

Northern Colorado Partners for Clean Energy Releases Second Review of Platte River Power Authority's "Zero Net Carbon" Analysis

Review Highlights Opportunities for PRPA to Transition to a Renewable Energy Future

For Immediate Release: Tuesday, April 3rd, 2018

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Longmont, CO. Today, Northern Colorado Partners for Clean Energy (NCP4CE) released a second, more detailed review of the Zero Net Carbon (ZNC) analysis that Platte River Power Authority (PRPA) finalized in December of 2017. The new critique, which was prepared by the Salt Lake City-based consulting firm Energy Strategies, clearly demonstrates that the ZNC analysis underestimates opportunities in the rapidly evolving energy marketplace that make transitioning to 100% renewable energy sources achievable by 2030. "In addition to identifying missed opportunities in the ZNC report, the Energy Strategies study will help to inform a path forward for Longmont, Fort Collins, Loveland, and Estes Park to achieve 100% renewable energy by 2030," said Abby Driscoll, Chair of the Board of Directors for Sustainable Resilient Longmont.

PRPA released its ZNC analysis after stakeholders from its four owner communities expressed interest in reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with their electric power. The analysis found that PRPA could achieve a ZNC electricity profile by 2030 with costs that are only 8% higher than "business as usual" on a net present value basis - a surprisingly small difference, particularly given the value of the public health and environmental benefits from the carbon reductions.

"The ZNC Analysis went a long way towards making the economic case for Platte River to begin to transition to a zero carbon or 100% renewable resource portfolio," said Zach Pierce of the Sierra Club, a member of NCP4CE. "The use of more reasonable and current cost assumptions for renewable energy and battery storage could easily have resulted in the ZNC portfolio actually being the 'least cost' portfolio."

While the ZNC study presents a positive path forward for Platte River's transition to renewables, the Energy Strategies analysis points out several areas where the report underestimated this opportunity. Energy Strategies calls attention to the following issues in the ZNC report:

1. Overly conservative estimate of declining costs of renewable energy technologies and battery storage technologies;
2. Exclusion of storage technologies such as batteries from the model;
3. Inadequate modeling of demand side resources (efficiency, demand response, and distributed generation); and
4. Overly conservative future pricing of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

The Energy Strategies review also highlights that ZNC accounting is "an unreliable measure of actual carbon dioxide emission reductions" that has not "been adopted by any existing or proposed regulatory framework." It goes on to call on the PRPA to abandon this accounting scheme and instead work with its owner municipalities and stakeholders to "establish CO₂ reduction goals...that would be achieved within a specified time period."

Following Energy Strategies' recommendation, NCP4CE is calling for the inclusion of a robust stakeholder engagement process in the development of the PRPA's next Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), which will likely commence later this year. That IRP, which will be in effect through 2025, should set the stage for the achievement of 100% renewable electricity by 2030. The member organizations of the NCP4CE look forward to contributing to that development effort.

The Energy Strategies critique of the PRPA's ZNC analysis is attached to this news release and is also available [here](#).

The NCP4CE's first review of the PRPA's ZNC analysis, which was prepared by the Catalyst Coop and released on December 18th, 2017, is available [here](#).

The member organizations of the NCP4CE are: 350 Northern Colorado, Colorado Sierra Club, Community for Sustainable Energy, Environment Colorado, the Estes Valley Clean Energy Coalition, the Fort Collins Sustainability Group, the Northern Colorado Renewable Energy Society, Renewables Now Loveland, Sustainable Resilient Longmont, and Transition Fort Collins.

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