Western Resource Advocates

Executive Biography

Sophie Hayes

Utah Clean Energy Manager/Senior Attorney

As the Utah clean energy manager at Western Resource Advocates (WRA), Sophie Hayes represents the organization in state regulatory proceedings and other policy-making forums, with a particular focus on the Utah Public Service Commission. She advocates for policies that will transition the electric grid from the current inflexible and polluting fossil-fueled version to one that is clean, efficient, and smart. Her work emphasizes renewable resources, grid decarbonization, energy efficiency, and utility-regulatory policies that mitigate and adapt to the harms of a changing climate.

Hayes joined WRA in 2018 as a senior attorney. She works in tandem with other team members, including government affairs and policy staff, to ensure efforts are coordinated for the biggest possible impact, always with an eye to the interconnected nature of the policies they pursue and their impacts on the lives and livelihoods in the West.

As a Salt Lake attorney and member of the Utah State Bar, she focuses on public utility law and the transition to cleaner energy. Prior work included private practice, as well as eight years at Utah Clean Energy, directing their regulatory intervention and representing them in regulatory proceedings related to integrated resource planning, net metering, renewable resource acquisition, and energy efficiency.

A Utah native, Hayes isn't the first in her family to embrace the West's natural resources. Her grandparents were naturalists, often taking her bird watching and rock collecting. Her grandfather was a geologist, and her grandmother was an environmental advocate in their community. It's a legacy Hayes is proud to continue.

She relishes the opportunity to create positive change and does so at every turn. Hayes was instrumental in the effort to set PacifiCorp (Utah's primary electrical utility) on a path to faster decarbonization. When the utility wanted to expand Utah's dependency on coal-based power, she helped to secure a settlement that meant the utility would have to prove the move would be in the public interest. Hayes also successfully litigated before the Utah Public Service Commission, which resulted in one gigawatt of utility-scale solar development, making Utah the sixth in the nation for installed capacity at the time.

Hayes sits on the Western Electricity Coordinating Council's Member Advisory Committee, as well as on the board of HEAL Utah (Healthy Environment Alliance of Utah), an environmental advocacy organization.

She holds two degrees from Brigham Young University, including a Juris Doctor from J. Reuben Clark Law School and a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology with a sociocultural emphasis.

Hayes currently resides in Utah with her cat Agate and appreciates living near to most of her siblings. She enjoys hiking, reading, and cooking, particularly various tasty sauces to accompany roasted vegetables. She also loves walks along the Jordan River Parkway, table-top games, and planning elaborate parties and Halloween costumes with her nephew.

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