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www.klickpud.com

Goldendale Office
1313 S. Columbus Ave.
(509) 773-5891
(800) 548-8357

White Salmon Office
110 NE Estes Ave. • P.O. Box 187
(509) 493-2255
(800) 548-8358

Renewable Energy Legislation

There is a lot of talk in Olympia about the state of Washington adopting a Renewable Portfolio Standard or RPS.

An RPS is a requirement for utilities to get a portion of their electricity from renewable sources, such as hydropower from dams, wind, solar and biomass.

This makes sense. Generally, I am not in favor of passing laws to make you do what you are going to do anyway, but I do support the concept of having a major portion of your electricity generated from renewable sources.

Washington is already one of the leading producers of renewable energy. Hydropower is clean, and the water to run the turbines is renewed each time it rains.

The problem with hydropower is most all of the available sites have been developed, yet loads are still growing. Therefore, new sources of power are needed, and adding additional renewable generation makes sense.

Wind, solar and biomass—such as our landfill gas project—should play a major role in new generation resources. Washington has one of the lowest ratios of atmospheric emissions and greenhouse gases per kilowatt produced.

For a time, it looked like most of the new generation was going to be from Combustion Turbines (CTs) such as one we have here in Goldendale. While the emission record of the newer generation CTs is good, renewables are better. Renewable generation is not only the better choice for the environment, it is also a cost-effective choice when compared to using fossil fuels, such as natural gas.

Here in Klickitat County, we are blessed with an abundance of resource opportunities. Wind power is being developed in the eastern part of the county. This, together with an expanding source of landfill gas, will provide opportunity for Klickitat County to supply clean renewable generation for our residents, as well as others around the state.

Solar also is abundant throughout Klickitat County. Solar installations are becoming more commonplace. One day, people may be incorporating solar systems into all of their building plans. Any assistance provided by an RPS will help speed that day's arrival.

Here at Klickitat PUD, we support renewable generation. We are doing something to back up our convictions. KPUD is working to develop new generation from both wind and biomass. We also have one of the most active solar programs in the state.

Next time you flip on that light switch, we want you to be a leader in the use of clean renewable generation.

Tom D. Svendsen, General Manager

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