

1 **Retain the Columbia Generating Station**

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3 **WHEREAS** the Columbia Generating Station (CGS) is a publicly owned nuclear facility
4 operated by a Washington State not-for-profit operating agency since 1984, capable of
5 delivering 1,190 megawatts of continuously available power to the grid, sufficient for a
6 million homes, while emitting virtually no greenhouse gases;

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8 **WHEREAS** in 2016 a resolution to shut down the CGS was passed by the Washington
9 State Democratic Convention, claiming that the value of the electricity generated is less
10 than the plant's operating cost, pointing out that there is no national spent fuel storage
11 repository, and that active geological faults in the Puget Sound area are connected to
12 ridges at the Hanford site;

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14 **WHEREAS** said resolution did not consider or even acknowledge any of the positive
15 aspects of the CGS to be mentioned below;

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17 **WHEREAS** CGS power is generated at a sustaining cost of 3.5 cents per KWh ,
18 competitive with natural gas and hydropower, and less expensive than wind and solar
19 power;

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21 **WHEREAS** the greatest part of the spent nuclear fuel from the CGS is safely contained
22 in dry cask storage on site, and the CGS is currently building additional capacity to
23 store thirty additional years' worth of spent fuel casks, so that the CGS could operate
24 throughout its useful life without a national spent fuel repository;

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26 **WHEREAS** recent evaluations conducted at the Hanford Site, for the Nuclear
27 Regulatory Commission are concluding that the CGS facility including the spent fuel
28 storage systems are at very low risk of failure due to credible seismic events;

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30 **WHEREAS** the Nuclear Regulatory Commission was confident enough in the safety
31 and security of CGS operation in 2012 to approve an extension of the CGS's 40-year
32 license for an additional 20 years, thereby extending operation through 2043;

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34 **WHEREAS** in 2014 the CGS is a significant power source, generating 8.2% of
35 Washington's power;

36

37 **WHEREAS** CGS power is continuously available regardless of weather conditions, and
38 is therefore well suited to support reliable power grid baseload and capacity demand,
39 including backing up increasing levels of intermittent renewable wind and solar power;

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41 **WHEREAS** shutting down the CGS would likely result in an immediate shift of 8.2% of
42 our power to CO₂ power sources such as natural gas to meet increasing power
43 demands while supporting the power grid baseload; potentially doubling the state's
44 CO₂ emissions from natural gas, making attainment of Washington's greenhouse gas
45 emission goals more difficult, and making Washingtonians pay more in carbon taxes;
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47 **WHEREAS** local effects of shutting down the CGS could include the loss to Washington
48 State of up to 1,500 direct jobs and three times that number of indirect jobs; and
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50 **WHEREAS** while building a new nuclear power plant may be uneconomic in today's
51 business environment, shutting down the CGS would be abandoning an investment in a
52 large, continuously upgraded, and successfully operating low-carbon electrical power
53 plant with a thirty-year expected remaining lifetime;
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55 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Washington State Democratic Central Committee
56 desires progress to 100% renewable energy as soon as possible; we acknowledge the
57 CGS as a critical part of low-carbon electrical power generation in Washington State
58 and the Pacific Northwest, for the above reasons;
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60 **THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democrats
61 recognize the CGS as a critical facility for combatting carbon emissions-driven climate
62 change; and
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64 **THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democrats urge
65 the Washington State Legislature to support the retention of the Columbia Generating
66 Station nuclear power plant through its useful life.
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69 Submitted by the Benton County Democrats. (Date Submitted 9/1/2016)
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71 The Resolutions Committee amended this resolution and included it in the "DO PASS"
72 slate at its September 17, 2016 meeting.
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74 The WSDCC "PASSED" this resolution as amended at its September 17, 2016 meeting in
75 Yakima.