organizations in the
6 United States. Combined, these environmental
7 organizations employ 134,250 people, earning more than
8 27 billion in revenue, and have assets of 72 billion.

9 This industry creates climate public
10 opinion, through the media, causing climate rage that
11 is not always based on facts. The results have
12 included people attempting to destroy works of art,
13 laying in the street, causing massive traffic
14 standstills, all to save the planet, which causes more
15 chaos.

16 I believe most people are
17 environmentalists at heart. I have not experienced
18 anyone who does not support the wise use of the earth's
19 natural resources. However, I have also observed, in
20 the last 20 years, the tyranny of the few vilifying
21 Americans' energy use, and, in fact, jeopardizing
22 reliable energy delivery through misinformation, that
23 the earth is either cooling or warming beyond anything
24 in history, causing irreversible, catastrophic impacts.

25 The best example is when Al Gore

1 misrepresented data, and terrified people, that Arctic
2 seals would be completely gone by 2014. Like so many
3 previous soothsayers, Mr. Gore lives a lavish
4 lifestyle, and does not blink an eye when traveling by
5 plane, or indulging in 11,000 square-foot homes that
6 are not 100% solar.

7 The good news is the Arctic Sea is alive
8 and well, and so are the polar bears. Climate does
9 change, and if you review any historical documents, one
10 observes whole societies had to leave various areas,
11 due to famine, flood, lack of wildlife or drought.
12 However, unlike the nomads before us, we cannot move
13 cities and farms to follow the cyclical nature of a
14 changing climate.

15 In an interview, Dr. Willie Soon observed
16 global temperatures have dramatically fluctuated for as
17 long as humans have left records. Please read the
18 records. There are cities underwater because sea
19 levels have risen within recorded times. Dr. Soon
20 stated: CO₂ is nothing and cannot cause the climate to
21 change. It does not change anything, actually. It's
22 the sun. In fact, concrete and asphalt raise
23 temperatures more than CO₂.

24 Dr. Soon went on to say that the whole
25 problem with climate science these days is related to

1 how science is funded. Science must be funded with no
2 strings attached to achieve healthy debate and truthful
3 data.

4 Therefore, fossil fuels are not the
5 enemy. Should we continue exploring renewables and
6 rates into our energy use? Absolutely. But not at the
7 expense of fossil fuels, that, unlike renewables, offer
8 24-by-7 power. They are reliable. Their efficiency
9 factor is the highest compared to renewables.

10 I would also stress that renewables do
11 have natural resource harvesting and environmental
12 impacts that are conveniently not brought up. And the
13 materials used to create products, such as solar
14 panels, wind turbines, geothermal, battery storage, are
15 sometimes worse than the cure.

16 Regulation and reverse mandates can make
17 or break an industry, but, ultimately, impact the
18 consumers. We've heard a lot about the price. The
19 Colorado oil and gas industry has spent years, and
20 millions of dollars staying in compliance with an
21 ever-changing regulatory landscape. Thus state and
22 Federal legislative virtue signaling is not the answer
23 for consumers, especially since consumers are paying
24 ever increasing utility bills.

25 Have you ever seen a legislative bill

1 that actually had a return on investment? I would love
2 to see it.

3 What is real right now and works
4 immediately are the simplest of efforts, such as don't
5 pollute. I live in the mountains, and I see water
6 bottles all over the place on the ground.

7 Conservation, a woman brought up
8 conservation. I couldn't agree with her more.
9 Conservation, recycling, ride the bus and bike, and,
10 most importantly, teach people how energy is produced.
11 And if people understood the energy delivery ecosystem,
12 I believe technological advances would be abundant.

13 In conclusion, I am mortal. The planet
14 has been here four and a half billion years. We have
15 been here what? 100,000, 200,000. And we've been
16 engaged in heavy industry for a little over 200 years.
17 200 years versus 4 and 1/2 billion. And we have the
18 conceit to think that somehow we are the threat; that
19 somehow we're going to put into jeopardy this beautiful
20 green ball, that's just been floating around the sun?

21 The planet has been through a lot worse.
22 Thanks for your time, and I hope it was entertaining.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Ciara
24 Fernandez Faber.

25 MS. FABER: Yeah. Thank you for this

1 opportunity to speak. My name is Ciara Fernandez
2 Faber. I am from Denver, Colorado and I am a mother of
3 a seven-year-old and a two-year old.

4 My seven-year-old son is currently
5 learning about birds at school, and especially how the
6 polluted air and water is impacting their habitat. He
7 doesn't understand why we would do anything to harm
8 them. He has his own personal plans to plant more
9 trees and he wants to ask people not to use pesticides.

10 I try to highlight positive changes that
11 are happening in our community. For instance, I am
12 really optimistic about the state's leadership, and in
13 promoting and implementing renewable energy. And I was
14 relieved to hear that the Comanche coal plant will be
15 retired decades ahead of schedule.

16 As electrical demands grow, we have the
17 opportunity to make a just transition, with long-term
18 gains. It is not enough to meet the needs of the
19 moment with incremental changes, like gradually phasing
20 out coal and gas. That is effectively putting a
21 band-aid on internal wounds. Nor is it safe or
22 economical to drastically overhaul our energy needs
23 with untested and high-risk nuclear facilities.

24 Xcel Energy, of which I have been a
25 customer for two decades, should prioritize integrating

1 wind, solar and geothermal use into their long-term
2 energy planning. They are the cheaper, fastest,
3 cleaner and more reliable.

4 I often drive through Pueblo and across
5 this naturally beautiful and abundant state regularly,
6 to visit family in Northern Mexico, and the potential
7 for solar and wind power, in particular, are boldly
8 apparent. 300-plus days of sunshine and high wind
9 corridors make this state the perfect frontier for a
10 sustainable new future, one that I am personally
11 committed to see, as a mother of young children.

12 Thank you, again.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Mr. Scott
14 Hatfield.

15 MR. HATFIELD: Yeah. I have some
16 concerns about the incentives being counterproductive
17 to achieve the goals of the state, as well as the more
18 localized goals. There should be no new gas plants in
19 the plan.

20 There's ways to get around that, to meet
21 the ramp-up loads that happen, generally late
22 afternoon. There needs to be a lot more emphasis on
23 load shifting, as well as demand response. You could,
24 I think, you could use robust demand response to
25 eliminate the need for most of these new gas plants,

1 especially if you combine it with more virtual power
2 plants, more realistic load forecasts, distributed
3 energy resources as well.

4 There's really no need for new gas or new
5 nukes. These are promoted, primarily, I believe by the
6 perverse incentives for Xcel Energy to invest as much
7 money as possible, for a guaranteed rate of return.
8 This is a strong incentive to have abandoned assets in
9 the future.

10 That's probably what's going to happen
11 with any new gas or any new nukes. It's totally
12 counterproductive to our climate goals. The nukes are
13 going to have waste that's going to be on-site
14 indefinitely. There's no central repository.

15 Much of that demand is projected from
16 data centers. Data centers are becoming a lot more
17 efficient.

18 So, there's some inverse incentives to
19 dramatically overbuild resources to produce new
20 electricity. This just helps Xcel make more money.

21 So, if you overbuild it, and, then, you
22 have way too much electricity. This is going to
23 destroy our work for energy efficiency, and that's lot
24 of work there, across the board.

25 So, I think the state needs to be a

1 little bit more accommodating of these other concerns;
2 that don't just waste our climate future.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Velma
4 Campbell.

5 MS. CAMPBELL: Hello, Commissioners.
6 Thank you for the opportunity for public comment today.
7 I am a medical doctor, from Pueblo, specializing in
8 Pueblo health.

9 And I am speaking today, as an
10 individual, although I am a member of a number of
11 environmental organizations and public health
12 organizations, and I have been an activist for
13 environmental justice and social justice for many
14 years.

15 As you know, Pueblo, and its surrounding
16 areas, has long been burdened by pollution and health
17 issues, as well as low income, in spite of, perhaps, or
18 because of our strong industrial legacy. Our
19 community, like other communities, has the right to
20 prosper, in growing renewable energy, especially in
21 view of our fuel and infrastructure resources.

22 Renewable energy can meet the needs of
23 our community, for a healthy environment, and, hence,
24 economy, with union jobs and ample property taxes, if
25 they are not undermined by false solutions such as

1 nuclear, large-scale hydrogen, and/or gas plants, with
2 carbon capture.

3 Certainly overestimating demand and
4 deliberately building stranded assets, like gas plants,
5 should be unacceptable and are obvious false solutions.
6 Just Transition payments for Pueblo, and the other
7 coal-impacted communities we have heard from today,
8 should reflect the tax revenues and economic losses
9 resulting from those changes, at least until
10 replacement is accomplished.

11 Regarding the JTS, specifically in
12 Pueblo, I am requesting that the PUC direct Xcel, or
13 PSCo, to distribute such funds as are required to
14 evaluate, plan and implement a renewable energy
15 replacement hub, including generation, storage and
16 transmission on sites in our region, the current Pueblo
17 generating station and related property. In addition,
18 they should be instructed to plan and implement
19 accommodation for industries desiring and able to
20 develop in proximity to energy and heat generation that
21 they can use for operations.

22 I encourage reviewing the possibilities;
23 that the sale of energy generated and used on
24 properties owned by Public Service/Xcel should not be
25 limited by the current Black Hills' franchise monopoly

1 over Pueblo.

2 An exception already exists for EVRAZ
3 Corporation. This type of arrangement could make
4 generation and local load use much more economically
5 viable and profitable. Proposals are already in
6 circulation, for example, for an energy park and also a
7 DC transmission line is another project that's under
8 consideration.

9 I appreciate the opportunity to comment
10 and thank you for your consideration.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you for joining
12 us. Ms. Julie Zahniser.

13 MS. ZAHNISER: Thank you. Hello,
14 Commissioners. My name is Julie Zahniser, and I want
15 to thank you for this hearing, and also thank you for
16 being Public Utilities Commission Commissioners. You
17 have a really difficult job, and I appreciate your
18 work.

19 I am a grandmother, recently, and retired
20 speech pathologist and Xcel customer. Unlike many in
21 Pueblo, I grew up in relative privilege, not worrying
22 about playing outside in polluted air, at risk of
23 asthma or other health effects.

24 I appreciate the experts who will and are
25 detailing the hazards to the Pueblo community of

1 continued investment in its keeping the unreliable
2 Pueblo 3 coal plant operating, until the very last
3 possible minute, as well as extreme risk, expense and
4 climate mitigation delays of any type of nuclear in
5 Pueblo, no matter how small.

6 The question I would like to ask you is
7 this: How would your community feel if a highly
8 profitable, politically powerful, multi-state utility
9 approached your city or county leaders, with
10 presentations of unproven technologies, promising an
11 uncertain number of jobs, and no plan to securely
12 manage nuclear waste or potentially escaping captured
13 carbon, from new fossil gas, and, likely reduce water
14 resources in counties where you live, while having
15 generated power shipped off to Denver. I don't think
16 your communities, or mine, would support this. This
17 should not happen in Pueblo either.

18 There are safer, cheaper and more readily
19 available options in solar, wind, geothermal and
20 storage, as well as encouraging daytime energy use and
21 having distributed energy resources developed
22 elsewhere.

23 The Pueblo steel plant already relies, in
24 a significant part, on solar power. The mentioned
25 Pueblo renewable energy park could be started

1 immediately, could train and hire locally, expanding
2 and adding innovative solutions, when available.

3 This is a historic moment. We're all
4 worried about our country. There was never a more
5 important time for regulators like you to stand up to
6 corporate pressure, to take the long view, and for the
7 people and the planet, before profits.

8 Thank you for listening.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Mr. Scott
10 Miller.

11 MR. MILLER: Good afternoon,
12 Commissioners, and, am I live? Can you hear me?

13 CHAIRMAN BLANK: We can see and hear you.

14 MR. MILLER: Excellent. Thanks for
15 taking the public comments, and, like, Julie before me
16 said, doing a great job in engaging with the public on
17 all of these very difficult issues.

18 My name is Scott Miller. I am an Xcel
19 customer, living in the Gunbarrel neighborhood of
20 Boulder County. I have got two kids enrolled in BBSD.
21 I have a technology background, and I have recently
22 shifted my full-time focus to climate change and
23 energy, and I am learning a ton about the topic.

24 I am here to ask you to force Xcel to be
25 more thorough and transparent about investment options

1 that might be best for Pueblo and Colorado, even if
2 those options aren't the best for Xcel's financial
3 profits.

4 First, please do not rely on nuclear
5 power to replace coal. Nuclear costs remain high
6 compared to solar and wind plus storage. And the
7 technology for SMR is not yet proven. Please require
8 Xcel to evaluate energy parks, in regards to the
9 proposals for Pueblo.

10 Second, please do not allow Xcel to
11 justify building new gas plant and transmission lines
12 to meet the demands of global corporation data centers.
13 These data centers should benefit Colorado, accelerate
14 the state's path to zero emissions, and decrease
15 electricity rates for residential and commercial
16 customers, rather than the opposite. Please require
17 Xcel to detail options for data centers that benefit
18 all of Colorado.

19 Third, please require Xcel to provide a
20 detailed cost/benefit analysis, comparing the
21 deployment of distributed local energy resources, such
22 as solar, battery storage, plus demand-side management,
23 to building new fossil-fuel gas plants and transmission
24 lines. Deploying a combination of local energy
25 resources and utility-scale renewable energy plants may

1 be more effective financially and for reliability than
2 adding the gas plants.

3 Thank you very much.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Mr. Scott
5 Larson.

6 DR. LARSON: Good afternoon. I'm not
7 sure if I can start my video. So, I guess I can.

8 So, I will introduce myself. My wife and
9 I, my family, as they have grown up, have been 30-year
10 part-time residents of Routt County, Colorado, and we
11 love the area. And I have retired now, my wife and are
12 soon to become nearly full-time residents in Routt
13 County, Colorado.

14 And we have driven by the power plant, in
15 Hayden, numerous times, to fly back and forth, and we
16 usually drive there. I want to make the following
17 comments.

18 I had not intend to speak, mostly wanted
19 to listen, but given Ms. Rosintowski's -- I hope I am
20 pronouncing that right -- Ms. Rosintowski's comments, I
21 can't help but have to emphasize what she had to say.

22 And I, in fact, listen to, and if you
23 haven't ever listened to, and you have a sense of
24 humor, I would encourage you to go listen to George
25 Carlin's comments, and a standup comedy called, "Save

1 the Planet."

2 This planet has been around longer than
3 we can imagine. To think that we can possibly, as a
4 human species, bring it to its knees, in the course of
5 200 years, with the industrial revolution, I think is a
6 bit egotistical and reflects self-importance. I am
7 indeed a supporter -- I am a physician. I am based in
8 obvious evidence, and I understand logic and reason.

9 And I grew up in the '70s, and went to
10 college, and we saw the prediction of the ice age that
11 was coming, when I grew up in the '70s, and there was
12 great consternation about the ice age. And, indeed,
13 the former vice president said the polar bears are
14 going to drown, when their little pool of ice melts.
15 That did not happen. So there's a lot of hyperbole
16 here.

17 I do have and want to promote the health
18 of the planet; however, I think there needs to be
19 adequate consideration of the cost of the alternatives,
20 as well as the reliability. We have a home in Routt
21 County, Colorado, and have experienced power outages.
22 Routt County, Colorado, if you don't know, and I'm sure
23 you do, experiences extreme cold weather and high
24 snowfall. I'm really curious about the reliability of
25 solar energy, and in the contours of heavy snowfall,

1 300-plus inches, at a minimum, each year, in Routt
2 County.

3 I am also concerned about the cost of
4 reliable energy alternatives. I have yet to see an
5 example of where alternative energies have come to be
6 more affordable than traditional fossil fuels. I mean,
7 does it make sense that a country is buying dirty coal
8 from other countries, simply because of prior
9 administration policy on coal? Clean coal energy has
10 arrived.

11 I live in Michigan, as I mentioned
12 before, and the Palisade plant is about to be reopened.
13 It might take two or three years, but there are great
14 examples, across the planet, of small nuclear
15 facilities that can be reopened, and be climate
16 sensitive, for energy production, and in an efficient
17 manner.

18 Lastly, I want to comment on the storage
19 piece, because when my son was in middle school, I
20 helped him with a paper about Yucca Mountain. You have
21 heard of Yucca Mountain. Well, it still isn't approved
22 for disposal and storage of radioactive materials.

23 So, I challenge the people, of the
24 future, in thinking about the safety for the planet, to
25 say how are we going to dispose of all of these

1 batteries, that have all sorts of trace minerals and
2 risk to the public and the groundwater, in some
3 meaningful fashion. Right now, who knows how they are
4 being disposed of. There's no coordination of it.

5 And the risk to the planet of these
6 storage batteries, I would say to you, that it is equal
7 to the risk of radioactive material and needs
8 confirmation of the disposal and maintenance long term.

9 So, I am fine with renewable energy. I
10 just don't want to not be able to heat my house, when
11 it doesn't work, and I don't want another example of
12 Texas, when people's homes were destroyed, because they
13 didn't have a power grid that had backup.

14 Final comments. We put in a Generac for
15 this very reason. Who knows how long propane will be
16 available, but the person that put it in says, you know
17 what they ought to do with Hayden? They ought to make
18 it a generator backup. They ought to make it Generac.
19 They ought to make it easily brought up on line, again,
20 in the case of power failure from renewables, wind and
21 solar.

22 Those are my comments. I thank you for
23 the opportunity. Have a good afternoon.

24 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thanks for joining us.
25 Ms. Mary Pettigrew.

1 MS. PETTIGREW: Hi. Thank you for the
2 opportunities to comment today. My name is Mary
3 Pettigrew. I am a small business owner and Xcel
4 customer and a parent, in Boulder, who is distressed
5 because of the climate situation.

6 But I also honestly view this as the
7 clean and equitable solutions available now are,
8 really, opportunities to address this monumental
9 challenge in a way that could vastly improve our clean
10 energy future.

11 Unfortunately, politics, which often
12 translates to financial power, is often a limiting
13 factor, in terms of our adoption of sane solutions. In
14 Pueblo, it sure seems like the same situation is at
15 play.

16 Here is this community, that has been the
17 recipient of pollution from Pueblo Unit 3, a coal-fired
18 power plant that should never have been built, and that
19 has been plagued with issues, that Xcel continues to
20 pour money into, and, as an aside, I would love to
21 please take this opportunity to request that you not
22 approve any additional expenses on that power plant.

23 Pueblo doesn't even benefit from the
24 power produced by the polluting plant in their
25 backyard. Now, as Pueblo Unit 3 is set to retire --

1 not soon enough, in my opinion -- the powers that be
2 are promoting enormous capital-intensive solutions,
3 like nuclear, for instance, the most lucrative way for
4 them to secure future profit.

5 For background on nuclear, I would
6 recommend numerous Webinars on the topic, sponsored by
7 the Colorado Renewable Energy Association, Physicians
8 for Social Responsibility, Green Latinos, 350 Colorado,
9 and more. Nuclear power is not a viable solution in
10 light of its costs, the time it takes to build, the
11 fact that it is not a nimble and responsive source of
12 power, and, of course, that pesky problem of what to do
13 with the waste.

14 Please consider seriously the concept
15 that has been proposed in the Energy Innovation report,
16 called, "Energy Parks, a New Strategy to Meet Rising
17 Electricity Demand." This is from 2024, December, and
18 it outlines how places, like Pueblo, appear to be
19 optimal, and I quote, "to integrate multiple renewable
20 energy sources, storage solutions like batteries, and
21 potentially collocate electricity consumers such as
22 manufacturing facilities or data centers all connected
23 to the grid at a single point."

24 It goes on to say, "We are on the
25 precipice of huge clean energy economic opportunities

1 that policymakers and utilities can seize by opening
2 their regulatory and legislative forums to energy parks
3 and stakeholders eager to invest in their state and
4 communities."

5 Personally, I feel the investor-owned
6 utility has outlived its useful life. It is absurd, in
7 my opinion, if we care about responding adequately to
8 climate change, that we would continue to have utility
9 profits be part of the equation.

10 I realize there is work to be done at the
11 legislature, but I really appreciate your thinking,
12 Commissioners, about how to shift the system from one
13 that incentivizes utilities to pursue capital-intensive
14 projects instead of nonwire distributed resources to
15 supply our clean energy transition. Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.
17 Ms. Dominique Naccarato.

18 MS. NACCARATO: Good afternoon,
19 Commissioners. Thank you. I am Dominique Naccarato,
20 speaking today on behalf of myself, as an elected
21 council person for the City of Salida, Colorado. Thank
22 you for taking comments today on Xcel's Just Transition
23 Solicitation.

24 As a small community that has committed
25 to achieving net-zero energy use by the year 2050, our

1 residents are eager for clean energy choices.
2 Currently, there's even a waiting list for Xcel's
3 Renewable Connect Program, demonstrating our strong
4 demand for renewable solutions.

5 Client change has already affected
6 Salida. We're experiencing increased wildfire risk and
7 changing weather patterns, which threaten our
8 tourism-based economy, and including our snowpack and
9 our whitewater rafting industry.

10 We also experience economic strain,
11 during peak tourism seasons, due to Xcel power outages.
12 One recent outage, during a major summer festival,
13 prevented local businesses from using their credit card
14 machines, adversely impacting our small business
15 economy.

16 Given these realities, I am concerned
17 that Xcel's proposed plan includes building new gas
18 plants, emitting greenhouse gases and local air
19 pollution, which threatens community health and
20 undermines our climate goals.

21 They are also expensive to build and
22 operate, locking communities, like ours, into costly
23 infrastructure, that may become obsolete as we move
24 forward towards 100% clean energy by 2050.

25 Salida has been an active participant and

1 Xcel's partner in an energy program, dedicating
2 significant time and resources to develop and implement
3 a community renewable energy action plan, including new
4 natural gas infrastructure. The Just Transition plan
5 undermines these collaborative efforts and the
6 investments we've made towards a sustainable energy
7 future.

8 Instead of investing in new fossil-fuel
9 infrastructure, I urge Xcel, and the Commission, to
10 prioritize local clean energy projects and innovate
11 battery storage and grid resilience that will help
12 communities, like Salida, meet our goals. Investments
13 in wind, solar, geothermal and storage, will maximize
14 emissions reductions, protect ratepayers and truly
15 support a just transition.

16 I respectfully request that the
17 Commission avoid construction of new gas plants and
18 offer clean energy choice programs to residents and
19 businesses, and invest in local renewable energy and
20 storage to strengthen grid resilience and protect
21 ratepayers from future stranded asset risks.

22 Thank you for your time and
23 consideration.

24 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you for joining us
25 today. Mr. John Spezia.

1 MS. SPEZIA: Can you hear me okay?

2 CHAIRMAN BLANK: We can.

3 MS. SPEZIA: My name is John Spezia. I
4 have lived in Routt County for 52 years. I really have
5 a good idea of what the winter is like and the summer
6 is like. I have had solar panels, on my house, that
7 provide most of our electricity, for the last 13 years,
8 and we're moving towards air pumps, which work really
9 well in this climate.

10 I have a background in meteorology and a
11 Master's degree, and I have taught at CMC, 15 years, on
12 that particular topic, and have used the snow lab, on
13 top of the mountain, to gather data and inform my
14 students of what's going on.

15 In the 1990s, I used to teach both sides
16 of the climate question, but, after a number years, I
17 ran out of accurate, true data to suggest there was no
18 climate change. So, my next 15 years was to provide
19 the correct data, and deal with this information, by
20 giving my students information that's correct, and
21 letting them make their own choice.

22 One thing that's really interesting to me
23 is, I have been on the working group for
24 transportation, in our Climate Action Plan, in Routt
25 County, for a number of years, and we're doing pretty

1 good with trying to reduce the amount of carbon
2 dioxide, but I'm not sure how well we are doing in
3 terms of natural gas. It's still a greenhouse gas. It
4 still produces methane. Its carbon footprint is just
5 as big as CO₂.

6 In terms of nuclear, again, we have no
7 way of disposing of it. It has a lifespan of 100,000
8 years, so we have to look at that aspect of it. We
9 have got to think about what we leave in the future.

10 Many folks are talking about coal power
11 plants being stranded assets. Natural gas turbines
12 will be the same way, and we'll be paying for them for
13 a long time. But what we should focus on is batteries,
14 wind, solar and geothermal.

15 What's really nice about geothermal, many
16 of the skills that employees at the power plant, and at
17 the mines, use, we can use for geothermal. The biggest
18 problem, right now, is the gap between installing them
19 and digging the holes to provide geothermal.

20 So, here is a great transition
21 possibility, especially in Craig, to educate a few
22 people there, so they can make that transition of those
23 folks who can put solar or geothermal in the ground,
24 and transform it into our houses. Here's a potential
25 for a new future in terms of transition.

1 And lastly, I am a big recycler, and I
2 love to do so, but just recycling is nibbling at the
3 edges of climate change. The lady may be right in the
4 fact that the earth will survive climate change, and
5 has, but we, as humans, and our whole culture and
6 infrastructure will not survive at the rate we're going
7 now.

8 I really appreciate what you are doing,
9 and I appreciate the time you are taking to listen to
10 us. Many ideas. The most important thing is we
11 communicate with each other.

12 So, many of the disinformation or
13 misinformation that you hear is passed on and could be
14 considered the truth. As a scientist and teacher in
15 geology and oceanography and meteorology, I realize
16 they are all connected. We must educate the truth, and
17 actual data, so people can come away understanding.

18 So, I encourage conversation with those
19 who disagree with you, and try to integrate that into
20 educating each other as to different kinds of opinions,
21 so we get the truth, and, as a community, solve all of
22 these problems. Thank you very much for your time.
23 Bye now.

24 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Mr. Scott
25 Larson. This is our third Scott in a few minutes. Mr.

1 Larson.

2 (Off the record.)

3 CHAIRMAN BLANK: I don't see any more
4 hands. Would anybody else like to speak? Ms. Amanda
5 Perkins.

6 MS. PERKINS: Good morning.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Good afternoon.

8 MS. PERKINS: Yes. Good afternoon. You
9 are right.

10 So, my name is Amanda Perkins, and I
11 serve as a Climate Policy and Implementation Specialist
12 for Adams County. We appreciate the goals of Xcel's
13 Just Transition Solicitation, and recognize the
14 importance of an equitable transition for our energy
15 system.

16 Adams County supports maximizing the use
17 of renewable energy sources while maintaining focus on
18 reliability and affordability for ratepayers. We're
19 particularly concerned about the proposals to construct
20 new gas-fired electric generation facilities, north of
21 the Denver Metro area, as identified in Xcel's Answer
22 Testimony.

23 We understand the need to maintain and
24 repair existing infrastructure. Building new gas
25 plants, and the associated pipeline, represents a

1 significant economic risk. These investments could
2 become stranded assets, well before 2050, if Colorado
3 continues to follow the trajectory laid out in its 2018
4 updated pollution reduction Road Map.

5 Furthermore, as a county in the ozone
6 nonattainment area, we're acutely aware of and
7 concerned about the environmental and public health
8 impacts of additional fossil-fuel combustion. We urge
9 the Commission to consider these impacts carefully,
10 when making decisions involving Xcel's future energy
11 power.

12 Adams County recognizes that progress in
13 global, national and local transition, to renewable
14 energy, is essential for the environment, economy and
15 public health. We've demonstrated our commitment by
16 setting a 2030 goal to power 100% of government
17 facilities with renewable energy.

18 We're actively supporting community
19 assets for distributed solar and battery storage
20 systems, approving large-scale storage arrays,
21 development of commercial, multiple geothermal
22 opportunities, and advancing building decarbonization
23 through participation in regional electrification
24 efforts. Our experience shows that local governments
25 are ready and willing partners in the clean energy

1 transition.

2 We encourage Xcel, and the Commission, to
3 prioritize new renewable energy resources over new
4 fossil-fuel generation, as we work together towards a
5 cleaner, healthier and more sustainable Colorado.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Ms. Leslie
8 Glustrom.

9 MS. GLUSTROM: Hi, Commissioners. Thank
10 you so much for taking this time. We really appreciate
11 it, and, I think you can see that there's a lot of eyes
12 on this Just Transition Solicitation, and that people
13 really care deeply.

14 So, the good news is that it's been
15 really well-briefed for you, and I'm still not through
16 all of the testimony, but, I think this is not just.
17 This is a very broad-based public concern about more
18 gas, don't do nuclear, don't do carbon capture and
19 storage, be careful about data centers.

20 You've got a bunch of really good
21 testimony, which you may or may not have had time to
22 get through yet, but I was thinking, this morning, it's
23 a little bit like the medical profession, where you end
24 up with a really complicated case coming through, into
25 the emergency room, or whatever, but the doctors try to

1 remember to do no harm.

2 And I would ask, in this case, that you
3 bring that same kind of thought process to this. It's
4 really complicated. We really appreciate your work.
5 Thank you all for helping us navigate this transition.

6 And so, the do-no-harm part, that is not
7 to make big expensive mistakes. You've heard that we
8 already have these stranded coal plants. The
9 Commissioners before you did not take this kind of
10 thought process. So, we have over a billion dollars of
11 stranded coal. Let's not do the same thing with gas.

12 The good news is that your PUC staff,
13 your UCA, have all given you good advice. They have
14 said, listen, we could extend the contracts on Plains 1
15 and 2, on Fountain Valley 1 and 6. And the gas from
16 the 2021 ERP, that's 600 megawatts of gas we can use,
17 while we're waiting for long duration storage and
18 thermal batteries, and all of those other things to
19 come along. We don't need to build new gas plants and
20 make the 40-year commitment to do that again. That is
21 really well-briefed for you.

22 The data center is very well-briefed.
23 Mr. Eiden, for WRA and SWEEP, your Staff Witness Dipu,
24 I think -- I am not sure how to say his name -- UCA
25 witnesses, Utility Consumer Advocate witnesses, and the

1 key there is making sure the data centers are actually
2 bearing the risk. They put up the capital upfront,
3 and, then, they make take-or-pay contracts.

4 That may require rulemaking, on the part
5 of the Commission, to do, but there's no reason why
6 existing customers should be bearing the risk for these
7 very uncertain loads.

8 Xcel's 2035 60% probability scheme has a
9 lot of problems, if they add data centers, that were in
10 the high percentage. And, they have already withdrawn
11 their interconnect requests. So, let's go very
12 carefully on data centers.

13 This, as you know, was meant to be, let's
14 replace 500 megawatts of the Pueblo Unit 3. Now all of
15 a sudden we're looking at 14,000 or more megawatts
16 possible. Oh, no thank you.

17 And I would like to say that, with this
18 strategic -- now I've forgotten the full name --
19 SFRR45, proposes to collect as much as \$182 million of
20 after-tax income from Colorado. We don't need to give
21 them 500 million to go out and buy a bunch of gas
22 turbines that we shouldn't be building, and
23 transformers.

24 If they want to do that, they can take
25 the risk, if they are going to earn over 9% on their

1 equity. We should not also be putting the risk for
2 this complicated supply chain situation onto customers.

3 And, then, you've also heard quite a bit
4 about being careful about kind of where the siting take
5 place. I always talk so much about the generation
6 adequacy, but most outages are related to transmission
7 and distribution, something in the neighborhood of
8 about 80%. We, very seldom, we've got over the
9 1,000-megawatt reserve margin.

10 So, yes, we obviously need to be
11 thoughtful about generation adequacy, but it's much
12 more important that we start to focus on transmission
13 and distribution, and, again, finding ways to reduce
14 our reliance, because that's the weak link in the
15 chain. That actually delivers the electricity to load,
16 to customers, to homes, to businesses, and it's going
17 to get worse and worse, as extreme weather gets worse.

18 So, I wanted to, also, as many others
19 have, but just as I think you know, Energy Innovation
20 has done some sort of simple modeling for energy parks,
21 that would involve thermal batteries, that would allow,
22 I think, an actual solution for Pueblo.

23 I refer to nuclear jobs as, "fantasy
24 jobs." You know, they would be nice, I suppose. There
25 is all of those problems with nuclear. The chances

1 they are actually going to materialize are very slim.
2 So, please do whatever you can to take the next step
3 forward, based on what we've got.

4 Look at Dr. Schlissel's testimony, from
5 the Environmental Justice Coalition, and he's attached
6 the Energy Innovation models. Please do whatever you
7 can to move that forward. It's a very exciting
8 possibility. It allows true economic development for
9 Pueblo, as well as the other communities. And it also
10 allows us to start moving large industrial gas loads
11 off of gas and onto electricity, but it's going to
12 require some innovative thinking, and some new ways of
13 approaching this problem.

14 And last thing I just want to say, I am
15 supportive of Just Transition payments for Moffat
16 County, for Craig and Hayden. I am not sure about the
17 size, but, I think it's only right, that whatever it
18 is, it's frankly going to be kind of small potatoes in
19 this.

20 So, thanks so much for your work. Try
21 not to do any harm. Don't overreach. We'll have
22 another ERP in just a couple of years, so you don't
23 need to solve all of these future problems right now.

24 All that speculative data center load,
25 and, also, Xcel's accelerated beneficial

1 electrifications, Mr. Eiden, from WRA, has helped you
2 see that. Thanks so much. Appreciate your time, as
3 always.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Mr. Eric
5 Frankowski.

6 MR. FRANKOWSKI: Thank you. Can you guys
7 hear me?

8 I am Eric Frankowski, and thank you,
9 again, to the Commission for hosting today's public
10 comment hearing, and for using the virtual setting.

11 After Xcel's final response testimony, as
12 we've seen, in just the past few weeks, Xcel can drop
13 some huge surprises into the docket. It's important
14 for the public to have a chance to respond.

15 My name is Eric Frankowski. I am the
16 Executive Director of the Western Clean Energy
17 Campaign. I traveled to Pueblo and made a statement
18 there.

19 I want to bring into focus two completely
20 separate topics today. My first point, on Thursday you
21 will be in Hayden to hear from the residents in the
22 town, and from Routt County. For the past 60 years,
23 the Hayden power plant has been generating electricity
24 for all of Colorado, and has been an economic backbone
25 for both the town and Routt County.

1 Now that plant is being retired, the
2 residents and the community, that will be hurt by lost
3 jobs and tax revenue, deserve the same soft economic
4 landing being offered to other communities where Xcel
5 is closing down coal plants. The Commission should
6 honor the requests, by Hayden and Routt County
7 officials, for \$89 million in transition assistance,
8 which will provide a decade of support as they rebuild
9 their post-coal economies.

10 My second point has to do with Xcel's
11 most recent request for additional slush funds. Xcel
12 has already asked for an unprecedented \$100 million of
13 slush fund money, and earlier this month they submitted
14 a surprise proposal to collect over another half
15 billion dollars, from ratepayers, to buy costly gas
16 plants, and other equipment, in advance, whether the
17 Commission ultimately decides it will approve the gas
18 plants or not.

19 To make its request even more arrogant,
20 the company says if it doesn't end up needing the
21 equipment, let's sell it. And if the cost is below
22 market value, customers eat the loss, but, if it's sold
23 at a premium, even though Xcel shareholders haven't put
24 any money in, it's, again, Xcel gets to keep half the
25 profit, which is just pretty outrageous.

1 These slush fund proposals completely
2 negate the whole intent of the resource planning
3 process, in the first place. They give Xcel the
4 ability to do what it wants, charge customers for all
5 of it, without an ounce of risk to shareholders, and
6 helps bias the resource planning process, where
7 projects are finally approved by the PUC, because,
8 anything that the company has spent money on already,
9 has a leg up on competitive bidding.

10 The Commission should reject their
11 proposal outright, and signal to Xcel, never come back
12 with such scurrilous and customer unfriendly proposals
13 in the future.

14 Thank you so much for the opportunity to
15 speak today, and look forward to the opportunity to
16 continuing this conversation. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you, sir.

18 Ms. Talca Woods. Ms. Emma Ragna.

19 MS. RAGNA: I will be speaking on behalf
20 of Rob Robinson, who couldn't be here today; is that
21 allowed?

22 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Yeah. Of course.

23 MS. RAGNA: Okay. So, Rob Robinson, he's
24 a member of Wheat Ridge, Colorado, and he says: Dear
25 sir or madam: In general, it is the climate crisis

1 that most concerns me. I have two granddaughters that
2 I feel will be distraughtly impacted by increasing
3 extreme weather, that will harm them and collapse their
4 well-being. Thank you for adopting climate mitigation
5 policies, and I strongly urge the PUC to continue
6 aggressively addressing the climate crisis.

7 I have a number of comments on the Just
8 Transition Solicitation. The first, the nuclear power
9 reactor proposed near Pueblo. I have experience
10 working as a mining engineer, in nuclear waste
11 isolation. We failed to achieve long-term solutions to
12 isolate nuclear waste three decades ago. Ever since,
13 the waste is accumulating next to the nuclear power
14 plants.

15 In the lifetime of the Just Transition
16 Plan, the likelihood of a solution to isolate nuclear
17 waste is highly doubtful. What's more, nuclear power
18 is not free of carbon emissions.

19 Consider the carbon impact of mining, the
20 numerous process steps, transportation, construction
21 and maintenance of the power plant, and temporary
22 storage of the spent uranium. Further, wind and solar
23 possibilities are much cheaper.

24 I recommend you decline the proposed
25 Pueblo nuclear reactor and tell the proponents not to

1 come back, until there is available long-term isolation
2 of the spent uranium.

3 Rather than building out yet more
4 industrial-scale power in open spaces and greenfields,
5 the PUC should require Xcel to install distributed
6 energy resources, and in built-up areas, such as
7 rooftops, parking lots, rights-of-way, and so on.

8 After all, in addition to the climate
9 crisis, earth is undergoing the sixth greatest
10 extinction of life, in its entire four and a half
11 billion-year history. A few years ago, NREL estimated
12 that the nation's rooftops have space enough to
13 generate 40% of electricity demand. Further, the PUC
14 should require that massive data centers generate their
15 own renewable energy, and certainly not at the expense
16 of Xcel customers.

17 Xcel wants \$100 million for testing
18 experimentation of projects. I don't think so.
19 Certainly, not unless the PUC can video any of those
20 projects, not unless Xcel customers are repaid and earn
21 royalties, and not unless lower income customers are
22 protected from paying any increase in their power
23 rates.

24 Of course, if you have any questions
25 regarding my comments, please feel free to contact me.

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Talca.

3 MS. WOODS: I'm sorry. I couldn't
4 unmute.

5 CHAIRMAN BLANK: No worries.

6 MS. WOODS: Good afternoon,
7 Commissioners, regarding 24-0442E. My name is Talca
8 Woods, current resident of Lakeside Manor Estates,
9 Pueblo County, Colorado, one half mile north of the
10 Comanche power station.

11 I am a native of Pueblo County. I
12 represent our community of 200-plus residents. We have
13 many land issues/land-use concerns, such as health
14 issues, directly related to renewable energy.

15 Toxic runoff of solar panels with
16 turbines and batteries. Batteries are the wild west of
17 the unknown. A renewable industrial facility would
18 take up huge amounts of our land, compared to nuclear.

19 The esthetics and views are a huge
20 concern. They are a visual burn scar. Some wind
21 turbines, reaching to the sky, would disrupt natural
22 vegetation and wildlife habitat. Our communities will
23 suffer greatly for the supply of energy routed to the
24 Front Range communities, not our own. Land stewardship
25 is key and most important when making these decisions.

1 Our land is not meant to foster miles and
2 miles of glass or metal high towers and aches of
3 batteries, covering our beautiful Colorado. Think
4 about the mess and destruction we are leaving our
5 future generations.

6 The fire mitigation is a huge concern,
7 when studied previously, for industrial solar
8 facilities near our neighborhood. We want to express
9 our compassionate concern of declining property values
10 when surrounded by a so-called "energy park."

11 I will leave you with one thought. Your
12 community could be next. Thank you for your time and
13 consideration.

14 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Greatly
15 appreciate it. Is there anyone else who hasn't spoken
16 who would like to speak today? Laura Getz.

17 MS. GETZ: Good afternoon, everyone. My
18 name is Laura Getz. I am a resident of the City of
19 Pueblo Colorado, where I am raising two young children.
20 I also work in the electricity utility sector, but I am
21 not speaking on behalf of a utility. I also serve on
22 the State Just Transition Advisory Committee.

23 I appreciate the work that is going on,
24 to try and support the workers and communities impacted
25 in the transition, and appreciate that we're having

1 this hearing today, that this planning exists.

2 So, I followed, from Pueblo's
3 perspective, I follows the PISAC community work, and
4 just want to verify that that does not speak for the
5 entire community of Pueblo; that committee did not even
6 include a representative from the City of Pueblo; and
7 it did not allow for ample community-wide discussion or
8 appointment of a truly diverse set of stakeholders on
9 that committee.

10 I have been participating in Just
11 Transition meetings in our community, and I do believe
12 that there's not a silver bullet, as we would like
13 there to be, for the tax base that we're about to lose
14 here, with the closure of Comanche. It is a real
15 crisis for our community, our libraries, our school
16 districts. It will be devastating to Pueblo, and the
17 other communities that are to be impacted, but, really
18 I am speaking from the Pueblo perspective here.

19 I fear our desperate need for tax
20 revenue, at this time, coupled with the loss of these
21 jobs, and rapidly increasing utility rates from Black
22 Hills Energy, in our community, has put us in a very
23 vulnerable position. We've been in this position for
24 quite some time, but I fear what our community is
25 willing to accept in the name of revenue.

1 I think it's extremely important to
2 acknowledge this. And while we're very much in need of
3 revenue, it should not come at a cost to the health of
4 our community and our people, or to our reputation.
5 Pueblo certainly has the reputation of being pue town,
6 and we do not want anything to further reinforce this
7 image, which has become quite negative for us, from an
8 economic development perspective.

9 We would really like to see Xcel Energy
10 put additional financial resources and energy into a
11 look at helping to diversify Pueblo's community, and in
12 a real concrete, measurable way, that is not just a
13 one-for-one energy generation replacement, because,
14 again, that's a silver bullet that would be very
15 convenient, but I don't believe it's realistic. And,
16 we need a more, quiet frankly, a more difficult
17 approach.

18 It's not easy to come up with a strong
19 diversified economic development plan for a community,
20 but I think it's possible, and we need to keep those
21 conversations going, and we need to have Xcel be part
22 of that process, and put some concrete resources into
23 some alternatives, rather than just looking at what
24 could be a one-for-one generation replacement.

25 Once again, this is a very real, very

1 dire situation Pueblo is facing, with the loss of this
2 tax revenue. So, thank you very much for everyone's
3 comments and for your time.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Is there
5 anyone else who hasn't spoken, who would like to speak?

6 (No response.)

7 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Well, for once, the
8 comments matched the time available, almost exactly. I
9 just want to thank everybody for coming out. As
10 always, I learned a ton. Appreciate your spending time
11 with us, and it makes the process work.

12 So, with that, Commissioner Gilman, final
13 thoughts?

14 COMMISSIONER GILMAN: Yeah. Just
15 appreciate everyone's comments today, and, yeah, happy
16 to hear from you all, and consider your comments as we
17 move forward.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Commissioner Plant.

19 COMMISSIONER PLANT: Yeah. Thank you. I
20 would echo that, and want to thank everybody for taking
21 time out of your day to participate in this process,
22 and really encouraged that we add participation from
23 all over the state, and really appreciate you paying
24 attention to this issue, and following it, and engaging
25 with us, as we consider our various alternatives.

1 So, thank you very much.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thanks again. Again,
3 the evidentiary hearing is in June, and there's a
4 further Public Comment Hearing, May 1st, in Hayden,
5 from 4 to 6, and a remote Public Comment Hearing
6 Thursday, June 5th, from 5 to 7. With that, we're
7 adjourned and thanks again.

8 (Whereupon these proceedings were
9 adjourned at 1:00 p.m at Remotely on April 28, 2025.)

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1 CERTIFICATE

2 I, HARRIET S. WEISENTHAL, Registered Professional
3 Reporter, in and for the State of Colorado, do hereby
4 certify that I reported the foregoing proceedings in
5 the first instance, and that later the same was reduced
6 to typewritten form under my direct supervision and
7 control; I further certify that the foregoing is a true
8 and complete transcription of my stenographic notes
9 then and there taken.

10 Dated May 28, 2025.

11

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Dated May 28, 2025.

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