

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPORTING AFFORDABLE ENERGY CHOICES FOR WHATCOM COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, during the 2024 legislative session, the Washington State Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute Bill (ESHB) 1589; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 28, 2024, Washington Governor Jay Inslee signed ESHB 1589 into law; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the bill report, ESHB mandates, among other requirements, that Puget Sound Energy (PSE) file an integrated system plan (ISP) with the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) that consolidates PSE’s planning requirements for both gas and electric operations into a single ISP; and

**WHEREAS**, transitioning homes and businesses from natural gas to electric service can be very costly for homeowners and business owners thus drastically affecting affordability; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Building Industry Association of Washington, the cost to convert a home currently served by natural gas to electric is approximately \$40,000; and

**WHEREAS**, the costs to upgrade the current electrical system will be borne by rate payers, rather than PSE; and

**WHEREAS**, combining natural gas and electric service will result in expensive upgrades for individual homeowners as well as system improvements which will further burden customers; and

**WHEREAS**, the provisions of ESHB 1589 do not give any predictability with regard to timeline or costs for customers subject to the transition from natural gas to electric service; and

**WHEREAS**, a June 2023 Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults found that 68% thought the U.S. should use a mix of energy sources including oil, coal, and natural gas along with renewable sources, while only 31% said the U.S. should phase out the use of oil, coal, and natural gas completely, relying instead on renewable sources; and

**WHEREAS**, the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals determined that the federal Energy Policy and Conservation Act (“EPCA”), which prohibits natural gas infrastructure, expressly preempts state and local regulations concerning energy use of natural gas appliances; and

