

Register Gaurd Eugene Oregon Editor Letter by Ethen Perkins (Oct. 2017)

Downsizing EWEB's staff (RG 10-9 "EWEB Downsizing Paying Off") might be trading rate affordability for diminished quality. Should we be willing to pay higher rates to better insure EWEB can provide power and water after the big expected earthquake, for example? Will we wind up wishing we had kept some of the expertise of those 31 employees after such an event? Are we willing to exchange rate affordability for power produced by Seneca's deforesting biofuels that add tons of fine particle pollutants into our air? Does relying on BPA and other sources derived from natural gas, coal, Columbia and Snake River dams, and nuclear energy, make ethical sense just because it might be cheaper than wind and solar? Should EWEB sell its wind farms for purely economic reasons?

I am counting on my commissioners to rein in Frank Lawson when his decisions are not in the best long term and environmental interest of EWEB rate payers. Commissioners and Mr. Lawson, please do not assume that Eugenians are only interested in producing a stable financial balance sheet and affordability at the expense of good environmental choices, long term power and water security, and customer services. Please consider that every early retired, moved, downsized, automated, and transferred employee represents a potentially lost human resource that the ratepayers could sorely miss and who will no longer be contributing their expertise in the best possible way. Is EWEB's sterling reputation worth tarnishing for the sake of affordability and at the cost of diminished staff services?

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