

# **Black Hills Energy History in Pueblo**

# Black Hills Energy History in Pueblo

**2008** Black Hills Energy (BHE) buys Aquila.

---

**2009** Social service agencies notice an increase in low-income community needing financial assistance to pay their electric bill.

---

**2010 August** BHE signs a 20 year exclusive franchise agreement with the city of Pueblo.

---

**2011** The Social Services Organization, Continuum of Care, sent a letter to city and county commissioners stating the corporate policies of BHE are creating a hardship for poor families, disabled individuals, the elderly, and the social service networks that serve them.

**2013** BHE implements a change in “demand charge” for business class, resulting in huge increases in utility bills.

*Demand charge for business sector all but kills distributed solar incentives and cripples local installers livelihood*

**2014** Pueblo’s Energy Future (PEF), a grassroots movement is formed to advocate for a clean affordable, sustainable and just energy future for Pueblo.

---

**2015** PEF begins a listening and educational campaign to hear stories and inform the public about BHE’s utility bills policies and practices.

---

**2016** BHE seeks a \$8.5 million Phase I increase in revenue to pay for the construction of the \$65 million “peaker” plant, operating as intended only a few hours per year. (PUC approved construction)

**2016 August** About 600 people attended a PUC hearing in Pueblo and over 50 testified that BHE should not be granted a revenue increase because electric bills were up 27% since BHE bought Aquila in 2008.

*One of the most compelling testimonies came from Sister Nancy Crafton. She stated that her non-profit had paid \$455,991 in utility payment support for low-income from 2008 to 2016, compared to \$128,385 in previous 6 years with Aquila.*

**2016 December** PUC denies BHE the \$8.5 million Phase I increase in revenue but did grant a \$1 million Phase I increase. Big win for Pueblo.

---

**2017** BHE files Phase II rate scheme asking for an increase in customer charge...especially for residential solar owners (up 49%). Local solar owners organize to advocate for fair and just policies regarding solar and renewable energy issues creating **REOCA**.

**January 23, 2017** City Council passes a resolution to become a 100% renewable energy city by 2035, which was a Sierra Club Ready for 100 initiative.

---

**2017 Fall** Pueblo residents testify before an Administrative Law Judge in a hearing regarding the injustice of BHE Phase II rate schedule.

---

**2017 Fall** City Council voted 7-0 declaring its intention to execute a 2020 off-ramp provision, from the exclusive franchise agreement as allowed in state statute if a professional feasibility study confirms the benefits of doing so.

**2017 December** PUC Phase II ruling reduces the customer charge and increased the business demand charge threshold from 10kw to 50kw. *Another win for Pueblo!*

*PUC denies BHE phase II rate scheme and demands they reduce their customer charge in all classes*

**2018 January** City appoints Electric Utility Commission to advise City Council regarding a feasibility study. The Phase I feasibility study completed, and Phase II feasibility study in process.

---

**2018 Spring** BHE makes minor changes in reconnection fee and reduces deposit requirements from 3 months to 1 month.