



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

INDEPENDENT EVALUATOR

FOR

PUGET SOUND ENERGY'S

2021 ALL-SOURCE AND DEMAND RESPONSE SOLICITATION

ISSUE DATE: NOVEMBER 24, 2020
PROPOSALS DUE: DECEMBER 23, 2020

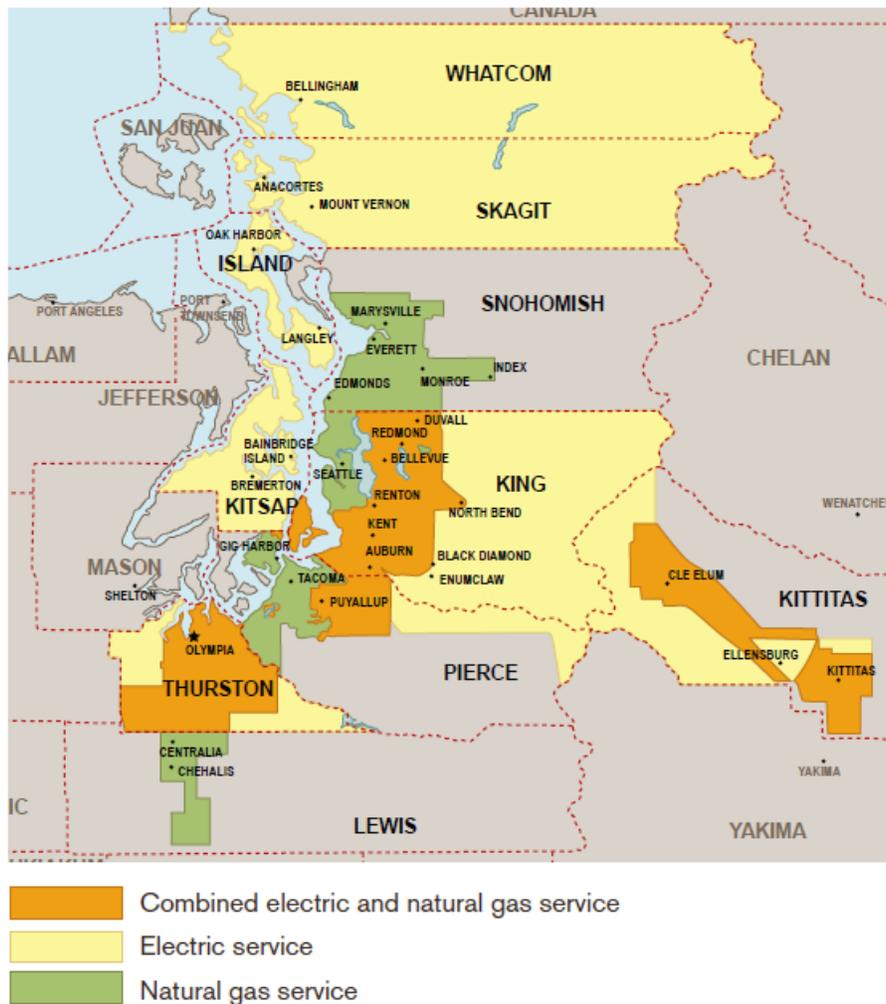
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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 About Puget Sound Energy

Puget Sound Energy (“PSE”) is Washington State’s oldest local energy company, providing electric and natural gas service to homes and businesses primarily in the vibrant Puget Sound area. Our service area covers more than 6,000 square miles, stretching from south Puget Sound to the Canadian border and from central Washington’s Kittitas Valley west to the Kitsap Peninsula. We serve more than 1.1 million electric customers and more than 840,000 natural gas customers in 10 counties.



For more information, visit www.PSE.com. All questions and any additional information needed regarding this RFP should be submitted via e-mail as follows:

Deanna Roshau
Sourcing Manager
425-424-7997
deanna.roshau@pse.com

1.2 Independent Evaluator Background

PSE is issuing this Request for Proposals with the aim of engaging the services of an Independent Evaluator (“IE”) for the company’s planned 2021 All-Source and Demand Response Requests for Proposals (the “2021 RFPs”).

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (“WUTC”) is currently engaged in Purchase of Electricity (“PoE”) rulemaking that, among other things, contemplates requiring utilities to engage the services of an Independent Evaluator to assess and report on the solicitation process if: a) the utility, its subsidiary, or affiliate participates in the utility’s RFP bidding process, which may result in the utility owning or having a purchase option in the resource over its expected useful life; b) the utility intends to retain the option to procure resources that will result in the utility owning or having a purchase option in the resource over its expected useful life; or c) the utility is considering repowering its existing resources to meet its resource need (WUTC Docket UE-190837). The IE is a third party, not affiliated with the utility, that provides an assessment as to the fairness and reasonableness of the utility’s request for proposal process, evaluation, selection criteria, and related analyses of all project bids and project proposals received in response to a request for proposal.

Due to the timing requirements for its 2021 RFPs, PSE is proceeding with the process of engaging an IE ahead of the final PoE Rules in order to carry out the 2021 RFPs in a timely manner and comply with the WUTC’s Order 04 dated October 15, 2020 requiring PSE to file the 2021 RFPs no later than April 1, 2021. The Scope of Work and timing may be modified to accommodate the final PoE rules.

The IE will contract with and be paid by PSE. PSE will also manage the contract terms with the IE. PSE’s selection of an IE may be subject to approval by the WUTC.

1.3 Independent Evaluator RFP Schedule

The following timetable is provided for planning purposes and may be modified by PSE as required.

Activity:	Target Date:
Stakeholder Comment	November 17-23, 2020
Issue IE RFP	November 24, 2020
Bidders Submit Intent to Bid Notification and Deadline for Questions	December 8, 2020
PSE Answers Bidder Questions	December 15, 2020
IE Bids Due	December 23, 2020, 3:00 pm Pacific Time
Bidder Interviews	January 11-13, 2021
PSE Selection Process ¹	January 15-28, 2021
PSE Notification to IE Bidders	February 1, 2021
Contract Execution	February 5, 2021
Start of Work	February 15, 2021

¹ The PoE Rules, if adopted and in effect, may require UTC approval of PSE’s recommended IE.

1.4 PSE’s 2021 All-Source and Demand Response RFPs

The integrated resource planning (IRP) process, which evaluates and establishes PSE’s capacity and renewable energy needs on a biennial basis, guides PSE’s electric resource acquisition process. PSE anticipates that the 2021 RFPs will seek resources to meet both renewable and capacity needs. The Demand Response RFP will be issued in conjunction with and supplement the All-Source RFP to encourage offers from demand-side resources in addressing PSE’s capacity needs. PSE will compare demand response options submitted to the 2021 RFPs in a combined analysis.

Based on the analyses of the 2021 IRP process to date (accessible at <http://www.pse.com/irp>), PSE projects that it must add approximately 8.225 GWh of renewable energy resources by 2030 (to meet the targets of the Clean Energy Transformation Act²) and fill a capacity need of approximately 545 MW in 2026. The resource need targets and corresponding glide path of the 2021 RFPs will be further informed and refined by the 2021 IRP, which is scheduled for draft release in early January of 2021 and final publication by April 1, 2021.

CETA introduced new statutory requirements for the IRP and separate planning requirements, including the clean energy action plan (“CEAP”) and the clean energy implementation plan (“CEIP”). The CEAP identifies the resource plan PSE will pursue over the next 10 years to meet capacity and renewable energy needs, and it will be filed jointly with the IRP. The CEIP identifies the specific and interim targets consistent with the plan in the CEAP, and the actions the company will take over the next four years to achieve those targets. The new rulemakings associated with these legislative changes, including the PoE rulemaking mentioned above, may result in adoption of final rules by December 31, 2020.

PSE currently plans to file its draft 2021 RFPs by April 1, 2021. WAC 480-107-015 provides for a public comment period of forty-five days from the filing date of a draft RFP, after which the Commission has thirty days to approve (or suspend) the RFP. Thus, PSE expects to issue the final 2021 RFPs at the end of June 2021.

The following is a preliminary timeline for the 2021 RFPs, alongside planned milestones for the IRP, CEAP, CEIP, and this RFP. This timeline is indicative only, provided at this stage in order to aid in overall planning, and is subject to modification by PSE.

Draft IRP Published	Jan 4, 2021
IE Start of Work	February 15, 2021
Final IRP/CEAP Filed	April 1, 2021
Draft 2021 RFPs Issued	April 1, 2021 ³
End of Public Comment Period on Draft 2021 RFPs	May 17, 2021
WUTC Approval Review Period Closes; Decision Anticipated	June 16, 2021

² On May 7, 2019, Washington State passed the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA), which requires all utilities to supply Washington customers with electricity that is 100% renewable or non-emitting by 2045. CETA sets specific milestones to reach this target; utilities must eliminate coal-fired electricity from their portfolios by 2025 and must be carbon-neutral with 80% of annual retail load using electricity from renewable resources and non-emitting electric generation by 2030.

³ Draft All-Source RFP filing schedule of no later than April 1, 2021 consistent with WUTC Final Order approving 2020 All-Source RFP withdrawal motion in Docket UE-200414.

Final 2021 RFPs Issued	June 30, 2021
Bids Due	September 1, 2021
CEIP Filed	October 1, 2021
Phase 1 Evaluation; Candidate List Selection	November 2021 (est.)
Phase 2 Evaluation; Short List Selection	May 2022 (est.)

2 SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 Role and Expectations

The function of the IE is to consult with PSE, as needed, on the procurement activities in the 2021 RFPs as described below. The IE will:

- (a) ensure that PSE's 2021 RFP process is conducted fairly, transparently, and properly;
- (b) participate in the design of the 2021 RFPs;
- (c) evaluate the unique risks, burdens, and benefits of each bid;
- (d) provide to PSE the IE's minutes of meetings and the full text of written communications between the IE and PSE and any third-party related to the IE's execution of its duties;
- (e) verify that PSE's inputs and assumptions, including capacity factors and capital costs, are reasonable;
- (f) assess whether PSE's process of scoring the bids and selection of the initial and final shortlists is reasonable;
- (g) prepare a final report to the WUTC after reconciling rankings with PSE in accordance with WAC 480-107-035(3) that must:
 - i. include an evaluation of the competitive bidding process in selecting the lowest reasonable cost acquisition or action to satisfy the identified resource need, including the adequacy of communication with stakeholders and bidders; and
 - ii. explain ranking differences and why the IE and PSE were or were not able to reconcile the differences.

The IE will participate in meetings with the WUTC and PSE, on an as-needed basis, to discuss its findings. If called upon to testify, the IE may serve as an expert witness in proceedings.

The IE will be given reasonable access to information, meetings and communications related to offers submitted by all respondents. The IE will immediately report to PSE and the WUTC any perceived attempt by any individual or party to improperly influence any findings determined by the IE, or to challenge or interfere with their independent role in the solicitation process.

The IE does not make resource decisions on behalf of PSE. The IE makes an assessment of the fairness and reasonableness of PSE's process and decisions, and may make recommendations to improve the evaluation and decision-making process, but does not have the authority to require PSE to follow any recommended course of action. The IE will not negotiate with any respondent on PSE's behalf.

2.2 Responsibilities and Tasks

In support of the functions discussed above, the IE responsibilities and tasks will include the following:

- Review and provide feedback and recommendations on PSE's draft 2021 RFPs, including stakeholder comments. Assess the 2021 RFPs' design, including review of the adequacy, accuracy and completeness of solicitation materials to ensure compliance with the WUTC's Purchase of Electricity Rules and consistency with accepted industry standards and practices. The IE will participate in the design of the RFP and provide feedback to PSE on the draft 2021 RFPs prior to their release.
- Advise on the consistency of solicitation activities with the WUTC's rules and procedures and PSE's WUTC-approved 2021 RFPs.
- Advise on the evaluation process, including recommending data requests, as needed, to supplement the information requested from bidders in the 2021 RFPs to allow for a full and fair evaluation of proposals.
- Assess whether the quantitative and qualitative bid evaluation criteria and methodologies are applied to all bids in a fair and non-discriminatory manner and whether PSE's process of scoring the bids and selection of the initial and final shortlists is reasonable. The IE will be provided reasonable access to the evaluation meetings and documentation of PSE's Business Initiatives and cross-functional teams, in order to credibly assess the bid evaluation and selection processes.
- Verify that PSE's inputs and assumptions, including capacity factors and capital costs, are reasonable. The IE will be provided with a description of how the evaluation models function, including the inputs and outputs of all models used during the evaluation process.
- Assess whether PSE's process of scoring the bids and selection of the initial and final shortlists is reasonable. The IE will score and rank qualifying bids based on PSE's modeling output and an independent qualitative assessment using the RFP's ranking criteria and methodology and consult with PSE to reconcile any ranking differences. If a bidder makes material changes to its bid after shortlist selection, PSE and the IE will rerank bids according to the revised bid.
- Monitor the evaluation processes and promptly submit recommendations to PSE's resource acquisition manager to ensure that no bidder has an information advantage and that all respondents or counterparties, if applicable, receive access to relevant communications in a non-discriminatory manner.

2.3 Deliverables

- Prepare a final written report as to whether or not the utility's competitive bidding process, evaluation process and decisions were reasonable and appropriate and were applied in a transparent, fair and non-discriminatory manner for all offers received. The report will explain why the IE and PSE were (or were not) able to reconcile any ranking differences. The IE will protect confidential bidder information subject to the terms of the confidentiality agreement included in the IE RFP and consistent with the terms of the confidentiality agreement included in the 2021 RFPs.
- Provide to PSE the IE's minutes of meetings and the full text of written communications between the IE and the utility and any third-party related to the IE's execution of its duties;
- Participate as an independent witness or in an advisory capacity during administrative hearings, as required, before the WUTC in any associated proceedings.

2.4 Contract Term

The IE contract is anticipated to be for a term of four (4) years, with the option to renew on a month-to-month basis or terminate earlier, as the case may be, until the IE's participation in the 2021 RFPs is completed. Hourly pricing is expected to remain constant between the initial term and renewal terms.

3 MANDATORY MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

The IE function requires multiple competencies. The IE must be experienced and competent to perform all IE functions as per WAC 480-107-023, as needed. All personnel providing material support must be at a senior level in terms of qualifications and experience. The IE shall:

- (i) Possess technical expertise in terms of evaluating all aspects of capacity, energy, storage (including batteries), demand response and other electricity-related products
- (ii) Be familiar with transmission system planning, development and operation;
- (iii) Be familiar with the electricity markets and infrastructure of the Pacific Northwest and WECC region;
- (iv) Be familiar with relevant industry practices, various standard contracts and the Washington- specific regulatory framework;
- (v) Be able to quickly examine and evaluate offers for power purchase agreements, buyout options and turn-keys on a side-by-side basis.
- (vi) Possess up-to-date and comprehensive information security systems and arrangements such that all confidential documentation and information is secured and safeguarded.

- (vii) Possess previous experience performing independent evaluator duties for at least one utility of a similar size as PSE.

The IE selected for the purposes of this RFP must be independent of and not affiliated with the utility and the potential bidders in the 2021 RFPs, as per the Declaration of Conflicts of Interest (Appendix C).

The IE Candidates shall disclose all business conducted with Puget Sound Energy or its affiliates, past and present.

4 BID EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

The PSE project team members will evaluate each proposal based upon how the proposal meets the objectives described in Section 2, Scope of Work. This evaluation will draw upon the materials submitted under Section 5, below, as well as interviews with selected IE Bidders as per Section 6.8. PSE’s evaluation will take into consideration, but not be limited to, the criteria described in the overall categories described below.

CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Ability of the IE Candidate to perform the work	
Quality of expertise, breadth and depth of experience of the bidder and its individual staff member(s) assigned to the project to perform the proposed scope of work.	50%
Experience with clean energy portfolio integration	
Experience and knowledge of bilateral markets and the CAISO Energy Imbalance Market	
Experience reviewing RFPs for renewable energy and capacity resources, including experience with battery and other storage options. Preference for experience evaluating market bids in the WECC region and Pacific Northwest in particular.	
Experience reviewing demand side resources, including in comparative analysis with an RFP.	
Experience with utility applications of electric production cost modeling, in particular relating to renewable generating resources bids as part of an RFP. Familiarity with forecasting, analysis and market simulation software (including Aurora and Plexos).	
Experience with interconnection and transmission service processes, Open Access Transmission Tariff (“OATT”), Bonneville Power Administration (“BPA”) transmission interconnection and transmission services processes, and familiarity with the transmission networks in the WECC region and Pacific Northwest in particular.	
Responses to IE Questionnaire (Appendix B)	
Costs and Contracting	
The total cost of the proposal, including the elements of the cost and the overall appropriateness of the cost in relation to the work as proposed.	50%

Feedback and Confirmation Provided for Master Services Agreement (Appendix E)	
Conflicts of Interest Declaration and Disclosures, Certificate of Insurance and overall completeness of bid	
Bidder contribution to the equity goals of RCW 19.405.040(8). ⁴	

PSE will be evaluating proposals based on multiple evaluation criteria, as evidenced above. Lowest bid will not necessarily result in a Contract award, as PSE will evaluate the cost-to-benefit ratio of proposals relative to each other. Our requirements are driven by PSE’s unique business process needs and the Contract award will be consistent with how a proposed solution best fits these needs at a competitive cost.

Although PSE is under no obligation to reveal to a Bidder how a proposal was assessed or to provide specific information relative to the decision-making process, we are committed to fairness and to providing a level playing field.

After conducting its evaluation, PSE will recommend one or more alternate bidders for approval by the WUTC, if necessary.

5 PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Information to Return Prior to Bid

- Intent to Bid and questions via email message to Deanna Roshau, Sourcing Manager at deanna.roshau@pse.com.

5.2 Proposal Contents

Bidder’s formal response shall include the sections set forth and described below. Bidders should adhere to this format to aid the project team to evaluate all information efficiently. Responses that deviate from the requested format will increase the time required to review and evaluate its contents and may disqualify Bidders.

A: QUALIFICATIONS

The Bidders shall provide all information necessary to demonstrate fully their qualifications as required under Section 3 above.

B: COMPANY OVERVIEW

The Bidders shall provide information on their company and business, including at minimum the following:

⁴RCW 19.405.040(8): In complying with this section, an electric utility must, consistent with the requirements of RCW 19.280.030 and 19.405.140, ensure that all customers are benefiting from the transition to clean energy: Through the equitable distribution of energy and non-energy benefits and reduction of burdens to vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities; long-term and short term public health and environmental benefits and reduction of costs and risks; and energy security and resiliency.

- (i) Summary of business, including location of headquarters and other offices, local staffing presence, years in business)
- (ii) List of previous and ongoing IE clientele and dates engaged.
- (iii) Ownership structure and any pending acquisitions or restructuring
- (iv) Pending litigation and any past lawsuits
- (v) Financial report (10K, 10Q or comparable information)

C: STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND ORGANIZATION

Each proposal shall describe the qualification and expertise of staff proposed for this project. Bidders shall highlight relevant prior experience on similar projects. Proposals must indicate the bidder's staff organization, the responsibilities and hierarchy of staff to be assigned to the project, and the resumes of such staff. Assignments and responsibilities should be categorized and described by task.

D: REFERENCES

Each proposal requires at least two performance references for IE projects with other utilities of similar complexity and size. Each bidder shall submit work samples demonstrating their expertise and competence, including willingness and ability to work independent of utilities and to rigorously review, evaluate, and critique utility RFPs.

E: QUESTIONNAIRE

Each bidder shall submit responses to each of the questions and topics in Appendix B. Responses should be concise but complete.

F: COST PROPOSAL

Bidders must provide an estimate of the total project cost, broken down into the major cost categories and hours associated with each task. At a minimum, each proposal shall contain the following:

- (i) Total personnel costs, itemized and broken down by:
 - a. Category and seniority of personnel (i.e. project manager, etc.)
 - b. Names of personnel in each category to be used
 - c. Estimated hours
 - d. Rates per hour for each person, and
- (ii) Total and itemized cost of all materials and supplies, including computer software.
- (iii) Total and itemized transportation and related costs (Note: PSE assumes that Bidders will directly pass through reasonable travel costs and expenses at no mark up.)

G: PSE DOCUMENTS

Please review the documents noted here and included in the RFP packet as these will be the controlling documents of any resulting contractual agreement. Unless otherwise noted in the bid

response, it is assumed that your firm accepts the terms and conditions outlined in these documents:

- (i) Bid Form (Appendix A –to be completed and signed with bid)
- (ii) IE Questionnaire (Appendix B – Bidder to provide responses)
- (iii) Declaration Regarding Conflict of Interest (Appendix C – to be signed and submitted with bid)
- (iv) Mutual Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix D – to be signed and submitted with bid)
- (v) Master Services Agreement (Appendix E – any redlines must be returned with bid or will not be considered)
- (vi) Draft Statement of Work (Appendix F)
- (vii) Certificate of Insurance (sample provided, selected Bidder to submit)

H: BIDDER DOCUMENTS

- (i) Any additional supporting documents that the Bidder wishes to attach.

6 INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

6.1 General

All bidders should carefully examine the contents of this RFP. Any ambiguities or inconsistencies shall be brought to the attention of the appropriate contact listed below. Failure to do so will constitute acceptance by the bidder of any subsequent interpretation or decision by PSE. Only written interpretations will be binding upon the project team. No interpretation of the meaning of this RFP will be made orally.

By execution of this form of proposal, the Bidder agrees to furnish all labor, materials, and equipment necessary to complete the project in compliance with the Scope of Work and other provisions and documents included in this RFP. All costs associated with participation in this RFP process are the sole responsibility of the respondent.

Due to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic, PSE anticipates that all communications with IE bidders and with the ultimate winning bidder during the course of its work will occur remotely. Bidders should be equipped and experienced with using common and prevailing telecommunications applications and platforms.

6.2 Questions

The release of the RFP begins a quiet period for Bidders participating in this project. Bidders should not call PSE employees with the intent of discussing the project or asking questions regarding the RFP.

However, we realize it is critical to provide Bidders a vehicle to ask questions so that quality responses can be prepared. Responses to all questions will be provided in writing to all Bidders without identifying which company posed the question. The last date for question submittal is found on the Project Timeline.

All questions should be submitted via e-mail as follows:

All rights reserved. Information and descriptions contained herein are the property of Puget Sound Energy. Such information and descriptions may not be copied or reproduced by any means, or distributed without express prior written permission and standard non-disclosure agreements by all parties.

Deanna Roshau, Sourcing Manager
deanna.roshau@pse.com
425-424-7997

6.3 Preparation of Proposals

All bids shall conform to the response format specified herein. The Bid Form shall be duly executed by the Bidder and any interlineations, alterations or modifications to the Bid Form or any documents shall be explained in writing and initialed by the Bidder. The completed Bid Form shall specify the full legal name and business address of the Bidder (and the Bidder's street address if it differs from its business address). Bids by a partnership or joint venture shall list the full legal names and addresses of all partners and joint venturers. Bids by a corporation shall specify the place of the corporation's incorporation. The name of each signatory shall be typed or otherwise clearly imprinted below each signature. Satisfactory evidence of authority of any signatory to sign on behalf of the Bidder shall be furnished by the Bidder upon request of PSE.

6.4 Submission of Proposals

Proposals shall be submitted via e-mail to deanna.roshau@pse.com as an attached Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF document. Please note that our e-mail server will not accept e-mails over 10MB or containing .zip files. All proposals shall be received no later than **3 PM Pacific Time** on Wednesday, December 23, 2020.

6.5 Examination of Bid Documents

Each Bidder shall carefully examine the RFP documents and all addenda. If a Bidder (a) finds discrepancies, omissions, or ambiguities in the RFP documents, (b) is uncertain as to the intent or meaning of any provision of the RFP documents, or (c) has questions regarding the RFP documents, the Bidder shall promptly notify PSE thereof in writing at the appropriate email address specified above. Replies to such notices may be made in the form of addenda which will be issued simultaneously to all Bidders who have obtained the RFP documents from PSE.

Please be advised that Puget Sound Energy Inc. has certain and specific expectations of entities with which we do business. Please review these "Responsible Contractor Guidelines" as well as PSE's "Corporate Ethics and Compliance Code", both located on pse.com at the following links:

<http://pse.com/aboutpse/VendorsSuppliers/Pages/Supplier-Contractor-Guidelines.aspx>

<http://www.pugetenergy.com/pages/codeethics.html>

6.6 Substitutions

To obtain approval of substitutions, Bidders shall submit a written request thereof so as to be received by PSE no later than five (5) calendar days prior to the date above for the submission of responses. Each request shall set forth a complete description of the substitution for which approval is sought, together with all data and other information necessary to demonstrate comparability of the substitution.

Any approval by PSE of any substitution proposed by Bidders will be made in the form of addenda which will be issued simultaneously to all Bidders who have obtained the RFP documents from PSE.

PSE reserves the right to withhold its approval of any or all substitutions proposed by Bidders and to deny any or all requests for such approvals.

6.7 Modifications or Withdrawals of Responses

A Bidder may modify or withdraw its response by written (including electronic) request, provided that the request is received by PSE at the address and prior to the time specified above for the submission of responses. Following withdrawal of its response, a Bidder may submit a new response, provided that such new response is received by PSE at the address and prior to the time specified above.

PSE may modify any provision of the RFP documents at any time prior to the time specified above for the submission of responses. Such modifications will be made in the form of addenda that will be issued simultaneously to all persons who have obtained the RFP documents from PSE.

6.8 Award or Rejections of Bids

Bids will be opened privately and PSE reserves the right to keep any and all responses confidential. Bidders should be aware that PSE may be required to share bid information with the Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission, subject to the terms and conditions of the Mutual Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix D).

Interviews with selected Bidders via video conferencing may be scheduled on the dates indicated in the RFP Schedule in 1.3 above, to review and discuss the Project.

All responses are subject to further negotiation. The contract, if awarded, will be awarded on the basis and after consideration of the requirements, evaluation criteria and proposal contents in sections 3, 4, and 5 above, and any other factors deemed pertinent by PSE.

PSE reserves the right to reject any or all responses or to waive any informality in the responses or bidding.

6.9 Contract Execution

Prior to execution of the contract, the Bidder to whom the contract is awarded shall deliver to PSE the signed Declaration Regarding Conflict of Interest, Mutual Confidentiality Agreement, certificate(s) of insurance and any other documents specified in the RFP.

If requested by PSE, the successful Bidder shall assist and cooperate with PSE in preparing the formal contract. Within five (5) days after presentation of the formal contract, the successful Bidder shall duly execute the same and return it for execution by PSE. No binding contract will exist between the successful Bidder and PSE until they have each executed a written formal contract. PSE reserves the right to withdraw this RFP at any time before a written formal contract has been executed.

All RFP documents shall remain the property of PSE. If requested by PSE, the unsuccessful Bidders shall return all RFP documents to PSE at the address specified above, without mutilation, marks or annotation.