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August 4, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Elizabeth Osborne, Washington Council staff

SUBJECT: Energy transition and innovation panel

BACKGROUND:

Presenters: Dennis McLerran, Deputy General Manager, Seattle City Light
Josh Jacobs, Vice President of Clean Energy Strategy and Planning, Puget Sound Energy
Serj Berelson, Director of Regulatory and Market Development, West, Opower

Summary: The Council will be joined by three speakers to discuss the clean energy transition. The panel will talk about strategies for addressing the challenges faced by some of Washington's largest utilities in meeting electric decarbonization policy requirements and accommodating significant load growth. Speakers will talk about opportunities available through innovative technologies and programs and discuss supply and demand side options as well as the role that transmission expansion can play. Affordability is a key concern for policymakers, utilities, and many other electric system stakeholders; the panel will touch on the current major cost drivers affecting operations and how utilities are managing them.

Background: Washington has several key policies shaping the transition toward decarbonization across the state's economy. Among them, the Clean Energy Transformation Act requires electric utilities to supply carbon-neutral electricity to customers by 2030 and provide 100 percent clean electricity by 2045.

More info: Dennis McLerran joined Seattle City Light in his current role earlier in 2026, after previously serving as counsel at Cascadia Law Group, Chair of the Leadership Council of the Puget Sound Partnership, and, prior to that, as the Environmental Protection Agency Region 10 Regional Administrator. Seattle City Light is conducting many innovative pilots, studies, and special projects to facilitate electrification across economic sectors. More information can be found on City Light's website at <https://www.seattle.gov/city-light/energy/energy-innovation>

Josh Jacobs has been with Puget Sound Energy since 1998 in a variety of roles across the utility's operations. Currently, he leads electric and natural gas resource planning, transmission planning and services, and decarbonization of PSE's natural gas and electric systems. The utility is investing in new clean energy resources, increasing energy efficiency and demand side flexibility programs, and modernizing its infrastructure to enable the clean energy transition. More information can be found on PSE's website at <https://www.pse.com/en/green-options/Clean-Energy-Basics>

Serj Berelson began working with Opower in 2012, serving in several different roles. His focus is energy efficiency, particularly for low-income customers. Prior to Opower, he was with the California Public Utilities Commission. Opower is a division of Oracle Utilities, bringing together behavioral science with artificial intelligence to help utilities with demand flexibility, electrification, and energy efficiency while maintaining affordability. For more information, see: <https://www.oracle.com/utilities/#energy-efficiency>