Northwest **Power** and **Conservation** Council

Minutes for Conservation Resources Advisory Committee
March 24, 2026

Kevin Smit, NWPCC, began at 10:30. Christian Douglass, NWPCC, took roll call.

Ninth Power Plan Timeline and Conservation Program Update

Jim Lazar, independent, asked when interested parties can see all the assumptions that go into the Ninth Plan work [Slide 2]. He was particularly interested in the Generating Resources assumptions. Smit informed Lazar that the Generating Resources assumptions are already available and pointed him to Generating Resources Advisory Committee (GRAC) work.

Lazar noted that the last GRAC assumptions came out in January 2025, asking if they have changed. Smit said inputs were frozen in June or July 2025.

Early Thoughts: Residential Heat Pump Themes for the Ninth Plan Conservation Program
Christian Douglass, NPWCC

Questions [Slide 15]
Lazar asked if the more efficient heat pump is going to have to reach a lower temperature before it uses backup. Lazar then asked if a more efficient compressor will also be a more efficient air conditioner, wondering how summer and winter efficiency gets factored in.

Douglass moved back to [Slide 14] to explain that “more efficient” doesn’t mean more cold climate capacity, pointing to cold climate heat pump equipment that does have that capacity. Douglass then showed the benefits that come with cooling. He stressed that the main way to optimize the system and save the most energy is by minimizing the backup heat system.

Lazar wrote, The 5- or 10-kW backup coming on may be a "blip" in terms of kWh across the year, but it may NOT be a "blip" from the perspective of peak capacity planning, including distribution substations and final line transformers. Spending $2,000 extra for a cold climate heat pump may save $5,000 in peaking capacity investment., in the question pane. [Slide 26]. Douglass agreed, saying they are working towards a cold climate heat pump without electric resistance backup.

Lazar wrote, We use a propane fireplace (30,000 BTU) for backup. It is also our power outage freeze protection. Much easier on the electrical peak load, and a trivial amount of propane across the year., in the question pane. Smit wrote, Yes, this is true for the 20% of homes with gas backup, in reply.

Amanda Welch, ODOE, wrote, Oh sorry, forgot about the Q&A portion! Are you forecasting weatherization to make up for those leaky envelope issues that leads to undersized equipment…, in the question pane. Smit replied, Our supply curves include weatherization and air sealing measures in addition to heat pump measures. Ideally, a home would be fully insulated and weatherized prior to installing a heat pump. This is one of the issues we will discuss more later. Thanks, in the reply.

Sofiya Atitsogbe wrote, My thermostat has an Em.Heat mode, so that would require me to just switch from normal heat to Em.heat, in the question pane. Smit replied, Thermostats vary quite a bit, but typically it will call for the Em. heat when it thinks it is needed. Some smart thermostats will work hard to heat the home without calling for the backup resistance heat.

Quentin Nesbitt, Idaho Power, wrote, I would say having a heat pump on a ducted system it is very apparent to me when the backup heat kicks on because the temperature of the air coming out of the register is very noticeably warmer versus when only the heat pump is on., in the question pane. Smit replied, Yes, that is true. I notice that also. And that warm air is being produce by 10kW of electric resistance (per Christian's example).

Questions [Slide 37]
Nolan Kelly, BPA, moved back to [Slide 36] asking what falls in and out-of-scope for controls, pointing to ongoing NEEA work. Douglass predicted there will be a lot of recommendations to mitigate back-up heat issues for both contractors and manufacturers, adding that NEEA tackles the manufacturers work.

Lazar said staff is missing several important pieces, noting that people depend on grid reliability as they electrify their homes. Lazar called this risky for older neighborhoods with overhead distribution lines, saying they need off-grid heating options like propane fireplaces. Lazar insisted staff needed to look at the whole capacity planning picture and this misses the point.

Douglass assured Lazar that he too believes in emergency backup, particularly after living through a four-day outage with a six-month-old at home. Douglass clarified that this slide describes primarily using a non-electric heat source before installing an electric ductless heat pump. Douglass agreed that this would not result in electric savings as it is displacing a non-electric heating source.

Lazar continued, saying a non-electric emergency backup heat sources allows for a smaller cold climate heat pump that wouldn't have to rely on electric strip heat. Lazar said this would save on distribution capacity, generation peaking, and transmission costs.

Lazar reminded the room that when he served on the Regional Technical Forum, they took the distribution benefits of energy efficiency into account which doubled the value of weatherization. He suggested the Council consider a grid-independent, supplemental heating source, like the battery of an electric vehicle. Lazar said this could save on heat pump sizing and the generation/distribution capacity needed to serve it. Douglass thanked Lazar for his points.

David Baylon, independent, said the biggest problem with heat pumps is that people are afraid of outages so they set up the technology assuming it will not work. Baylon called this a controls issue that can be addressed. Baylon insisted that integrated controls are part of the solution and that electric resistance backup wipes out the advantage of the heat pump.

Baylon added that occupants turn on emergency heat and forget to turn it off. Baylon said until that issue is solved the region will never see a cost-effective heat pump measure.

Lazar wrote, If ductless heat pumps do not have backup systems, and thousands of apartments are being built with ONLY ductless heat pumps, should I assume that people are using the range, hair dryer, or plug heaters for supplemental heat? Do we have data on that? in the question pane [Slide 40]. Smit wrote; I am not sure how much detail we have on that. I would have to look at the RBSA. But apartments do have lower heating loads that single family home due to shared walls, etc. in the reply.

Welch wrote, How does the Power Plan think about a warming climate? By 2050, I doubt there will be many days where a heating load at 25 degrees F will be needed. Just wondering around some assumptions there…, in the question pane [Slide 42]. Jennifer Light, NWPCC, wrote, For the Ninth Plan, the Council used climate model data to inform future conditions. This includes temperatures, as well as precipitation/streamflow, etc. We have three different climate models we selected to reflect the uncertainty. All show a warming trend over the horizon, but some are warmer than others, and the range of hydro is also different. These assumptions roll through our loads and resources., in the reply.

Questions [Slide 53]
Nicolas Garcia, WPUDA, said occupant usage may be more important than setbacks when evaluating these systems, noting that his wife is always cold and will turn up the thermostat or plug in a space heater. Douglass agreed that this is always an issue and research can help bear the difference between efficiency and behavior. Douglass said the goal is raising the average.

Baylon insisted he was not ready to throw in the towel because of anecdotes about people being chilly. He pointed to the performance of heat pumps over time which continue to under deliver predicted savings, calling for more research. Baylon said putting heat pumps into electrified houses that are not ready for them will generate a lot of high heat peaks and put serious demand on the grid, calling that unacceptable.

Baylon pointed to the outlined solutions, like better controls, that can solve the issue with a little electric resistance backup.

Douglass asked that questions and feedback be sent to his email. Smit ended the meeting at 12:00.

Attendees via Zoom Webinar

Kevin Smit	NWPCC	Nathaniel Clayville	NWPCC
Christian Douglass	NWPCC	Elizabeth Osborne	NWPCC
Jennifer Light	NWPCC	Bonnie Watson	BPA
Laura Thomas	NWPCC	Nolan Kelly	BPA
Serj Berelson	Oracle Utilities	Debbie DePetris	Clark PUD
Sophia Spencer	Nauvoo Solutions	Michael Coe	Snohomish PUD
Bryan Russo	Tacoma Power	Andrew Grant	Cadmus Group
Kim Boynton	Avista Corp	Joe Walderman	NWPCC
Jimena Diaz-Duran	Seattle City Light	Leann Bleakney	NWPCC
Mattias Jarvegren	Clallam PUD	Nick Manning	WA Dept of Com
Sofya Atitsogbe	WA UTC	Nicolas Garcia	WPUDA
Craig Patterson	independent	Ted Light	Lighthouse Energy
Frank Brown	BPA	Jim Lazar	independent
Masumi Izawa	BPA	Aquila Velonis	Cadmus Group
Brian Dekeip	NWPCC	Danielle Walker	Brightline Group
Nick Gemperle	Puget Sound Energy	Amanda Welch	ODOE
David Baylon	independent	Quentin Nesbitt	Idaho Power
Steven Simmons	NWPCC	Jeff Harris	NEEA
Kyle Morrill	Energy Trust of Oregon	Kim Stevens	Puget Sound Energy
Scott Hackel	Swift Strategy	Leah Kim	Tacoma Power
Jennifer Finnigan	Seattle City Light	Angus Duncan	independent