

What's Really Raising Our Electric Rates?

Charlee Thompson (she/her), Senior Policy Associate
September 3, 2026



We advocate for people and the planet.



Customer Resources



Renewable Energy



Equity, affordability, consumer protection



Fish & Wildlife



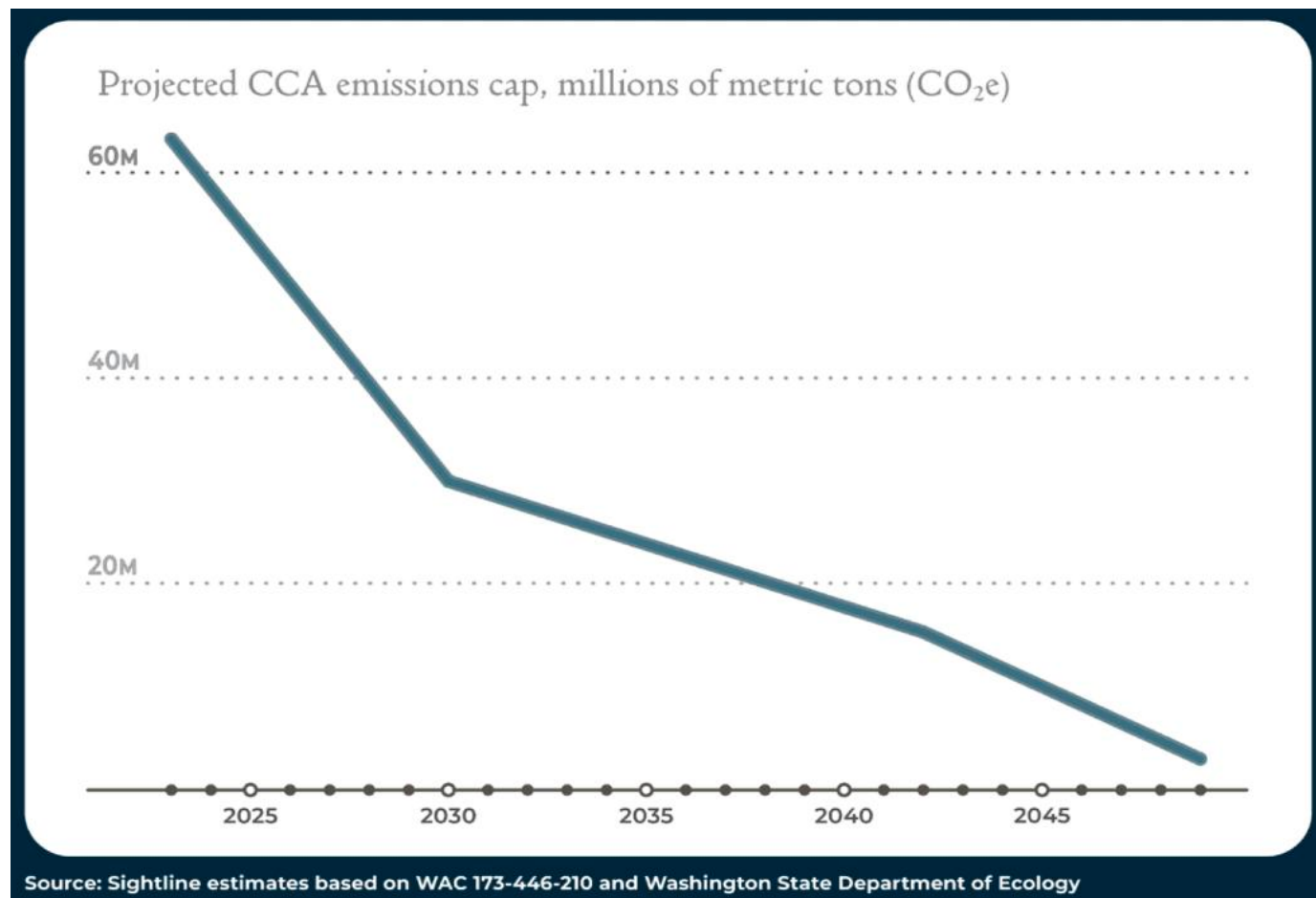
Decarbonization



NW Energy Coalition

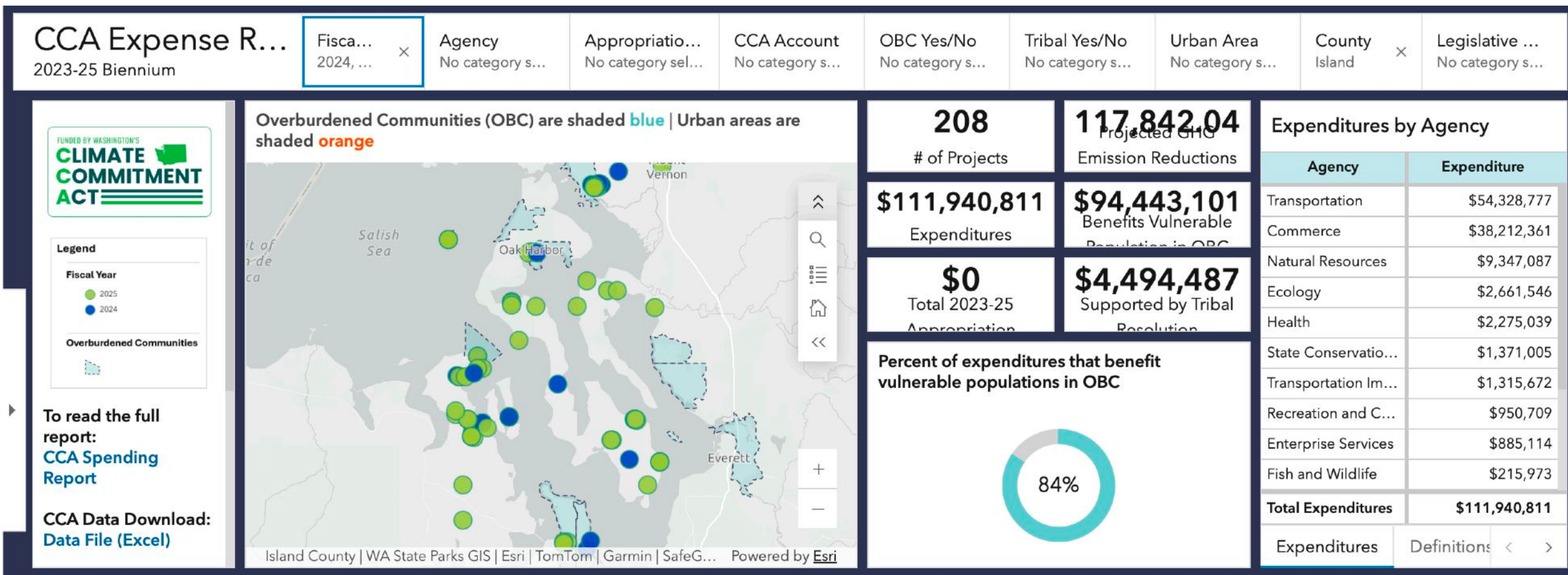
Washington's Clean Energy Landscape

Climate Commitment Act (CCA) (2021)



Source: [BP Cherry Point Oil Refinery, Whatcom County](#)

Climate Commitment Act (CCA) (2021)



Source: [Washington Climate Action CCA Dashboard](#)

Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) (2019)



2025: No more coal



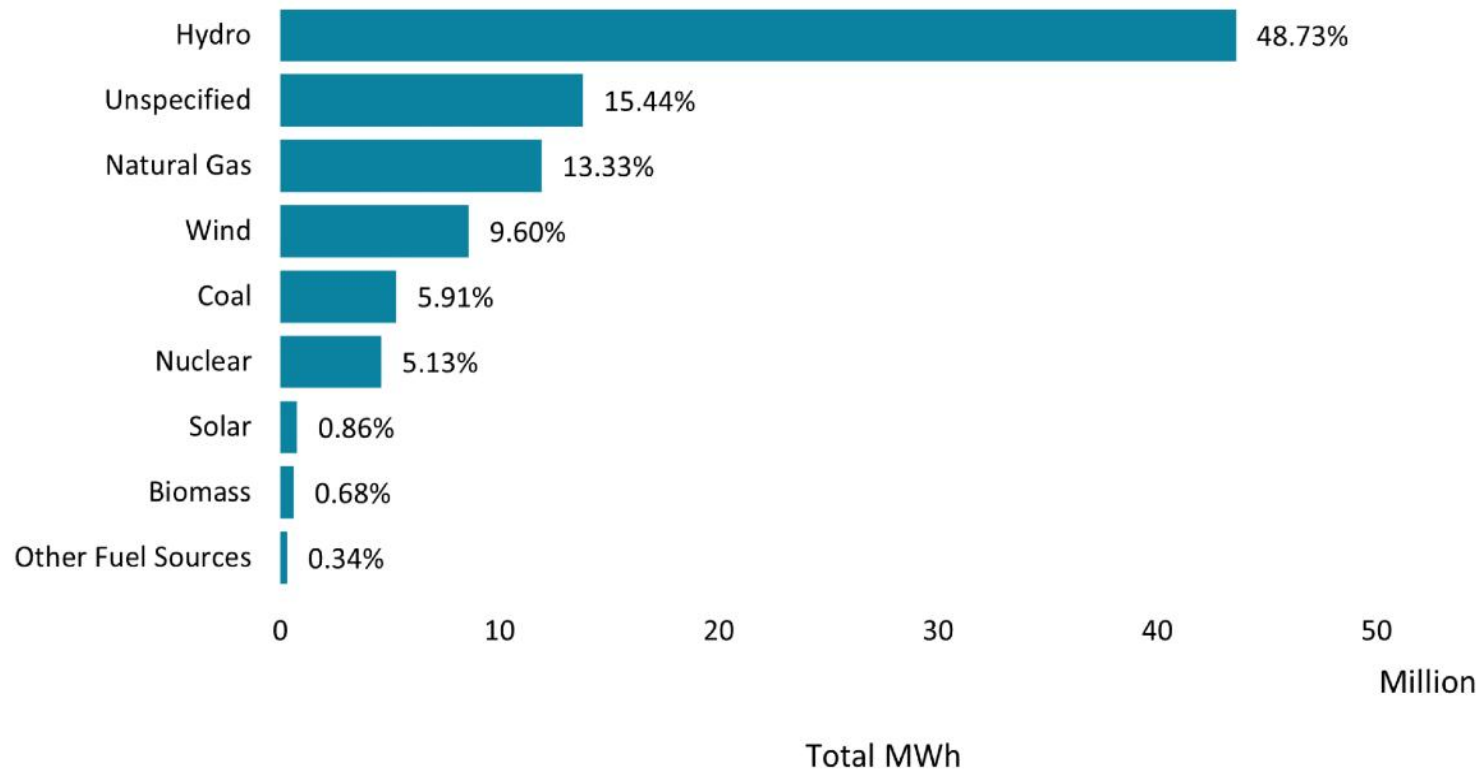
2030: Carbon neutral electricity



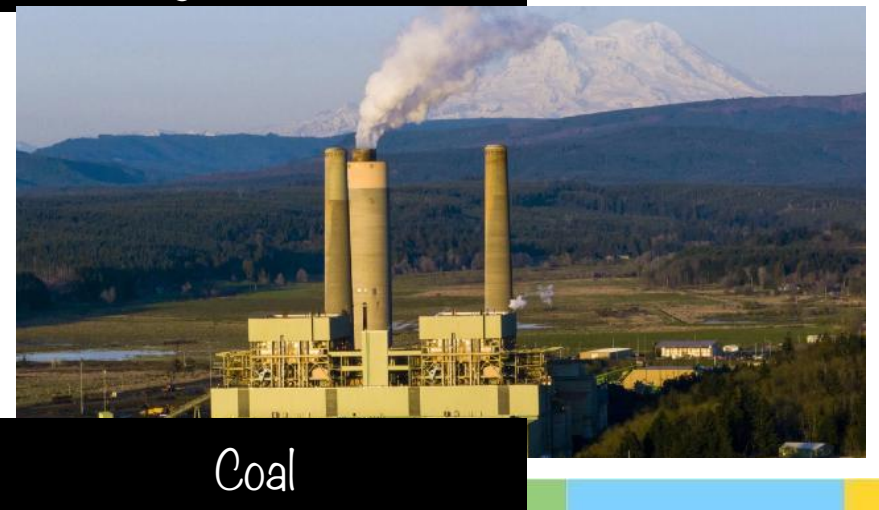
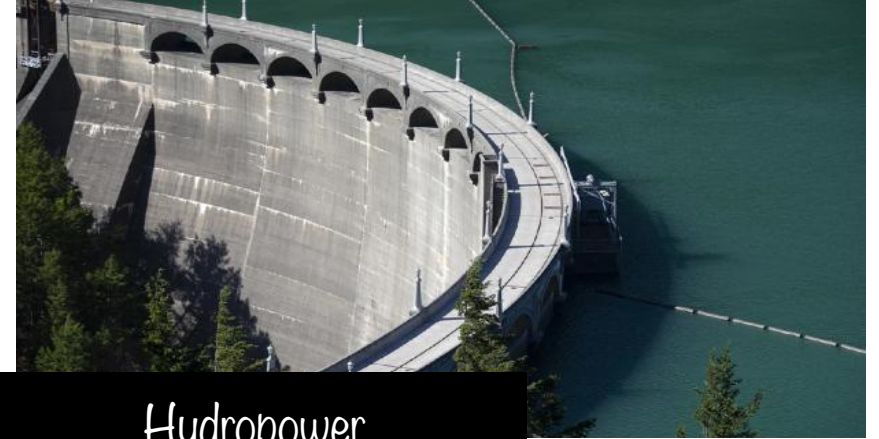
2045: 100% renewable and non-emitting electricity

(+ an equity mandate!)

Washington electric utilities aggregate 2024 fuel mix



Source: [Washington Department of Commerce 2026 Annual Fuel Mix Report](#)



Who regulates who?

Investor-Owned
Utility (IOU)



UTC
Washington Utilities
and Transportation
Commission

Consumer-Owned
Utility (COU)



Municipal Utilities
& Public Utility
Districts (PUD)



**Elected Board
of
Commissioners**

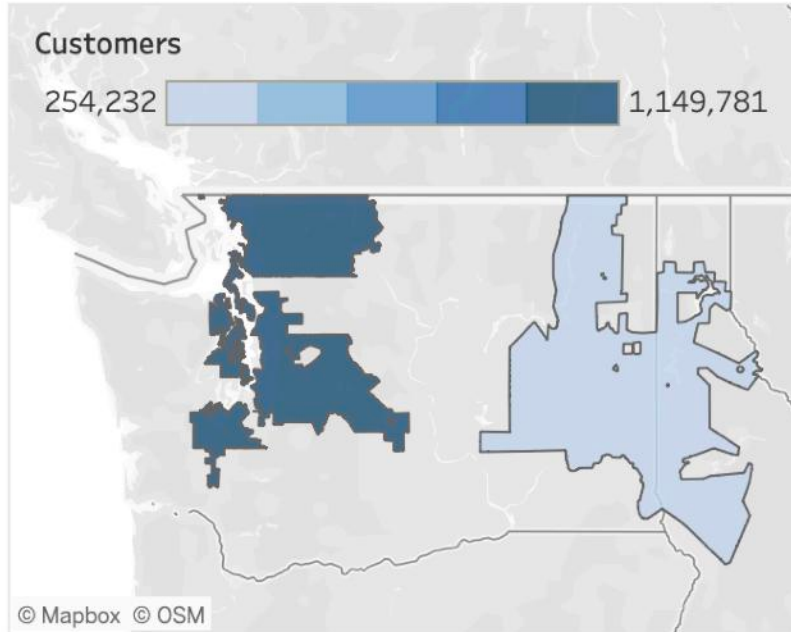


Electric
Cooperative
(Co-op)

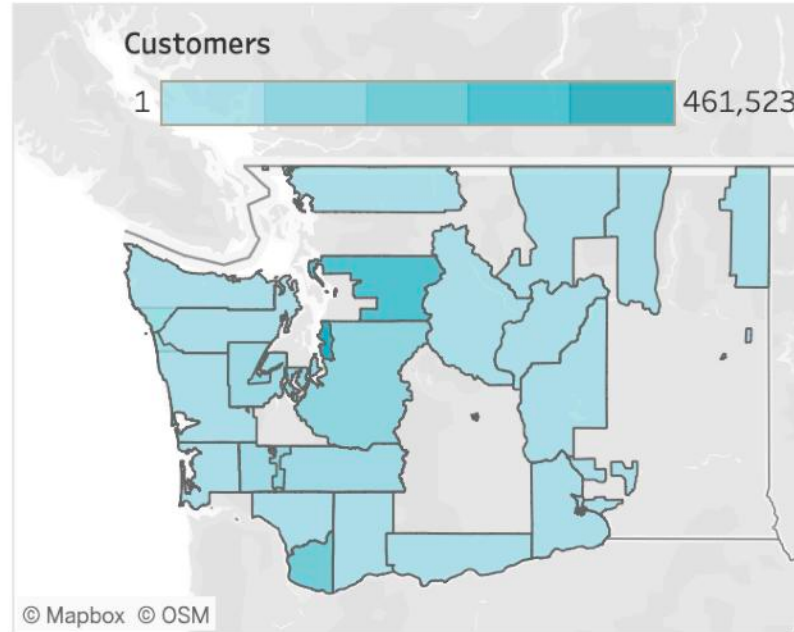


**Co-op
Members**

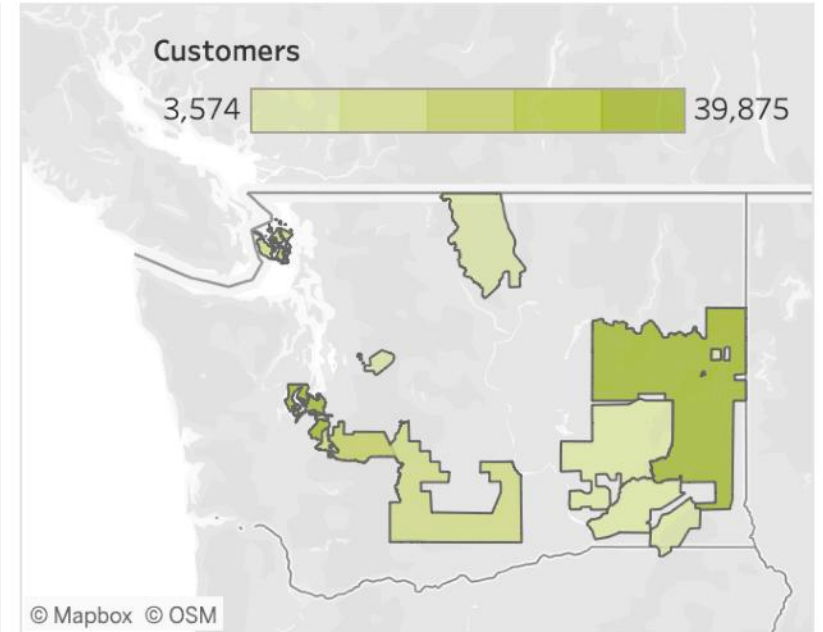
Investor-owned Utilities



Municipal Utilities and PUDs



Cooperative Utilities

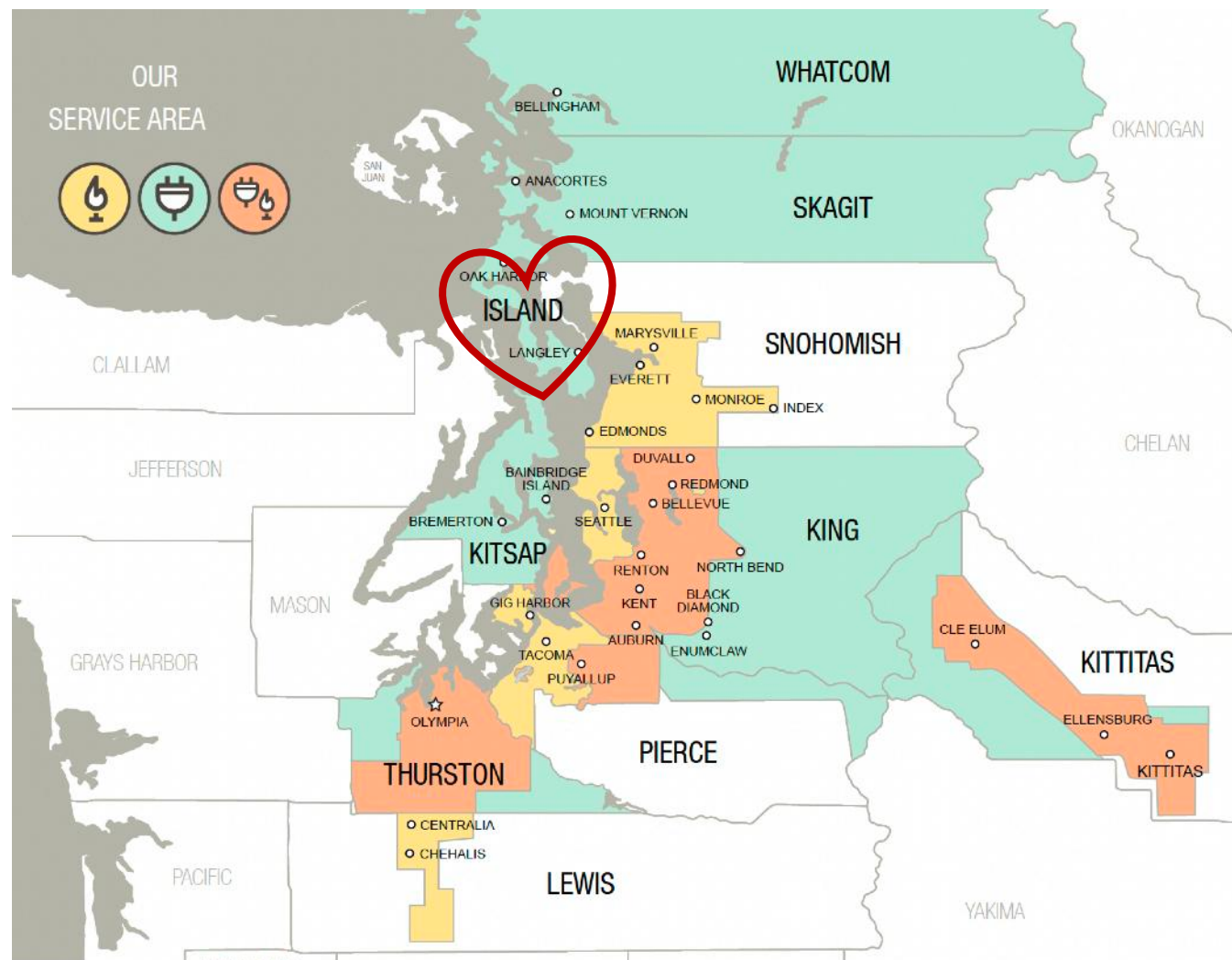


[Northwest Clean Energy Atlas](#)

Who is your utility?



*PUGET
SOUND
ENERGY*



Source: [Puget Sound Energy](https://www.pse.com)



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Energy Affordability

What is energy burden?



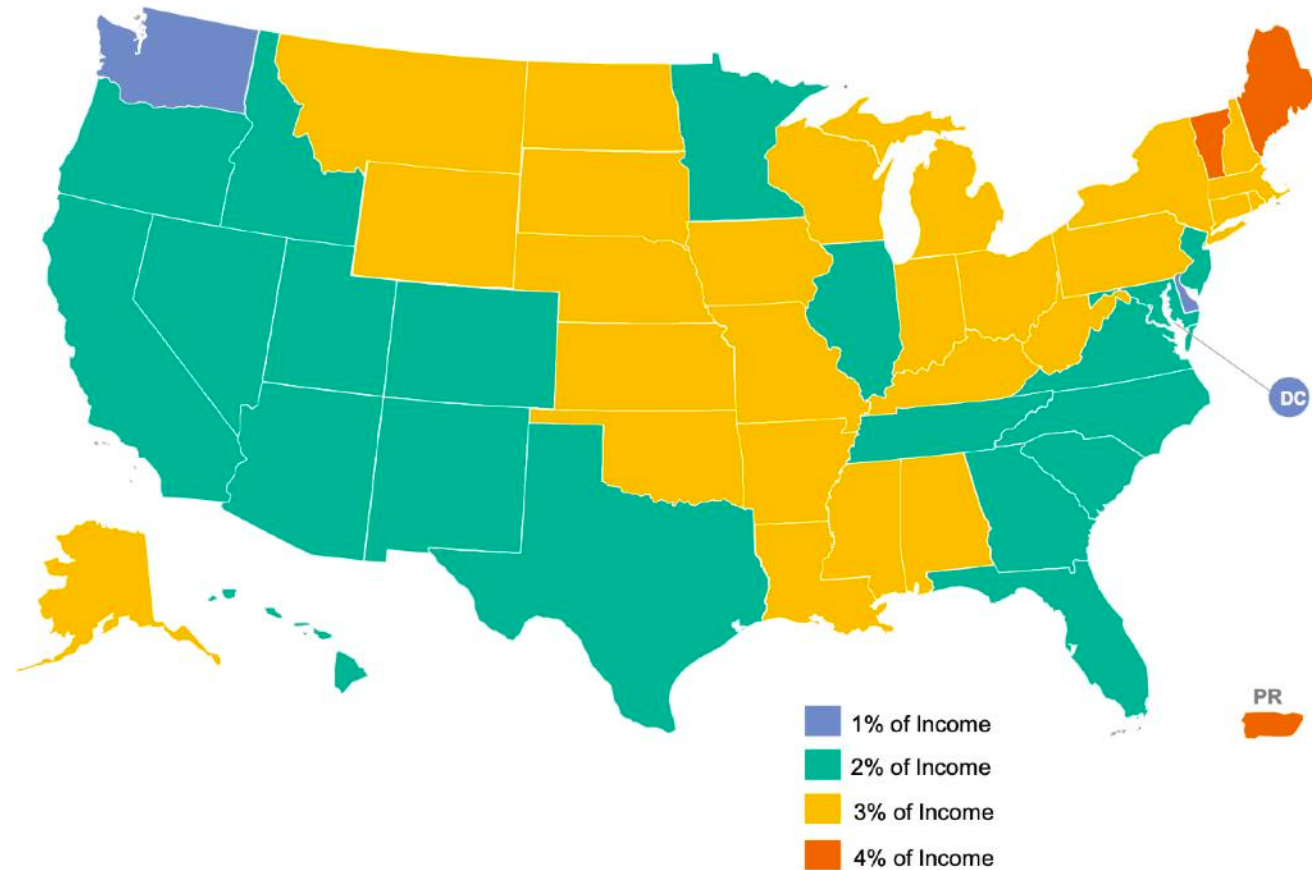
Energy Spending



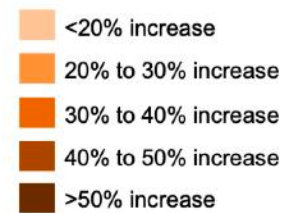
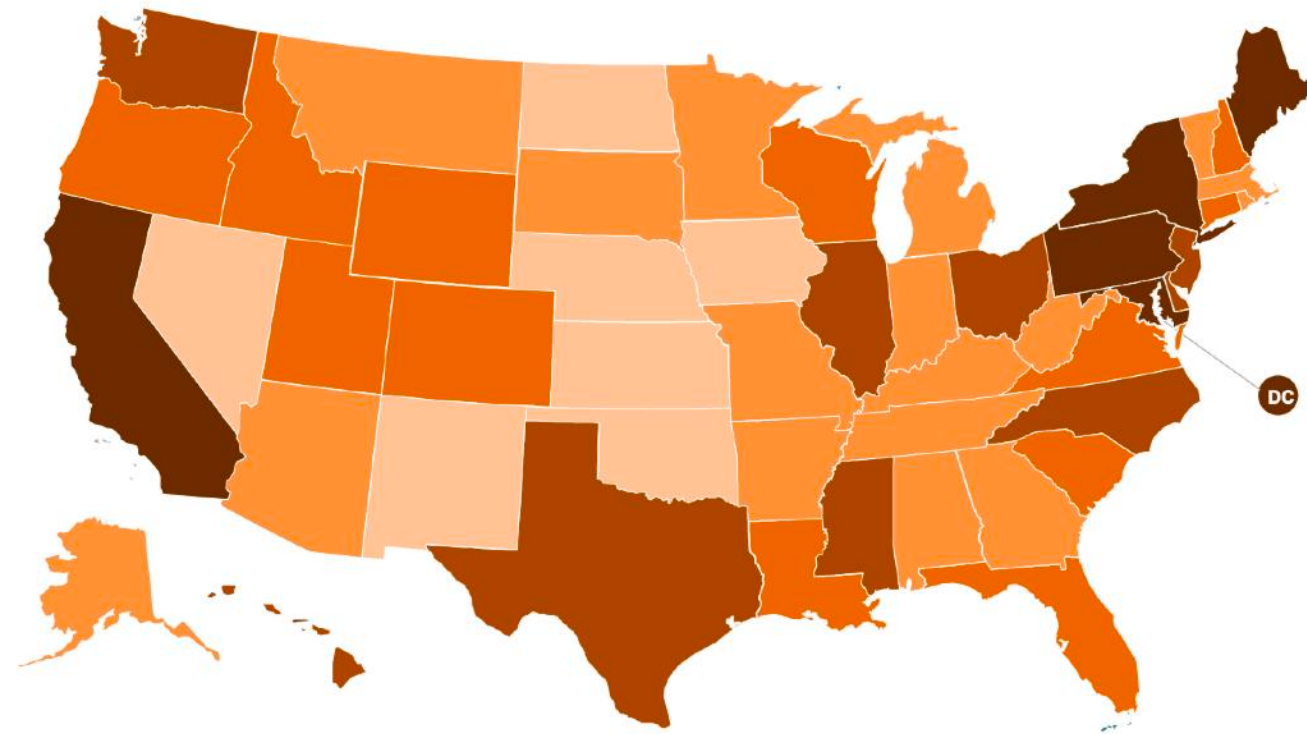
Household Income

High energy burden is when a household spends 6% or more of their income on energy bills

Average Energy Burden By State



Average Electricity Price Changes, April 2021 – April 2026, By Percent



Average WA IOU Residential Customer Bills 2022 vs 2025

Company	Type	Average Residential Usage	Average Bill in January 2022	Average Bill in September 2025	% Increase
PSE	Electric	800 kWh	\$88.90	\$135.87	53%
PSE	Gas	68 therms	\$79.70	\$113.76	43%
Avista	Electric	945 kWh	\$73.66	\$115.98	57%
PacifiCorp	Electric	1200 kWh	\$103.12	\$176.11	71%
NW Natural	Gas	56 therms	\$66.88	\$73.75	10%

This analysis was conducted by the Public Counsel Unit (PCU) of the Washington State Office of the Attorney General. The supporting data and sources are referenced in PCU's testimony in UTC docket UE-250224, <https://www.utc.wa.gov/casedocket/2025/250224>.

States with Clean Energy Mandates Have Higher Rate Increases

A follow up to how clean energy mandates lead to higher prices

 MITCH ROLLING AND ISAAC ORR
NOV 29, 2025

 97

 29

 10

Share



NEWS SPORTS GOVERNMENT RESTAURANTS OPINION GAMES OBITUARIES FINANCE CLASSIFIEDS BEST OF SOUTH SOUND

PSE responds

Some of that increased cost for ratepayers can be traced to **clean energy** goals, but that’s only part of the picture, said Matt Steuerwalt, senior vice president of external affairs for PSE.

”Puget Sound Energy, for complicated federal reasons, does not get access to federal hydroelectric power from the Columbia River and Snake River Dams that say the city of Tacoma does,” he said. “So we had sort of the steepest hill, and we’ve been chugging along up the hill. We’ve more than doubled our renewables. We’ve reduced our greenhouse gas emissions by 60% on the electric utility, but that’s not free.”

ENERGY

GREEN ENERGY INCREASES UTILITY BILLS

Jonathan Small | October 20, 2025





Who We Are ▾ Our Work ▾ Take Action ▾ News ▾

Myth Busting: Why Clean Energy Is Not Making Energy More Expensive

Posted on April 23, 2024 by **Bob Jenks** and **Charlotte Shuff**
Tags, **General Interest**, **Energy**

← back

U.S. Electricity Bills Are Rising Fast: Which States Are Paying More—and Why

A complex web of factors drives electricity cost increases, but states that have invested in clean energy have seen less volatility in rates than their fossil fuel-dependent counterparts.

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Clean energy journalism for a cooler tomorrow

Solar Wind Batteries Electrification U.S. regions ▾ | Newsletters ▾ Events ▾ White papers ▾

Don’t blame clean energy for rising electric bills

A new report links rising U.S. power bills to fossil gas price spikes and utility incentives — not solar, wind, and batteries, as clean energy foes suggest.

When Policies Restrict Clean Energy, Electric Bills Go Up

Federal efforts to halt renewable energy development could be adding billions of dollars to energy bills — even as clean energy remains a fast, reliable and cost-competitive option to meet rising demand.

By: **Lori Bird** and **Alex Smith**

July 16, 2026

So, what's really raising our electricity rates?



Transmission &
distribution
infrastructure
replacement



Competition with
data centers



Wildfire mitigation
& liability



Low hydropower
output



Extreme
temperatures (i.e.,
planning for peak
load)



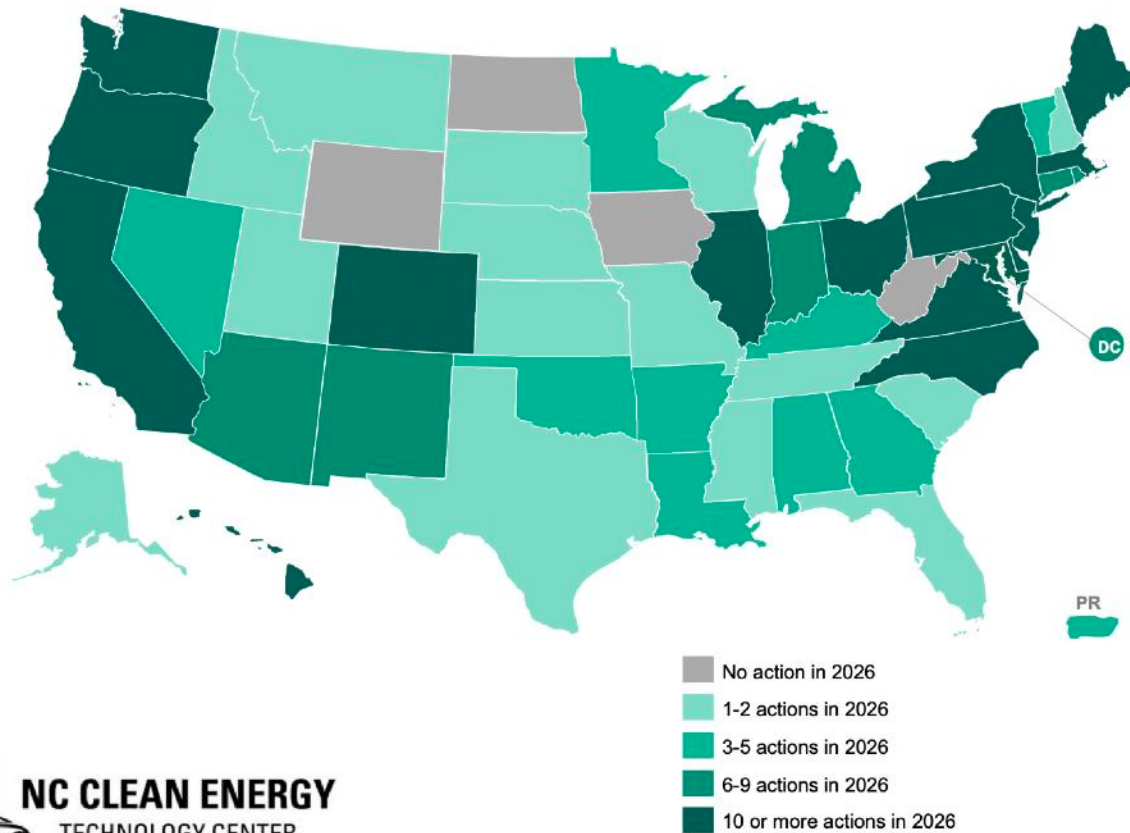
Supply chain
issues & inflation



Natural gas price
volatility

What Have We Done?

2026 Action on Energy Affordability, By Number of Actions



WA was in the top states to take action in 2026:

- Energy affordability studies & investigations
- Utility business model reform
- Infrastructure planning and procurement
- Customer cost allocation
- Large load customer cost allocation
- Cost-Saving Programs

What Can We Do?

Participate in and advocate for energy efficiency and demand response

- [PSE Energy Efficiency Programs](#)
- [PSE Demand Response Programs](#)
(PSE Flex)

Choose how to participate

Flex Rewards



During Flex events, PSE will send you notifications to reduce your energy usage. You'll earn money based on how much electricity you save.

- Get \$25 for enrolling
- Plus \$1 per kWh you save during Flex events
- \$15 each year you stay enrolled

[LEARN MORE >](#)

Flex Smart



Own a Wi-Fi enabled smart thermostat? During Flex events, PSE will automatically adjust its temperature set point by a few degrees with no action needed on your part!

- Get up to \$50 per device for enrolling
- Up to \$40 per device each year you stay enrolled

[LEARN MORE >](#)

Flex EV



PSE will remotely signal your home EV charging to happen outside the hours of Flex events.

- Get \$50 for enrolling
- Plus \$0.50 per kWh you save during Flex events

[LEARN MORE >](#)

Flex Water Heaters



PSE will remotely signal your electric water heater to adjust its operation during Flex events.

- Get a \$20 for enrolling
- Plus a \$20 each year you stay enrolled

[LEARN MORE >](#)

Flex Batteries



Own a battery storage system? Earn money by partnering with PSE and allowing your battery to be called upon during Flex Events, with no action or behavior change required.

- Get \$75 per kWh of battery storage (up to \$1,000 total) on enrollment
- Earn \$.50 per kWh for your participation during Flex events

[LEARN MORE >](#)



NW Energy Coalition

Give public comment on PSE's rate case

PSE has a proposal before the UTC to increase electric rates by 30% and gas rates by 20% over the next 3 years (2027-2029). What's the cause?

Power Supply Costs

- Puget hydropower contracts are expiring
- New resources cost more
- Centralia coal plant gas retrofit costs

Distribution System Expansion

- Fast growing service territory
- Transformers, conductors, and labor are expensive

Shareholder Profits

- Currently set at 9.9%
- PSE is asking for 10.9%
- Attorney General's Office is recommending 8.17%

Give public comment on PSE's rate case

NWEC intervened with other environmental advocates and provided testimony on July 28th in UTC docket [UE-260005](#). Some of our positions:

- Remove hundreds of millions of fossil fuel investments from rates
- Reject PSE's \$3.4 million proposal to conduct hydrogen blending experiments on its customers at their expense
- Require PSE to better consider non-pipes alternatives (NPAs) that can save money, reduce emissions, and avoid gas pipeline investments
- Prohibit predatory fees charged to customers who fall behind on their bills and have their utilities disconnected

Make your voice heard!

[PSE 2026 Rate Case](#)
[Public Comment Toolkit](#)

- **September 29: Live public comment hearing at UTC headquarters**
 - Tuesday, September 29, 2026 @ 6-8 pm
 - 621 Woodland Square Loop S.E., Lacey, Washington 98503, Room 110
- **October 7: Virtual public comment hearing (6-8pm)**
 - Public Comment Hearing #2 will be held virtually from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., on Wednesday, October 7, 2026. To participate by phone, please call (253) 215-8782 and enter Meeting ID: 822 1351 8474# and Passcode: 226995#
 - **Zoom Link:** <https://utc-wa-gov.zoom.us/j/82213518474?pwd=BmsrsNzVWp6WmOpoBdLBoxxvxD6Qb0.1>
- **October 14: Preferred date to have written comments submitted**
 - Comments can be submitted through the [UTC's form](#), by email to comments@utc.wa.gov

Advocate during the 2027 Legislative Session

- **Long session! (January – April)**
- **Lay of the Land**
 - Another bad budget year
 - Data centers, wildfires, affordability, and CETA will be hot topics!
- **What can we do?**
 - Write testimony or give oral testimony on bills your support / oppose
 - Sign in pro / con on bills
 - Donate or volunteer

Thank you!

Email: charlee@nwenergy.org
Website: nwenergy.org



How Do PSE Rates Compare?

Ten Largest Utilities Residential Rates

How Big Is The Rate Increase?

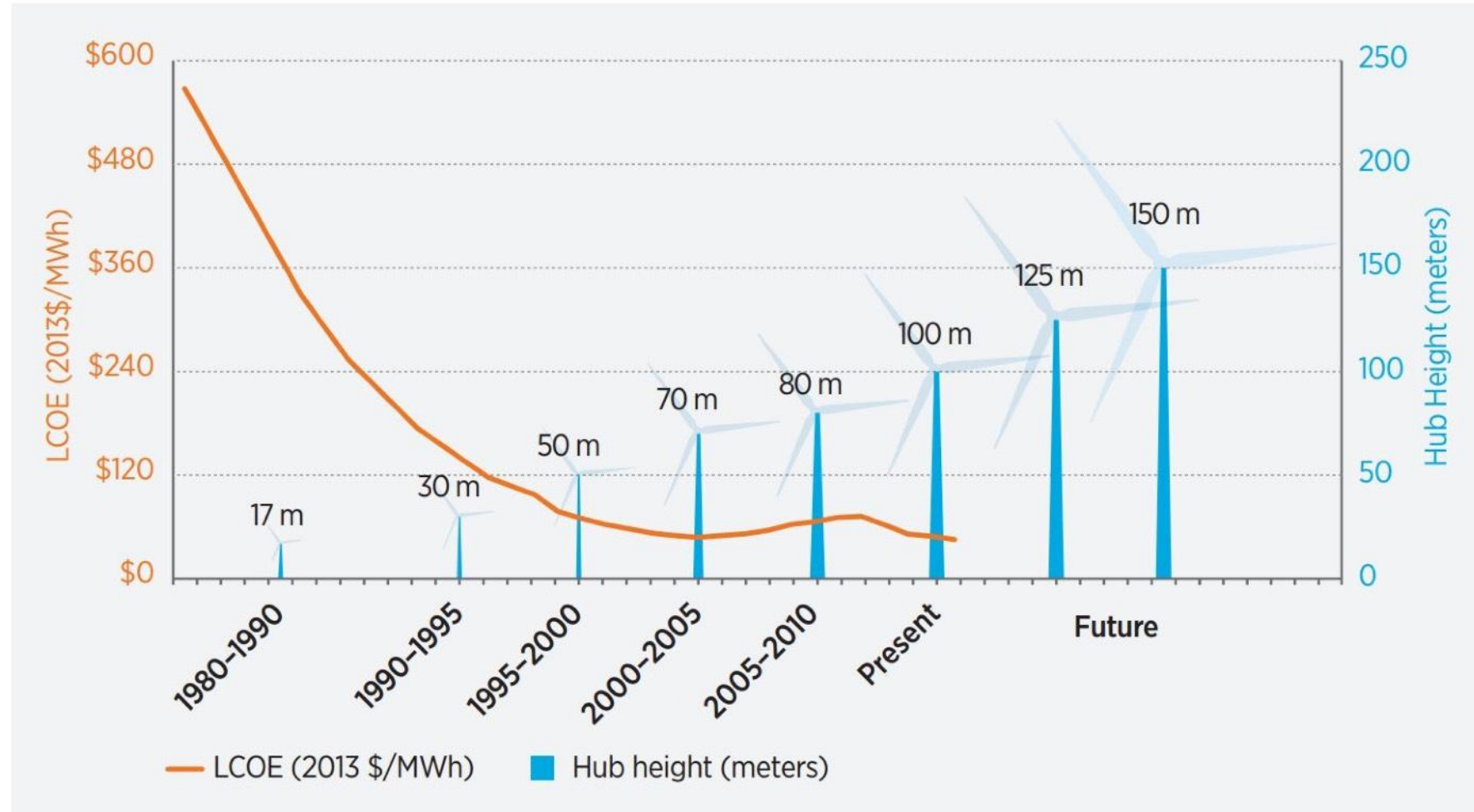
2027: 15.2%

2028: 3.7%

2029: 8.7%

Wind Power Costs are Down

Scale-up of wind technology has supported cost reductions.



Note: LCOE is estimated in good to excellent wind resource sites (typically those with average wind speeds of 7.5 m/s or higher), excluding the federal production tax credit. Hub heights reflect typical turbine model size for the time period.

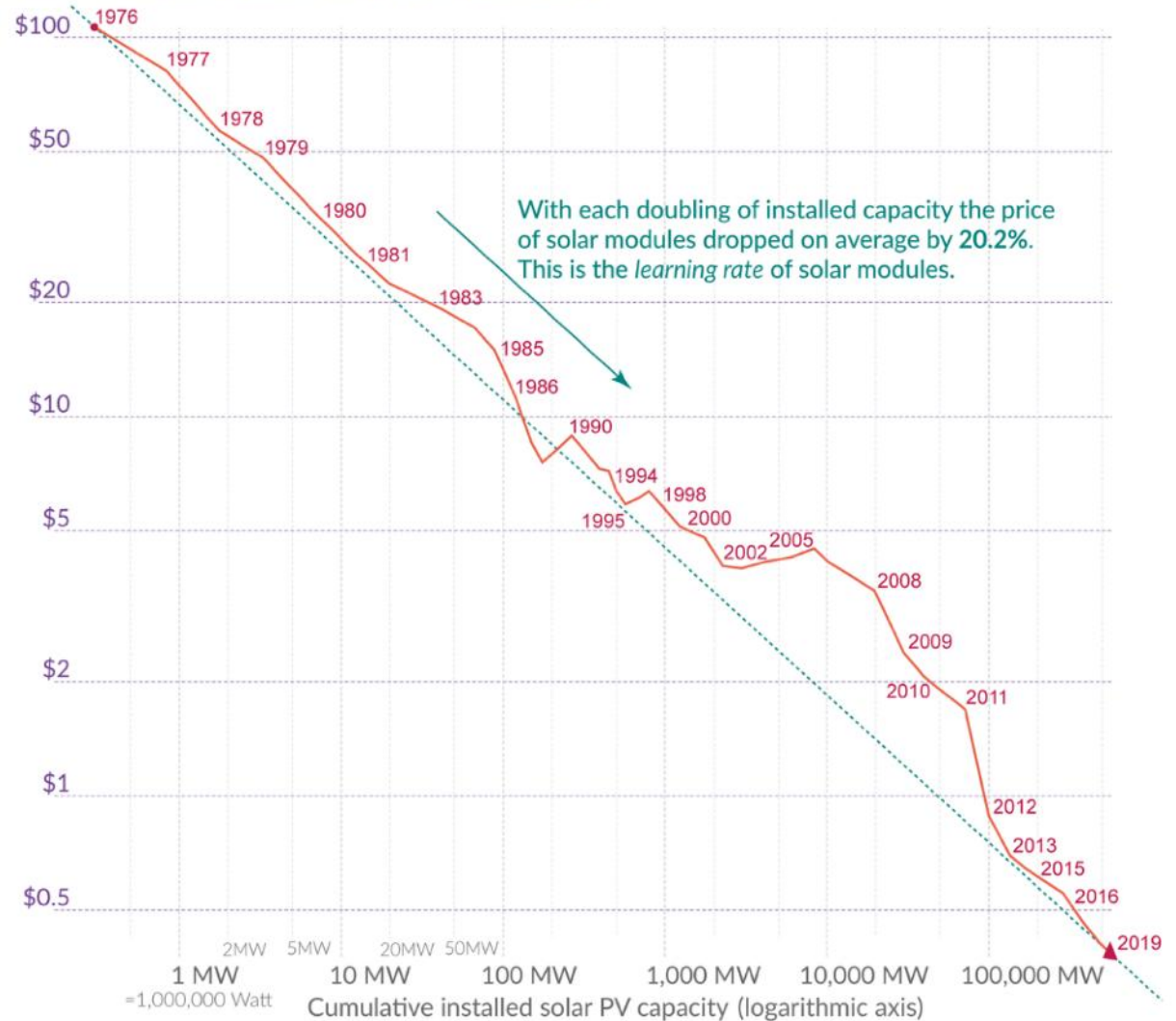
Figure ES 2.5 Wind technology scale-up trends and the levelized cost of electricity

Solar Power Costs are Down

The price of solar modules declined by 99.6% since 1976

Our World
in Data

Price per Watt of solar photovoltaics (PV) modules (logarithmic axis)
The prices are adjusted for inflation and presented in 2019 US-\$.



Data: Lafond et al. (2017) and IRENA Database; the reported learning rate is an average over several studies reported by de La Tour et al (2013) in Energy. The rate has remained very similar since then.
OurWorldinData.org – Research and data to make progress against the world's largest problems.

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Battery Costs are Down

