

PUD Delegation Meets With Washington Legislators

A strong relationship with Washington state's congressional delegation is a key element to the success of any public entity. In the case of the Grays Harbor PUD, we are fortunate to have that relationship with our leaders on Capitol Hill.

A March trip to Washington, D.C. for the American Public Power Association rally included a day of visits to the United States Capitol Building to meet with members of the Washington Congressional delegation.

Commissioner Arie Callaghan, General Manager Dave Ward and Communications and Government Relations Director Ian Cope met with Congressmen Derek Kilmer and Denny Heck, Senator Maria Cantwell and staff members from the offices of Senator Parry Murray and Congresswoman Jaime Herrera-Beutler.

"These visits are more than a chance to meet and shake hands with our delegates; they are an opportunity for us to put our issues squarely before them," said Commissioner Callaghan. "I left Washington, D.C. with a strong feeling of support from the men and women that we rely on to advocate for us in Congress, and the assurance that they will have our back in several areas important to the Grays Harbor PUD and its customers."

In addition to discussing statewide public power issues, the Grays Harbor PUD staff was able to:

- Encourage congressional support for tree trimming on the borders of National Park and Forest lands.
- Swifter action by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the event of a natural disaster on the Washington coast.
- Continued economic development and increased trade training in Grays Harbor County.

The congressional offices expressed appreciation for the work done by the Grays Harbor PUD and its role in helping Grays Harbor recover from the economic downturn caused by the recession.



*Pictured from left to right:
General Manager Dave Ward,
Rep. Derek Kilmer,
Commissioner Arie Callaghan
and Communications and
Government Relations Director
Ian Cope.*



A Path to Economic Recovery

By Rep. Derek Kilmer

As your representative, my main focus has been getting this economy moving. While jobs aren't created in marble buildings in Washington, D.C., what the federal government does and doesn't do matters. That's why I recently introduced the Olympic Peninsula Economic Development Initiative (which you can read at kilmer.house.gov). It lays out some things the federal government ought to do to be a better partner in economic recovery. Among other things, it proposes:

Bringing Jobs Back to America: Our tax policies should encourage investments in the USA - not reward shipping jobs overseas. I'm working on bipartisan legislation to encourage investment in rural areas, providing incentives for bringing jobs home.

Supporting Innovation: Good economic development is like good hockey. The best players don't skate to where the puck is; they skate to where the puck will be. Research tells us that we'll likely see substantial growth in fields that require education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). That's why I recently passed an amendment in the Science Committee to require the Administration to better promote STEM education in rural areas and communities suffering from high unemployment.

Protecting our Fisheries: One of the strengths of our region's economy is our shellfish industry and our recreational and commercial fishing businesses. To help these businesses, I've introduced legislation to protect our most vulnerable areas and to address ocean acidification.

Growing Opportunities in the Timber Industry: While economic diversification is important, the timber industry has been - and should continue to be - a meaningful player. That's why I've brought industry and environmental leaders together to form a collaborative effort to explore ways we can provide for increased, sustainable timber harvests on the Olympic National Forest and improve forest health. I'm also working to protect local forest products companies from being treated unfairly by trading partners.

Enhancing our Infrastructure: I'm working on a number of bills focused on protecting coastal communities, enhancing access to rural broadband, improving transportation, and strengthening our ports. Infrastructure investments - including the valuable services provided by the PUD - are critical to laying the foundation for economic growth on the peninsula.

Investing in Workforce: The investments we make in skills can help us keep our employers - and our kids - here in Grays Harbor. I support enhanced vocational education opportunities and financial aid resources. I've also sponsored the Skills Investment Act to better enable small businesses to invest in the skills of their workers.

There's plenty more to do to help our small businesses and get things moving. I look forward to working with the PUD and all of you to make it happen.

Commission Meeting Dates

Meetings are held in the Nichols Building, 220 Myrtle Street, Hoquiam.

April 2014

Monday - April 7

Monday - April 14

May 2014

Monday - May 5

Monday - May 19

Regular business meetings are scheduled to begin at 4:30 pm. A one hour workshop (3:30 to 4:30 pm) will precede each business meeting, unless otherwise noted. The public is welcome to attend all commission meetings, special meetings, workshops and public hearings.

Commission meetings may be cancelled and special meetings may be scheduled. Please visit our website (www.ghpud.org) for updated information.

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PUD Welcomes New Engineering Manager

The Grays Harbor Public Utility District has filled a key spot on its senior leadership team by hiring Schuyler Burkhart to serve as the District's Engineering Manager. Burkhart comes to Grays Harbor from Tacoma Power, where he serves as a senior supervisor in the Transmission & Distribution section.

"The hiring of Schuyler Burkhart is a tremendous addition for the District and for Grays Harbor and finalizes the team that will lead the PUD for the foreseeable future," said Commission President Russ Skolrood. "Schuyler brings with him a track record of success as both an engineer and a supervisor. I think he is a great fit for Grays Harbor and I can't wait to begin working with him."

A Washington native, Burkhart is a graduate of Tacoma Community College and the University of Washington. Over a 20 year career he has served as an engineer in several transmission and distribution roles, supervised engineering and operations teams for 7 years, and has actively recruited professional positions and college interns. Schuyler's experience in the last 10 years was in Transmission & Distribution substation engineering; project management; and supervising engineering and meter, relay, and line service crews.

"I am absolutely thrilled with the addition of Schuyler Burkhart to our Grays Harbor team," said District General Manager Dave Ward. "In filling this position, we were looking for a blend of professional excellence, vision and personality. We found that in Schuyler. Your PUD will benefit tremendously from his hiring."

As Engineering Manager, Burkhart will supervise a 15 person staff, and plan, direct, coordinate and manage Engineering work and resource requirements to ensure efficient and safe use of District resources, for the most cost-effective operation of the District.

PUD Promotes Energy Efficiency at EXPO Grays Harbor

The Grays Harbor PUD was one of over 50 businesses to take part in the 2014 EXPO Grays Harbor and Bite of Grays Harbor. PUD staff answered questions, distributed literature and passed out nearly 400 energy efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs to the over 1000 attendees at Aberdeen High School's Sam Benn Gym on March 15.



Strategic Planning

By Russ Skolrood

Your PUD commissioners recently joined with the PUD Senior Leadership Team to work on a strategic plan for the Grays Harbor PUD. I have worked on strategic planning before but I was impressed with the process and the initial outcome of this important planning effort. Strategic plans are too often just words and catch phrases that businesses put on the wall to show that they have a general focus for their business. For me, a strategic plan should set the direction for all of your actions and business decisions in the future.

A powerful strategic plan does not just involve management but should have the added power of having buy-in from all your employees and customers. We are on our way to developing a very strong plan at Grays Harbor PUD because we are working hard at focusing on the reason we are in our industry. We are also making sure that we are involving all the stakeholders in the process so that the whole "Team" is on the same page and rowing the boat in the same direction. Grays Harbor PUD is here to deliver safe, reliable power at the most practical cost.

Moving forward with the planning process we will start to set measurable goals that are all focused on our strategic plan. It will then be easy to make sure that every business, policy and personnel decision is in perfect alignment with these goals and ultimately our strategic plan. The final outcome is an efficient, well-managed and focused business plan that delivers to the customer what we promise; safe, reliable power at the most practical cost.

Does this mean that the job of Commissioner will be easier? I doubt it! The Commissioners will still have to make hard choices that will affect their friends, family and neighbors and usually when you have 30,000+ customer/owners you seem to always upset someone. The main gain from this process is that we will have a focused direction and strong goals to make those decisions consistent and sound. In the end the customer/owners should feel confident that the PUD is doing everything it can to make the strategic plan a powerful and meaningful document that will ensure that they are getting the service that they deserve.



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