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Spring 2003

The Energy Activist

NW Energy Coalition



Bonneville in crisis



Fix the present, safeguard the future

From the director

To know us is to trust us



Last April, Seattle City Light conducted focus groups that rated the credibility of local politicians, newspapers and community groups. We learned the results in a February Seattle Times story. The nominees included the two daily papers, City Light itself, the Federal Energy

Regulatory Commission, the Mayor and three public interest organizations.

And the winner was ... the NW Energy Coalition!

We rated 6.6 on a scale in which “10” means the participants completely trust/believe us and “1” means they don’t trust or believe us at all. The low score was 4.2; FERC finished seventh (out of 10) at 5.1. An asterisk in The Times story noted that not many participants recognized the Coalition.

Both the rating and the asterisked information speak to – and well of — the very essence of the Coalition. First, our credibility with people who pay close attention to energy issues must be exemplary. It is.

Second, as a coalition, we do not strive to be a household word. Our members have large individual memberships and a strong interest in name recognition. We have a strong interest in bringing the combined influence of our very diverse members and allies to bear on the policy decisions they all care about. Our relative anonymity reflects our success in promoting our members’ joint agendas.

I believe our high credibility score is a proud reflection of two crucial coalition assets: a very capable staff and our Coalition members’ and allies’ enormous breadth of expertise and wisdom.

A good recent example is the hearing on the Energy Portfolio Standards bill in the Washington state legislature. Four panels of supporters testified: renewables developers organized by the Renewable Northwest Project; rural and eastern Washington residents organized by NWSEED; consumers (including an economist and two greenhouse gas activists) organized by Wash-PIRG; and energy-efficiency businesses organized by the Northwest Energy Efficiency Council. All the panel organizers were Coalition stalwarts and partners in this legislative effort.

After the panels, the committee took general testimony. The Coalition batted cleanup, answering legislators’ questions and responding to points made by opponents.

The Coalition doesn’t need to be in the foreground. Our role is to present the facts and to bring the diverse voices for clean and affordable energy to the table. The City Light study says we must be doing a pretty good job.

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Citizens Energy Campaign's clean energy vision: An economic engine with environmental benefits

Another budget-busting, low-water year has wedged the Bonneville Power Administration between a rock and a hard place. Utilities, still smarting from BPA's 2001 rate hike, are asking Bonneville to avoid an increase. Meanwhile, invaluable energy conservation, renewables and wild salmon recovery programs hang in the balance.

NW Energy Coalition has been working with its members and allies over the last year to create a new vision of a clean and affordable energy future. The Coalition commissioned a study by the Tellus Institute that showed an enormous reservoir of cost-effective energy efficiency and renewable energy in the region.

The Citizens Energy Plan is the centerpiece of the Coalition's campaign to steer the region toward a reliable, clean and affordable energy future. The plan details the policies, programs and actions that will deliver that amazing potential.

Just as the fledgling Coalition's Model Conservation Plan became the model for the Northwest Power Planning Council's first Northwest Power and Conservation Plan in 1981, the Citizens Energy Plan will strongly influence the Council's fifth Power and Conservation Plan, due out in draft this autumn.

The Citizens Energy Campaign (CEC) will unite policymakers, activists, and business and labor leaders around energy policies that will nurture the regional economy and decrease electric rates while delivering a cleaner energy supply. New clean energy will help restore Columbia Basin wild salmon by reducing our reliance on hydropower.

A Tellus Institute study and a recent RAND study illustrate the practicality of the Campaign's goals. They found that we can diversify our energy portfolio, create jobs, meet growing electricity demand AND keep costs down by investing in conservation and renewable resources.

The Citizens Energy Campaign features:

- The Citizens Energy Plan — a comprehensive policy prescription for the region and for each state in the Coalition.
- A traveling visual presentation of clean energy solutions, designed to educate and inspire concerned citizens and activists.
- Outreach to business and labor leaders.
- Outreach materials to educate decisionmakers and motivate members and activists.

We can diversify our energy portfolio, create jobs, meet growing electricity demand AND keep costs down by investing in conservation and renewable resources.

BPA, state legislators and utilities can craft a sustainable energy plan and require only the political will to do the right thing for our region's businesses, communities, consumers and environment.

To volunteer for the Campaign, visit the Coalition Web site — www.nwenergy.org — where you also can learn more about the Tellus study, the RAND study and Bonneville Power Administration's rate case.

— Rob Gala



The Energy Activist

Founded in 1981, the NW Energy Coalition is dedicated to the pursuit of clean and affordable energy. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, all donations to the NW Energy Coalition are tax-deductible.

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Report highlights need for Salmon Planning Act Administration flunks restoration test again

2003 marks Year 3 of the new federal salmon plan for the Columbia and Snake Rivers. Despite President Bush's campaign promises, the Administration has shown little interest in restoring Northwest wild salmon. The lack of commitment fails wild salmon, fishing families and Northwest communities, and heightens the need for action in Congress.

A Plan Undone

The Administration's much-touted Salmon Plan is supposed to restore wild salmon, honor tribal treaties, and protect fishing communities that depend on salmon for their livelihood. While the Plan agrees with the prevailing scientific view that removing four dams on the lower Snake River is the surest path to recovery, it proposes instead "aggressive non-break" measures.

These "other measures" form a familiar list, which includes barging and trucking baby salmon downstream past the lethal dams and reservoirs. Such measures have been tried over the last 25 years, at costs exceeding \$3 billion, and have proved abject failures. The big difference under the new plan? Federal promises that they are really serious this time: more money for more measures and full implementation. So far, it looks like more empty promises.

'Report Card' Gives Administration an F

In their recently released "Salmon Plan Report Card," conservation organizations and sport and commercial fishing associations gave the federal

Ask your Representative to help restore wild salmon and protect the communities and economies that depend on them by co-sponsoring the Salmon Planning Act. Call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

For more information, visit: www.wildsalmon.org/spa



government another F. For the second year in a row, the feds have failed to fund or implement their own recovery plan. In its first two years, the Bush Administration has requested only about half the money necessary. Worse, federal agencies have implemented only roughly one-quarter of the required actions. And the situation is worsening — the Administration's FY2004 budget request reflects a 5-percent decrease from 2003.

Congress and the Salmon Planning Act

In July 2001, U.S. Reps. Jim McDermott (D-Wash.) and Tom Petri (R-Wis.) introduced the Salmon Planning Act, which would provide provisional authority to federal agencies to remove the four lower Snake River dams should independent scientific analysis confirm the need to do so. The Act also funds studies on how to protect communities, maintain energy supplies, and improve the transportation infrastructure to move goods in the event of dam removal.

In late February of this year, original sponsors McDermott and Petri re-introduced the Salmon Planning Act in Congress. At print time, at least 65 House members had joined them. Moving the Act forward, however, requires determined leadership from the region's congressional delegation. At this point, Washington's McDermott remains the Northwest's only Salmon Planning Act supporter.

— *Joseph Bogaard*

Low-income assistance must rise with rates

Low-income households are still feeling the bite of the 2001 power shortages. Electric rates that shot up as much as 50 percent during the crisis placed extra burdens on retirees and low-wage earners who typically occupy the least-efficient homes. As this winter began, utilities reported heavy increases in the number of customers receiving shut-off notices. Snohomish PUD cut power to 13,633 residences from January through October 2002, 43 percent more than during the same period of in 2001.

Bonneville Power Administration will likely raise rates this fall, increasing the pain of already high energy bills. Boosting investment in efficiency improvements for low-income residences is imperative. As it is, utility budgets for home weatherization and other energy services generally fall far short of the need.

A recent RAND report provides a glimpse of the extent of the problem. Only about 64 percent of households earning less than \$5,000 per year have ceiling insulation, compared to 91 percent of households earning more than \$50,000. The poorer households also are much more likely to own a refrigerator more than 20 years old, and live in homes built before 1980 that typically use 43 percent more electricity than newer homes.

Nationwide, poorer households spend 8 percent of their incomes on electricity (the very poorest spend up to 23 percent), while electricity consumes only 2 percent of a median-income household's budget.

Northwest consumer advocates have reacted to

'Taking the Stand' a grand success

Michael Karp and the Coalition's Low-Income Organizing Network held the second "Taking the Stand Workshop" in the San Juan Islands in December. The workshop focused on teaching low-income advocates and community action agency staff skills for working successfully with legislative and administrative bodies. Presenters included Teri Ottens of Idaho Community Action Association, Oregon Citizens' Utility Board representatives Jason Eisdorfer and Jeff Bissonette, and Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission administrative law judge Bob Wallis.

Save the date!

Karp is also executive director of A World Institute for a Sustainable Humanity, which is putting on the second Washington State REACH conference May 14 at the Chelan County PUD in Wenatchee, Wash. The conference is designed for utilities, regulators, legislators, community action agencies, state departments, advocates and all interested parties. Participation is free. For more information, email awish@awish.net or go to www.awish.net

Low-Income Network prepares for rate case

The Low-Income Organizing Network is mobilizing around the BPA rate case. The Bonneville Power Administration has triggered the safety net cost recovery adjustment clause (SN CRAC), which could lead to an October wholesale rate hike of up to 15 percent.

Severe cost reductions are on the table. Based on the Comprehensive Review in the mid 1990s, the governors of the four Northwest states suggested 0.4 percent of retail revenues as the target for funding low-income weatherization. That would translate to nearly \$18 million today, though BPA's current direct investment is roughly \$3.5 million.

For more information, contact Steve Weiss (steve@nwenergy.org) or Rob Gala (rob@nwenergy.org)

Bonneville's rate-increase proposal by calling for the agency to commit to a larger low-income weatherization program. BPA directly spends about \$3.5 million a year on low-income services – far less than is needed – but recently convened a work group to study how more assistance might be distributed.

– Kevin Fullerton

Curing Bonneville's woes for today

Bonneville Power Administrator Steven Wright faces a difficult decision. Some want his agency to cover its \$920 million shortfall with heavy borrowing. Others say Bonneville should make draconian cuts in both capital and operations budgets. Suggestions range from emptying cash reserves to outright gambling on a major sales revenue rebound over the next two years.

A haunting refrain emerges from the chorus: "No Rate Increase." Consumers are still reeling from the 45-percent wholesale rate hike BPA levied barely two years ago. Now Wright's talking about anywhere from a 12- to 15-percent jump ALONG WITH some \$850 million in budget hacking.

So what's Wright to do?

NW Energy Coalition believes BPA cannot budget-cut its way out of its deficit without endangering its economic health and the health of the region's air, water, wildlife and human communities. Excessive borrowing will merely mortgage the agency's future for fleeting relief in the present.

Bonneville must chart a middle road, a third path. The agency should mix prudent budget cuts, some use of less-risky financial management tools, and an as-small-as-possible rate hike to right its fiscal ship. And it must recognize that sustained investments in conservation, renewables and fish are the long-term solutions, not the cause of Bonneville's problems.

Here's what we propose:

■ Budget Cuts

Bonneville administrators already have made \$350 million in program and operational cuts, and have proposed another \$500 million in budget reductions between now and 2006. Some cuts should go forward, such as delaying advance purchase of uranium and an expensive refurbishing of

the Columbia Generating Station nuclear plant.

However, the fiscal paring knife has sliced some \$21 million from BPA's planned investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency investments, undermining long-term rate stability and leaving us more vulnerable to risky and expensive wholesale power markets and

droughts.

The last rush to cut costs from conservation budgets, in the mid 1990s, reduced the region's energy efficiency programs to shambles and significantly deepened the impact of the 2000-01 energy crisis. Maintaining those efficiency programs would have saved Bonneville from having to purchase an estimated \$200 million to \$300 million of power from the market in 2000 alone. (Seattle City Light says its energy efficiency programs have saved it \$100 million.)

Saving energy generates revenue — lots of it. BPA has been able to acquire a kilowatt-hour of conservation for less than 2 cents, then sell that saved energy in the market for 4 cents per kWh or more. Clearly, Bonneville must not reduce

and tomorrow



its efficiency investments.

Salmon also are taking an oversized hit. In addition to all the other taken and proposed cuts, BPA recently sought and gained approval from the Northwest Power and Conservation Council to carve approximately \$40 million from its fish and wildlife program funds for the current fiscal year. At least the Council drew the line on further reductions, noting that spending by fishery agencies is carefully monitored and under-budget, and should not be used as a reserve fund when BPA gets into trouble. When “rates are collected to pay for those fish and wildlife obligations,” the Council wrote Bonneville on Feb. 21, “it is unacceptable that funds are not available when those obligations come due.”

Bottom line: Bonneville has to make cuts. But it should place its public-purpose investments in fish restoration, energy conservation and renewables in a dedicated fund and treat the programs as substantial multi-year missions to be sustained over time — not subject to the risks of the power business.

■ Financial Management Tools

BPA has identified various financial management options that could reduce short term costs.

Two strike us as reasonable. One, Bonneville has been making its U.S. Treasury repayments on a sort of budget plan — paying the same amount each year even though the payment exceeds the actual amount due. Sending the minimum would stretch out the repayment schedule, but help the current bottom line.

Two, Bonneville should borrow for salmon-related land acquisitions and a portion of the cost of some new transmission lines rather than paying for them out of pocket.

Other suggestions include harvesting some of the \$315 million from refinancing Energy Northwest bonds at lower interest rates (which could damage BPA’s bond rating).

Bottom line: Given the poor economy, a limited amount — perhaps \$100 million — of borrowing is reasonable at this time. Speculative or risky accounting options could crack the agency’s fiscal foundations.

■ Rates

Customers like stable rates. BPA in the past has set rates for several years at a time. To do that, however, Bonneville needs \$600 million or more in reserves to deal with swings in precipitation (a rainy, or not-so-rainy day fund) and unpredictable market prices for its surplus energy sales.

Unforeseen events, such as severe drought or dysfunctional markets, can render rates inadequate in the middle of a rate period, putting BPA into the kind of deep trouble it’s in today. NW Energy Coalition and BPA’s utility customers have proposed that rates be set yearly, which would cut BPA’s reserve needs in half.

Bottom line: The cost cuts (however painful), limited borrowing and year-to-year ratemaking discussed above still leave BPA about \$300-400 million short between now and the end of 2006. That would be covered by a wholesale rate hike of 3-5 percent — much less than the 12- to 15-percent increase being considered. Zero’s a great number, but in this case, zero could cost us our clean, dependable energy future. Bonneville can reduce costs and delay investments only so long without jeopardizing the system’s reliability and long-term sustainability.

Bonneville must reduce the impact of the rate hike by increasing its low-income weatherization funding. BPA directly provides some \$3.5 million a year for this program, but as rates increase, the need gets greater.

— Steven Weiss, Nancy Hirsh
and Marc Krasnowsky

Idaho Energy Coalition on clean crusade

NW Energy Coalition's Idaho caucus continues to advance the clean, affordable energy agenda.

- Bill Eddie of Advocates for the West is leading the Coalition charge on two proceedings before the Public Utility Commission. The first involves Idaho Power's failure to truly address the issue of investments in renewable resources and energy efficiency in its 10-year Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). Commissioners defeated a motion for full hearings on the IRP, but sent strong signals to the company about complying with the spirit of the motion.

Eddie also has filed a petition to expand net metering to include PacifiCorp customers in eastern Idaho. Net metering allows consumers to sell excess energy they produce on their own to their electric utility.

- Coalition participation on Idaho Power's Energy Efficiency Advisory Group is paying off. Last fall, Idaho Power distributed coupons toward the purchase of compact fluorescent light bulbs; more programs will be rolled out soon. The Coalition probably will ask the Idaho PUC to increase Idaho Power's investments in demand-side management (programs to reduce energy use during specific times) from the current level of about \$2.5 million per year (0.5 percent of revenues).
- The third Harvesting Clean Energy Conference was held in Boise February 10 and 11. For the first time, the Coalition-sponsored event was combined with the Ag Summit, vividly illustrating Idahoans' growing interest in renewables.
- The Coalition welcomes Idaho Rivers United's new conservation director, Jenna Borovansky. Contact her at jenna@idahorivers.org or phone (208) 343-7481.

Tough sledding for good energy bills in Montana

Very few bills aimed at creating a cleaner, more sustainable energy future for Montana survived the legislature's halfway point. The legislature seems willing to extend the Universal System Benefits (USB) program through the end of 2005; all the bills offering longer extensions were defeated in committee. The USB program raises about \$13 million a year (\$8.2 million in NorthWestern Energy's service territory in 2001) for energy conservation, renewable energy and low-income bill assistance each year. The typical homeowner pays \$1 per month into the fund.

Energy proposals that didn't make the cut included extending Montana's "net metering" law to rural electric cooperatives and Montana-Dakota Utilities, and requiring that NorthWestern obtain 7 percent of its energy from renewable energy sources certified as "environmentally compatible."

Despite support from Secretary of State Bob Brown, the Montana Farmer's Union, the Montana Progressive Labor Caucus and a coalition of consumer and environmental groups, this bill died in committee.

Some Good News

Three positive energy-related resolutions received favorable votes: SJ13 directs the Environmental Quality Council to study Montana's energy-efficiency building codes, which have not been updated since 1995. As passed out of committee, the bill increases the study's scope to include energy efficiency and conservation in general. HJ16 urges Congress to expeditiously extend the federal wind energy production tax credit, which is set to expire the end of this year. HJ26 supports taking "all necessary steps to move Montana into a hydrogen-based economy."

— Pat Judge

Powering Washington's future

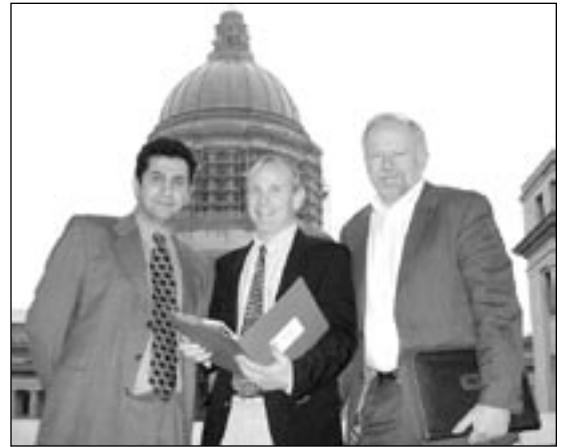
The Washington State Legislature was the scene of an initial foray in the fight for greater energy efficiency and increasing use of renewable energy sources. House Bill 1544, which carried the proposed Energy Portfolio Standard — or EPS — made it through committee but did not reach the House floor.

The EPS proposal, introduced in late January, grew out of months of work by NW Energy Coalition and member groups NW Sustainable Energy for Economic Development (SEED), Renewable Northwest Project and Washington Public Interest Research Group.

Like the better-known Renewable Portfolio Standard adopted by more than a dozen states, the measure would guarantee that a growing percentage of the state's electricity comes from plentiful and home-grown renewable energy sources, such as wind and biomass. Washington's EPS, however, went further by requiring energy efficiency measures as well, thus reducing the statewide demand for electricity.

An Energy Portfolio Standard would create jobs, help family

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Oregon Energy Trust making a splash

Since opening its doors on March 1, 2002, the independent, nonprofit Energy Trust Organization (ETO) has made a mark on Oregon's energy scene. The Trust's new building efficiency program is bringing together some 150 Oregon technical analysts and installation contractors to create a consistent, stable, energy-saving service for commercial, agricultural and industrial facilities.

Through its Home Energy Savings Program, the Trust aims to streamline the traditional home energy audit. In a one-step process, a technician will install a few devices, offer a menu of energy-efficient measures and cash or tax incentives, and recommend three contractors.

A major wind development contract has been negotiated that would increase Oregon's power from wind energy by 20 percent. ETO also has a deal with Northwest Natural to begin delivering gas efficiency programs to Oregon customers.

The Energy Trust posts its white papers and decision documents, as well as information about the organization and its programs, on its website, www.energytrust.org

Going green

As of Jan. 1, more than 35,000 or 3 percent of Portland General Electric and PacifiCorp Power and Light customers had signed up for green energy and other energy-saving options. The response rate exceeds that of similar programs in other states and surprised even the Citizens' Utility Board of Oregon.

New name, new Oregon members at Power Council

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council opened 2003 with a brand-new Oregon delegation. Outgoing Gov. John Kitzhaber named Gene Derfler and Melinda Eden to the four-state board charged with balancing energy production and wildlife protection at Columbia River Basin dams.

Derfler, a Republican legislator then serving as Oregon Senate president, and Eden, a Democrat dairy farmer and former chair of the state's Environmental Control Commission, replaced John Brogoitti and Erich Bloch.

First elected in 1994, Derfler became Senate president in 2001. As a state legislator, the Salem resident worked on behalf of low-cost energy, and advocated a regional takeover of the federal Bonneville Power Administration.

Eden is a Portland native, but now lives in

Milton-Freewater area of rural eastern Oregon. She spent time as an Associated Press reporter, became a natural resources attorney, then married into a farm family. She was appointed to the Environmental Quality Commission in 1996, where she took a special interest in the safety of a U.S. Army chemical weapons incineration project.

In addition to the two Oregon delegates, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (until recently known as the Northwest Power Planning Council) includes a pair of members each from Washington, Idaho and Montana. Idaho's Judi Danielson was elected chair at the Council's January meeting.

— Marc Krasnowsky

New faces adorn NW Energy Coalition office

The NW Energy Coalition has welcomed four new staff members in the past 10 months:



Trina Blake joined the Coalition as Policy Associate in May 2002 after taking two years off from paid employment after having her third child. She had worked as a public defender for The Defender Association the previous 11 years. She joined the Coalition looking forward to doing more "positive" work, and feels her position allows

her to make a difference while tackling something new. So far, she has focused on CO2 regulation in Washington state and green power issues.

Lisa Noble became the Coalition's newest Outreach Associate in June. She comes to the Coalition from People For Puget Sound where she worked in Olympia doing outreach. She is happy to be doing work across a broad range of issues. Lisa, who moved to Washington from Virginia four years ago, is no Southern belle, though she really misses sweetened tea, a phenomenon that, sadly, never made it west.



Kevin Fullerton ended a 5-year career in alternative journalism to join the Coalition as Communication Associate in July. He covered the wind energy revolution in Texas as a writer for The Austin Chronicle, and absorbed himself in Northwest energy issues at the Seattle Weekly. Kevin is much more careful with the facts now that he writes for the NW Energy Coalition Report and the Activist. Someday he hopes to farm organic produce and perhaps the wind, too, while he's at it.



Marc Krasnowsky was named Communications Director in mid February. A Seattle native, he spent many years in the Midwest as a daily newspaper environment and utilities reporter and science writer/editor. He sees his new position — which involves both media relations and NWECC publications — as an opportunity to meld his professional experience with his concerns for social justice and the environment.



People

In memoriam Chris Attneave: A clean energy pioneer

The NW Energy Coalition lost one of its earliest and most committed activists in December. Chris Attneave succumbed to worsening health problems and died at her home in Spencer's Butte, Ore., at age 69.

Chris earned an enduring place in Pacific Northwest history through her strong and early challenges to unbridled power-plant building. She won amendments to the Northwest Power Act of 1980 that de-emphasized plant construction. The past two decades have proven her prescience.

A Coalition board member recalled Chris's "dogged persistence for the common good," which helped shape a movement for common-sense energy policy in the Northwest. Chris believed social change could happen only when ordinary citizens gave their time and energy to work together against unwise policies.

Her vision eventually coalesced into the NW Energy Coalition. To the end, she remained a vital

champion of the Coalition's mission, and became an indelible part of the organization's history.

A memorial for Chris was held Jan. 12 on the University of Oregon campus. Energy Coalition staff, board members and friends will miss her impassioned wisdom and selfless work on behalf of us all.

Washington

Continued from page 9

farmers, increase state and local revenues, and stabilize electricity rates — without increased taxes.

HB1544 remains alive for 2004. The concepts underlying the proposal are sound and should resonate with the public and with legislators on both sides of the aisle in legislative sessions to come.

— Lisa Noble

Yes!

I want to join the fight for clean and affordable energy to protect consumers and the environment.

I want to support the Coalition. My check is enclosed.

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Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters — Regional
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Portland Energy Conservation Inc. — OR
Portland General Electric — OR
Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans — WA
Renewable Northwest Project — Regional
Rivers Council Of Washington — WA
Salmon For All — OR
Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition — Regional
Seattle Audubon Society — WA
Seattle City Light — WA
Sierra Club — National
Sierra Club of British Columbia — BC
Snohomish County PUD — WA
Solar Energy Association of Oregon — OR
Solar Information Center — OR
Solar Washington — WA
South Central Idaho Community Action Agency — ID
Southeast Idaho Community Action Agency — ID
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy — Regional
Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs — WA
Tahoma Audubon Society — WA
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United Steelworkers of America, District 11 — Regional
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Washington Wilderness Coalition — WA
Western Solar Utility Network Cooperative — WA
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Yakima Valley Opportunities Industrialization Center — WA

Associate Members
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