



Minutes for Conservation Resources Advisory Committee January 28, 2026

Kevin Smit, NWPCC, began the meeting at 9:00 by welcoming the CRAC and the DRAC. Christian Douglass, NWPCC, called for attendance. Chad Madron, NWPCC, explained how to best interact with the Zoom platform.

Smit reviewed the Council's Planning Timeline.

Incorporation EE/DR Resources in Council's Capital Expansion Modeling John Ollis, NWPCC

Jim Lazar, Electricity Brain Trust, asked about the electricity demand forecasts represented on [Slide 7] noting that in the past many utilities had redundant forecasts. He asked how Council staff is preventing this phenomena now that data centers present similar risks. John Ollis, NWPCC, assured Lazar that staff are very aware of the data center issue. Ollis said the uncertainty approach is yielding a large range of demand forecasts and load futures.

Lazar pointed to a paper that showed the utilities were collectively planning for four times as many data centers as chip makers are proposing. Ollis agreed this is important and on the top of staff's mind.

Tomás Morrissey, NWPCC, dropped a [link](#) to a past Demand Forecast Advisory Committee meeting that outlines the forecasting process and key components. He also [linked](#) to a recording of a Council meeting where staff presented the demand forecast to Council Members. Morrissey explained how staff try to avoid double counting.

Dave Baylon, independent, called [Slide 10] pretty thick, asking staff to explain one "x" or future so members could better understand the optimizing process. Ollis explained, on a high level, how the model gets the costs, which are represented by the "x." Baylon complained that the explanation still contained a bit of magic, calling it disconcerting. He then asked about generation and DR outside the region. Ollis answered that the model takes that into account in the loads and/or the market model.

Nolan Kelly, BPA, asked for more information on the load scaling effect of EE and DR [Slide 16]. Ollis explained that EE can be represented as an investment in a MW of load savings or as a percentage of a sector of load savings. Kelly asked if that computation happens before or during each modeling run. Ollis said the latter, explaining how staff pre-prepare the data. Douglass assured Kelly that this will be discussed shortly.

Baylon pointed to DVR on the demand side [Slide 17]. He asked if that is being considered here and if so, where in god's name are staff getting data. Smit explained how supply curves are developed for CVR on the conservation side and how the DRAC develops curves for DVR as a DR measure. Smit said the model then chooses the best solution.

Baylon asked if that means staff find out the region needs DR without a program to deliver it. Smit answered yes, saying that is how EE is developed. Baylon said this makes DR a catchall for problems yet to be solved. Smit said members of the DRAC, who have real life DR experience, provide the inputs.

Tom Eckhart, UCONS, asked if electric ferry charging is included in the modeling. Joe Walderman, NWPCC, said that is not a large load but staff are aware of the issue. Smit agreed that local utilities could develop a program to manage that.

Jeff Harris, NEEA, wrote: Probably a question for later: But the CVR/DVR discussion serves as an example of a resource that might be acquired for energy (CVR) and once acquired it can also be used at no additional capital cost for capacity (DVR). How is this no-cost capacity value treated in the capital expansion model?, in the question pane. Ollis explained how this resource is treated in the model, pointing to the importance of understanding capacity value endogenously.

Harris understood the strategy of assigning a \$0 fuel cost and moving it up and down. He pointed to EE measures with similar capabilities, like heat pump water heaters, that could be shaped at no cost. Harris asked how that value to the grid flows back to the original EE measure. Smit explained that, right now, staff do not define the dispatch value but are hoping the modeling exercise will reveal some information.

Lazar wrote: This question is outside the CRAC world. My state and my locals school districts are forecasting DECLINING enrollment for the next decade, then gradually rising to today's level by 2045. Are the regional population forecasts embedded in the Draft plan consistent with this?, in the question pane. Jennifer Light, NWPCC, pointed to the links above for more information.

Angus Duncan, NRDC, asked where staff is plugging in or extracting out existing and new transmission needs into the model [Slide 20]. Ollis explained how the model is doing that now, diving into process and examples.

Duncan thought it would be interesting to look at the Council's model's transmission structure and then introduce the 10-year new build/upgrade that WestTEC is proposing as a sensitivity. Ollis said the scenarios are already leveraged against the WestTEC effort. Ollis thought one of the Council's transmission scenarios will be close to that 10-year effort.

BREAK

Final Conservation Bundling Methodology, Modeling Sensitivities, and Supply Curves Christian Douglass, NWPCC

Lazar noted some utilities looking to invest in new nuclear power, which would fall in a \$100+ price bin [Slide 6]. Lazar asked if there was a way to tie those bins to an area's investment plans. Douglass noted all the different supply side resource available in the Plan, adding that there are cost bins that speak to nuclear power.

Harris asked if staff could determine the difference in value of solar coincident and non-solar coincident resources. Harris then asked if staff could make a solar coincident resource look like a non-solar coincident resource through load flexibility to determine value. Douglass was intrigued, answering yes, the model should provide those insights.

Harris noted that the last column of [Slide 9] only offers a yes/no, wondering about a scenario where availability is accelerated. Douglass said staff considered this, saying this Plan starts at a faster point than others.

Kelly noted that the Constrained World sensitivity only deviates from the others in the high-end cost bins [Slide 11]. Kelly asked why we are not seeing that effect across the board. Douglass said the next slide will better illustrate that, adding that the emerging tech options are more expensive.

Jennifer Finnigan, Seattle City Light, wrote: Not conservation related: Could you please point me to where I could find the Council's assumptions/plans for modeling customer solar? We're particularly curious about this, given the disappearance of the federal tax credits., in the question pane. Smit answered: Yes, our rooftop solar supply curves exclude the tax credits for the majority of the sensitivities, but we do include them in the one scenario, in the pane.

Kelly asked if the emerging tech prices are static or if they go down as the tech matures [Slide 12]. Douglass said they are static but could move if staff have insight. Light moved back to [Slide 11] to add that there is a lot happening in the modeling that are being tested, along with ways to gauge emerging tech and supply side resources.

Danielle Walker, Brightline Group, called it interesting that outputs look so similar, asking if staff were concerned about this as well. Douglass said the scenarios/sensitives effect other supply/demand resources as well as conservation. Douglass added that a lot of sensitivities are correlated to things that are higher cost by definition. Light added that this is a 20-year look, and things look different in the near term.

Lazar wrote: Jennifer: "no new transmission?" Is "reconductoring E/W transmission with higher capacity new-tech cables in the supply mix for transmission?", in the question pane. Smit wrote: We do not have specific estimates for reconductoring. However, we do hope to see from our different transmission sensitivities where additional reconductoring would be helpful. We also are aware of planned reconductoring projects., in the pane.

Sarah Widder, NEEA, approved of exploring the uncertainty of cost for emerging tech and wondered if staff would ever apply that to all the conservation resources. Douglass pointed to

different thresholds for current versus emerging resources. Light explained staff work further, saying it will provide some insight if costs change a bit. Widder approved.

Harris wrote: Follow-on to Jennifer's question: Are you modelling customer owned solar+storage as well as stand-alone solar? If yes, are you looking at the storage as a DER available to the grid or just as a mechanism to extend the value of the solar?, in the question pane. Light wrote: No, we just have behind the meter solar. Not solar plus storage., in the pane.

Model Conservation Standards and Research Recommendations

Kevin Smit, NWPCC

Bonnie Watson, BPA, asked for more information on the energy conservation program for this Plan [Slide 4]. Watson wondered how this approach is different than past work. Smit said that will be covered shortly.

Finnigan addressed modeling by balancing authority, asking if Seattle City Light is included in the Bonneville box [Slide 6]. Smit said yes.

Lazar commented on act 839FJ, saying there has never been an MCS for retail rate design [Slide 12]. Lazar asked if the Council is thinking about an MCS for rate design. Smit said this was discussed for the 2021 Plan but not included. Smit said he will put it on the list.¹ Lazar added that large jurisdictions are adapting rate design.

Lazar suggested making stand-alone air conditioners unavailable and only allowing heat pumps [Slide 14].

Harris recommended an MCS around no electric resistance backup heat for heat pumps, arguing that it is time as heat pump technology has advanced. Smit said the RTF and the Contract Analyst Team are talking about this.

Watson asked how this would play out during a time when the federal government is knocking the teeth out of standards. Smit said this will be discussed fully, noting that the Council will weigh in as well. Smit then explored how a heat pump with no electric resistance backup standard would be put forward.

Kelly asked when and where MCSs would be discussed. Smit said the CRAC will talk about this over several meetings, and this was very introductory. Kelly asked for more information on heat

¹ Smit followed up this question both internally with John Shurts, Legal Counsel, and then with an email to Jim Lazar. A portion of that email is included here: [The specific section of the Act you asked about at the CRAC meeting is Section 9(j) on the retail rate design. That section calls for the Council to prepare a report and recommendations regarding rate design. This is not a requirement of the power plan (it's not in that section of the Act), nor is it something the Council needs to keep doing. Specifically, John indicates: "My sense of 9j is that we had to do the study once. And we did. I think we could do one again if we thought it made sense. Clearly, we do not have to. And no, it is not part of the power plan. We could do it concurrently with a power plan process or even as an attachment as part of a power plan if we thought it made sense to. But it is not an element of the power plan, even if we did it at the same time. It would be its own separate study and report."]. Contrary to what was said at the meeting, rate design will not be on the list for an MCS in the 9th Plan.

pump commissioning. Smit said he is running out of time at this meeting but will address it in the next one.

Harris admitted that he was being provocative when asking for no resistance backup for heat pumps throughout the entire region.

Quentin Nesbitt, Idaho Power, expressed curiosity on how weatherization showed up as cost effective [Slide 13]. Smit pointed to the 2021 Plan recommendations to weatherize homes without insulation, adding that was not included in the MCS because of cost effectiveness.

Harris wrote: ETO is seeing roughly 25% of new solar installations include storage. This storage can be accessed for grid support services as exemplified by Pacific Power's Wattsmart DR program., in the question pane.

Treatment of EE Measures with Short Lives Residential Behavior Programs

Ted Light, Lighthouse Energy, wrote: Can you provide a link to the mentioned paper on short-lived measures? Smit pointed to the agenda page for [the link](#).

Widder said there could be a full meeting on the information on [Slide 5]. Widder said double counting feels like the wrong phrase as this seems like a different kind of conservation resource. Widder pointed to a variable lifetime, a need for continued investment, and the need to think about this differently. Smit agreed that this is tricky and requires more work.

T. Light voiced agreement with Widder, saying it might be the result of measuring program goals with first year savings. T. Light wondered if changing how goals are expressed might change this.

Lazar wrote: We have different measure lifetimes for generating resources. Hydro lasts longer than nuclear, and currently, nuclear is forecast to last longer than geothermal. Why is it any different for EE?, in the question pane.

Emily Gilroy, WA UTC, wrote: As noted, this is something that UTC staff is interested in exploring further as well., in the question pane.

Aquilas Velonis, Cadmus Group, wrote: In a lack of a better word, we have used "replacement savings"., in the question pane.

Kelly referred to the memo, asking if staff are interested in studying different actions around Home Energy Reports. Kelly also asked if concerns around Home Energy Reports extend to other programs like SEM in the industrial sector. Smit moved to [Slide 7] to explain different types of short measure life programs and [Slide 8] to address other concerns.

Finnigan wrote: '+1 to an extended discussion (at another meeting) around home energy reports, in the question pane.

Jennifer Snyder, WA UTC, wrote: UTC Staff is very interested in continuing this conversation, in the question pane.

Watson wrote: BPA is interested in discussing more (as I think you know), thanks-, in the question pane.

Smit acknowledged the committee's interest in further discussion and said he will set up a meeting. Smit pointed to the next CRAC meetings in March and April before ending at 12:10.

Attendees via Zoom Webinar

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|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Jennifer Light | NWPCC | Natalia Ojeda | Energy Trust of Oregon |
| John Ollis | NWPCC | Kyle Stetler | Flathead Coop |
| Kevin Smit | NWPCC | Renee Fiedler | Pen Light |
| Christian Douglass | NWPCC | Edith Bayer | ODOE |
| Laura Thomas | NWPCC | Jim Huffman | Riverland Energy Co-Op |
| Joe Walderman | NWPCC | Alex Joe | independent |
| Jim Lazar | Electricity Brain Trust | Bonnie Watson | BPA |
| Sarah Widder | NEEA | Bryve Yonker | Gridforward |
| Jennifer Snyder | WA UTC | Nolan Kelly | BPA |
| Wesley Franks | WA UTC | Ted Light | Lighthouse Energy |
| Emily Gilroy | WA UTC | David Baylon | independent |
| Eugene Rosolie | Advocates NWEA | Kim Boynton | Avista Corp |
| Nick Manning | WA Dept of Com | Danielle Walker | Brightline Group |
| Masumi Izawa | BPA | Andrew Grant | Cadmus Group |
| Elijah Cetas | Critfc | Chris Johnson | Benton PUD |
| Frank Brown | BPA | Jimena Diaz-Duran | Seattle City Light |
| Leah Kim | Tacoma Power | Ryan Bottem | Public Generating Pool |
| Craig Patterson | independent | Jennifer Finnigan | Seattle City Light |
| Heather Nicholson | Orcas Power & Light | Kyle Morrill | Energy Trust of Oregon |
| Leona Haley | Avista Corp | Eli Morris | ICF |
| Malcolm Ainspan | NRG | Quentin Nesbitt | Idaho Power |
| Janet Zadra | BC Hydro | Tony Allen | LV Energy |
| Suzanne Frew | Snohomish PUD | Nathaniel Clayville | NWPCC |
| Anthony Fontanini | Tacoma Power | Tomás Morrissey | NWPCC |
| Shivani Subramaniam | WA Dept of Com | Kerry Meade | Building Potential |
| Monish Mukherjee | PNNL | Brian Dekiep | NWPCC |
| Peter Keenan | IV Energy | Jennifer Langdon | Cowlitz PUD |
| Paul Koenig | WA UTC | Aliza Seelig | PNUCC |
| Mary Kulas | consultant | Sofya Atitsogbe | WA UTC |
| Elizabeth Osborne | NPWCC | Landon Snyder | Snohomish PUD |
| Christian Steinhoff | NEEA | John Purvis | Clallam PUD |
| Aquila Velonis | Cadmus Group | Benjamin Merrick | Orkydaceae |
| Angus Duncan | NRDC | Blake Scherer | Benton PUD |
| Rebecca Cottrell | Idaho PUC | Natalie Frick | LBNL |
| Debbie DePetris | Clark PUD | Kyle Billeci | PGE |
| Jeff Harris | NEEA | Cam LeHouillier | Tacoma Power |
| Tom Eckhart | UCONS | Drew Thompson | Chelan PUD |
| Amanda Welch | ODOE | Angela Long | Rock Cress Consulting |
| Scott Mayfield | Evergreen Energy | Alex Lopez | Rewiring America |
| Rebecca Klein | Seattle City Light | Jonathon Belais | NEEA |
| Jim McMahan | Better Climate | Anonymous | Northwest Environmental Advocates |
| Michael Coe | Snohomish PUD | | |