



# NW Energy Coalition

## Session 1: Expanding Support for Community Participation in Utility and Regulatory Processes

This panel will discuss: How can utilities and regulators improve and expand opportunities for community participation and expertise, particularly in environmental justice? What role can funding play, both in advocacy at decision-making bodies, and in community-based expertise for specific utility projects? How can processes for public input be designed to support meaningful collaboration with a diverse set of stakeholders?

### Resources for Learning More

[Oregon Public Utility Commission Advocacy 101 Presentation](#) by NWECC  
[Oregon and Regional Energy Policy Advocacy 101 Presentation](#) by NWECC  
[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Clean Energy](#) from the Washington State Solar Summit

[Electricity Regulation in the US: A Guide](#) by Jim Lazar

[Connectivity Means Community: Energy Justice and Distribution Systems 101](#)  
Presentation by Oriana Magnera and Charity Fain

### Key Terms and Acronyms

**UTC** = Utilities and Transportation Commission (Washington State)

**PUC** = Public Utility Commission (Oregon)

**IOUs** = Investor-Owned Utilities

**Docket** = A record of all of the filings and proceedings related to a particular matter

**A longer list of key terms relevant to energy policy in the Northwest can be found [here](#).**

**Intervenor Funding:**

Intervenor funding is funding that comes from rates paid for energy (i.e. ratepayer dollars) and is used to compensate organizations who represent certain groups of customers to represent those groups at utility commission proceedings (i.e. pay them to “intervene.”). It is available to ensure that qualified organizations who represent utility customers have the financial resources to advocate on their own behalf and provide Commissions with their needed expertise. In many states, there are, or will be, laws that ensure low-income and environmental justice organizations are compensated through intervenor funding for their advocacy, considering their capacity to participate is often limited. For more information, click [here](#).

**Prudence:**

In order to be included in a rate base (i.e. in order for a utility to be allowed to recover the costs of something it has done through customer rates), a Commission must find what the utility did to be a *prudent investment*. How Commissioners determine prudence depends on the rules and statutes of the state, but in general a prudent investment is one that “has been constructed or implemented as proposed, according to sound management practices, and at reasonable cost and with reasonable care.” –see *Electricity Regulation in the US: A Guide*.