

10 REALITIES

get real
on energy

1 THE ENERGY PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES ACTUALLY USE

"The energy conversation often focuses on how electricity is generated. The reality is that millions of Northwest families and businesses depend on natural gas directly every day."

The Outlook repeatedly notes that natural gas provides direct service to approximately 3.6-3.7 million households (about 10 million people), nearly 350,000 businesses and supplies roughly half of the region's non-transportation energy needs.

2 GAS AND ELECTRICITY ARE PARTNERS

"The question is no longer gas versus electricity. The question is how the systems must work together."

This may be the strongest insight in the report. The gas-electric interdependence chapter changes the conversation from fuel competition to system integration.

3 DIRECT USE MATTERS

"People don't need just electricity. They need energy: The gas system already delivers the energy millions of people rely on every day."

Natural gas is not simply a fuel used to generate electricity. It directly heats homes, provides hot water, cooks meals, powers businesses, supports manufacturing, and delivers energy when people need it most.

4 RELIABILITY HAPPENS DURING PEAKS

"Energy systems are tested on the coldest and hottest days — not the average day — and on those days, the gas system makes reliable operation of the electric system possible."

Annual averages don't matter during extreme weather - it's all about the peak. January 2024 cold snap: Gas supplied roughly 70% of end-use energy in Oregon and Washington during the event while also supporting electric generation.

5 INFRASTRUCTURE MATTERS

"Energy shortages begin years before the lights go out. You can't permit infrastructure after you need it."

The report is clear that the region is operating near infrastructure limits during winter periods. Pipeline utilization exceeds 90% during winter months.

6 WE NEED EVERY TOOL

"The future isn't either-or. There are no silver bullets, especially for emission reduction. Diversity is strength and creates reliability."

The natural gas industry is already decarbonizing, adding renewable natural gas hydrogen to their systems, in addition to continuously tightening their systems to reduce emissions.

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7 ENERGY DEMAND IS GROWING

“Energy demand isn’t waiting for our planning processes to catch up.”

Actual peak loads are already exceeding forecasts.

8 NATURAL GAS IS AFFORDABLE

“Affordable energy matters—and natural gas remains one of the Pacific Northwest’s most important affordability advantages. The energy transition must work for the household budget.”

Energy policy is ultimately paid for by households and businesses. Direct use of natural gas has always been an affordable way to heat homes, produce hot water, prepare meals, operate businesses, and support essential industrial processes.

9 THE ECONOMY RUNS ON NATURAL GAS

“Natural gas is embedded throughout the Pacific Northwest economy. Natural gas is not simply an energy commodity, it is economic infrastructure.”

The natural gas system supports nearly every aspect of modern economic life: it heats homes and businesses – provides hot water, especially for hotels and hospitals - and cooks food in restaurants, dries crops and lumber, and fuels reliable electricity generation. It’s used in pharmaceuticals, fertilizer, curing, melting, sterilizing, greenhouses, pulp and paper, plus producing glass, steel and cement...to name a few.

10 NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY IS DECARBONIZING NOW

“The natural gas system is not standing still, it is becoming cleaner and more efficient. The goal should be lower emissions—not fewer energy options.”

Natural gas utilities and pipeline companies are constantly pursuing multiple pathways to reduce emissions of the natural gas system, including: renewable natural gas, hydrogen, recovered methane, methane detection and reduction, and modernized equipment and infrastructure.

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