

after the draft EIS was issued.

Of interest to PUDs, the final EIS's Preferred Alternative includes a modified flexible spill approach to dam operations that attempts to balance fish benefits and energy, as well as other policy objectives, by increasing spring spill to aid juvenile fish passage. Notably, the preferred alternative does not include dam breaching; finding it inconsistent with several of the objectives for the Columbia River system of dams established by the U.S. Congress. As well as responding to substantive comments made in response to the February 2020 draft EIS, the final EIS assesses the environmental, social and economic benefits and consequences of the four principal alternatives considered for improved integrated operations. According to the final EIS, the preferred alternative will minimally impact the power grid:

“Hydropower generation decreases under the Preferred Alternative by 210 aMW, assuming average water, ... reliability is comparable to that of the No Action Alternative because other measures increase hydropower generation slightly in the winter, and more substantially in late August, and increase hydropower flexibility in some locations and periods. Therefore, no additional resources are needed to maintain regional reliability at [a level comparable to] the No Action Alternative level.”

The co-lead agencies plan to release a joint Record of Decision in September 2020 documenting which alternative evaluated in the final EIS will be selected for implementation.

WPUDA, PPC and other groups will continue to review the final EIS. The final EIS is available for review on EPA's searchable EIS database: <https://cdxnodengn.epa.gov/cdx-enepa-public/action/eis/search> and the project website: www.crsi.info.