

March 30, 2010

Good morning, Mr. Chairperson and fellow commissioners. My name is Rosemarie Ives of 807 Mohegan Trail and Redmond, Washington. Thank you for having a change of mind in conducting this public hearing on the island.

I want to express my appreciation to everyone participating here today regardless of position or opinion because it's clear we all love Block Island regardless of our 'status'—natives, recent-to-the-island year 'rounders who have come to escape the maddening crowds of life on the mainland, part-timers, or cottagers like our family's five generations who have owned our place 'on the rock' for 90 years.

Since last fall, I have researched, investigated, reviewed and analyzed as much as I could—the complexity of utilities is mind-numbing. I submitted a very lengthy letter previously but I'd like to take a few minutes to tell you why we flew 3000 miles from Seattle to be here today.

My expertise and experience is in government. Early on I learned that most laws are created because of an abuse by the few at the expense of the public. I started out as an appointed then an elected--trained, briefed, counseled on procedural standards on how to be or not be as an 'agent of the people': quasi-judicial, arbitrary and capricious, precedent-setting, gift of public funds, etc. But the most important standard was and is the standard of fairness.

As the 16-year mayor of Redmond, Washington, where we reside when not on Block Island, one of my most important responsibilities was to provide and assure that all proceedings and processes were not only fair but also appear fair. The government proceedings on this proposal thus far at every level prior to the PUC have NOT been fair to the people of Rhode Island including Block Island and they have NOT appeared fair.

At the heart of my opposition is a quote from Deepwater's own CEO, Mr. Moore, in his response to a PUC request for information: "This project is not an energy demonstration project. It IS a demonstration project for fast-tracking procedures and processes. I have dealt with all kinds of developers. "Fast-track" is developer-speak for dismantling public protections within adopted and established procedures and regulations set up to prevent corruption and abuse that benefit the few at the expense of the many.

The PUC has been under extreme and perhaps excruciating pressure to approve the agreement that benefits the few at the expense of the many. PUCs are usually charged with rate-setting that is commercially reasonable for projects that are already constructed or have capped costs. This IS NOT the case here. Proponents want the PUC to consider many more factors not about the speculative project before them today but on the promised benefits of a yet-to-be determined future mega project that is years away. The devil is in the details.

Perhaps my opposition goes back to those 16 years of catholic schools that was ingrained in me so long ago and has guided me personally and politically: “The ends NEVER justify the means.”

I ask the PUC to not abandon its basic responsibility and core values.

I have reviewed most of the 50 documents on line on the PUC’s website. I want to commend the commissioners for their substantive questions and requests for information. The PUC received the most pertinent and significant testimony from the consultant hired by the Department of Utilities, Mr. Hahn on Finances who is the only expert with the public’s interests at the forefront. You received outstanding testimony from others with their own particular interests and areas of expertise: Mr. Farley of The RI Energy Council and Mr. Beauregard.

The PUC has more than sufficient facts and data to reject this proposal outright. Please do so.

Thank you for your time, your attention, and your consideration.