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The Pacific Northwest Climate Solution

In listening to the climate debate, it becomes obvious that Northwest public power and Washington PUDs specifically have an important opportunity to shape the debate and forge a vision of the future that enhances not only the PUDs' position, but the Pacific Northwest's leadership role in environmental stewardship. PUDs can and need to provide the leadership to offer a solution that makes economic and environmental sense.

The Washington Public Utility District Association (WPUDA) proposes a menu of options available to the electric sector in the Northwest for reducing greenhouse gases to 15 percent below 2005 levels—the current target:

- New nonhydro renewable energy projects such as wind and solar.
- Conversion of the region's two existing coal-burning power plants to state-of-the-art combined-cycle combustion turbine technology (CCCT) or to intermediate plants.
- Reclamation of lost hydro systems. Assuming 1,000 megawatts of lost hydro was replaced by current typical CCCT technology, reclaiming lost hydro would reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) by 3 million tons, and allow integration of more renewable energy.
- Aggressive goals for additional new and incremental hydro.
- Ultimately, baseload energy will be best served by noncarbon emitting generation. Nuclear energy needs to play a prominent role in meeting this need.

Others have limited solutions by not allowing themselves to include a vision of a Pacific Northwest without any coal-fired generation facilities or a vision of increasing the hydro system.

The two existing regional coal plants transport the coal nearly 1,000 miles to burn it for electricity production. There are many more environmentally efficient ways to make electricity.

PUDs are championing the hydro system. We advocate protection, reclamation and enhancement for the use of clean renewable hydropower to solve the CO₂ dilemma. The Northwest Public Power Council's CO₂ footprint paper clearly demonstrates that greenhouse gas emissions increase due to spill and dam removal. Scientists often have wondered why the fish runs have declined both on river systems with and without dams. They have now come to the conclusion that warming of the earth may be the culprit.

Dams may actually be the answer, not the problem.

Tom Svendsen, General Manager

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