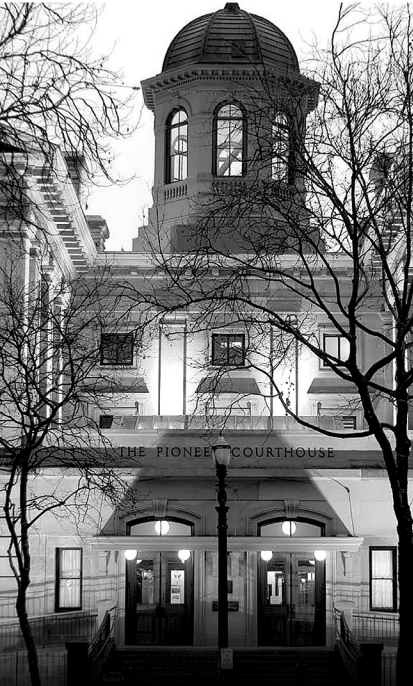




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TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING

NINTH NORTHWEST POWER PLAN

HELD ON

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

4:30 P.M.

IDAHO FISH AND GAME

PANHANDLE REGIONAL OFFICE

2885 WEST KATHLEEN AVENUE

COUER D'ALENE, IDAHO 83815

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APPEARANCES

NORTHWEST POWER AND CONSERVATION COUNCIL:

Peter Cogswell, Executive Director

Ed Schriever, Member (Idaho)

Jeffrey Allen, Member (Idaho)

Doug Grob, Member (Montana)

Kevin Smit, Manager of Power Planning Resources

PUBLIC COMMENTERS:

Jim Robbins

Abby Saks

PUBLIC HEARING
NINTH NORTHWEST POWER PLAN
HELD ON
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026
4:30 P.M.

DOUG GROB: Doug Grob, I'm from the State of Montana.

ED SCHRIEVER: Jeff Allen, my counterpart, the other Council member from Idaho, is delayed on a flight. He is rushing his way here as soon as he's wheels down at the Spokane airport. I know he apologizes for his tardiness, but we blame it on the airline.

While we might have hoped for a bigger crowd, we're very happy to see all of you here to participate in the Council's hearing on the Draft Power Plan.

Anyone wishing to provide public comment should sign up on the list in the back of the room, and I will call people to testify in the order in which you signed up.

When you come up to the microphone, even though we've called your name, please state your name and spell it for the court recorder, please. All of the comments tonight will be recorded so that we can get them all correctly transcribed and reviewed in the plan.

1 The hearing will run probably much longer than
2 it needs to. We're going to go until 6:30 tonight.
3 We'll listen to all your comments, and if other folks
4 have come in the room, we'll listen to them. Otherwise,
5 we'll adjourn briefly or for a longer period of time
6 until someone else comes up, but we will stay here until
7 6:30 to take any comment.

8 There is staff in the room from the Power
9 Council Central Office. There is -- Nate Clayville is
10 staff to Jeff Allen and myself in Idaho.

11 Peter Cogswell is our executive director out
12 of the Portland office.

13 As the first order of business, I have a
14 statement to make for the administrative record about
15 this public hearing.

16 The Northwest Power Act of 1980 directs the
17 Council to develop a regional conservation and electric
18 generation power plan, and to review that plan every
19 five years. The Council's current power plan is its
20 eighth plan, also referred to as the 2021 Power Plan.

21 The Council is now engaged in its latest five-
22 year power plan review. The Council released the Draft
23 Ninth Northwest Power Plan in mid-August for public
24 review and comment. For more information, including the
25 text of the draft plan and technical appendices, please

1 visit the Council's website at nwcouncil.org.

2 The Council will be accepting comments on the
3 Draft Ninth Plan through October 16th, 2026. The act
4 also requires the Council to hold public hearings in
5 every state represented by the Council which includes
6 Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. The full
7 schedule of hearings can be found online at
8 www.nwcouncil.org.

9 I would like to encourage anyone who is
10 interested in commenting to please sign up on one of the
11 sheets located around the room.

12 We have a court reporter in attendance to
13 record your comments. The transcript of this hearing
14 will be circulated to all Council members and staff and
15 will be included in the administrative record for the
16 Power Plan review.

17 You can also leave written comments with a
18 staff member today, or submit comments online.
19 Instructions for submitting comments online can also be
20 found at the Council's website.

21 All comments received will be carefully
22 considered by the Council in making its final decision
23 to approve the Ninth Northwest Power Plan. The Council
24 expects to make a final decision on the plan at the end
25 this year or early in 2027. Thank you.

1 I would just state that this is a hearing, not
2 a conversation, so we're here to listen to you, not go
3 back and forth with you. I'd ask you also please be
4 courteous to other speakers when they're up at the
5 microphone.

6 Kevin is going to kick this off with a
7 presentation to give you some very important background
8 information on the power plan.

9 KEVIN SMIT: All right. Thank you, Member
10 Schriever.

11 Hi, my name is Kevin Smit. I'm the manager
12 the Power Planning Resources at the Council, and I'm
13 going to give you a little bit of a high-level overview
14 and some background on the Draft Plan outline. After
15 that, we look forward to your comments.

16 Most of this was touched on already, but again
17 we were authorized by the Northwest Power Act in 1980,
18 and we've been following that power act ever since. The
19 Council members are appointed by the governors of the
20 four states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington,
21 so each appoint two members to that Council, so for a
22 total of eight. So those are the Council members who we
23 report to and who develop this power plan.

24 And again, we develop this plan with broad
25 public input, which is part of what we're here tonight

1 for. And then the Bonneville Power Administration has
2 some legal responsibility under the act. The Power Act
3 was written with Bonneville Power Administration in
4 mind.

5 We also do a -- a Fish and Wildlife program.
6 That's been completed for this go-round. That's always
7 done prior to the power plan. It was adopted by the
8 Council in June 2026, and so that provides a good basis
9 for starting the power plan because it's -- it's about,
10 you know, a lot of it is about the water, keeping the
11 water moving for migrating fish and also still meeting
12 the regional energy needs. So our role is balancing
13 those fish needs and -- and the power needs as we go
14 forward.

15 So in terms of the power plan, I mean, what is
16 it that we do? There is some words involved there that
17 I think are really important. Those are words we have
18 drilled into our minds and what we -- will guide us in
19 developing the power plan, but it's to ensure adequate,
20 efficient, economical, and reliable power supply for the
21 Northwest.

22 Again, we update this plan every five years,
23 but it's a 20-year look. We look out for 20 years. We
24 do our forecasts and -- and resource development on a
25 20-year look, and we update it every five years. And

1 things change a lot in five years, or they can.

2 You know, at a high level the plan asks for,
3 okay, what is the capability of the system today. That
4 means how much -- how many power generation resources
5 and other resources do we have to meet the needs, what
6 do we have today. And then we say, okay, what might be
7 -- this is where the forecasting come -- comes in. How
8 much might we need in the future. What is our load
9 growth and -- and what are the future demands on the
10 power system that we might need going down the road.

11 And then what is the least cost and the least
12 risk way to meet those future needs while being mindful
13 of their capabilities, you know, the limits that we have
14 including the constraints on the hydro system. We have
15 requirements of how much water needs to -- to go through
16 the dams and so on, and also the environmental quality.
17 And that's -- in a nutshell, that's what our power
18 planning is all about.

19 So the high-level takeaways from this -- this
20 particular power plan. First of all, load growth.
21 That's -- you -- you've heard about it, you've read
22 about it. Load growth is significant, even compared to
23 just five years ago when we did the other plan. It's a
24 lot more extreme and a lot more pronounced in this plan.
25 Driven by data centers and electrification, we see the

1 forecast over the next 20 years for the region to
2 increase by at least 50 percent up to 100 percent.
3 That's the range of our forecast. That's a lot of load
4 growth.

5 We also account for uncertainty and risk, we
6 -- which we we've always done, and we -- we -- in doing
7 that we look at a range of futures and the range of
8 risks around loads, resources, and also the weather
9 conditions, all those extremes that we've seen, the heat
10 spells and the really -- the cold spells we've had. We
11 account for all of those in our -- in our risk and
12 analysis.

13 We do a resource portfolio. We -- we include
14 a cost-effective regional resource portfolio --
15 portfolio, excuse me, for the suite of resources to add
16 to the grid to meet those future needs, so we look at
17 everything. We start with a broad range and narrow that
18 down to the ones that are cost effective.

19 And then what's next? So the Council's
20 Regional Power Plan is a transparent, open, public
21 process, like we're doing here, and these public
22 hearings are -- are part of that.

23 So this is kind of the high-level results.
24 The Draft Ninth Plan Resource Strategy for 2027 to 2032.
25 We really focus on that first six years of the plan,

1 five or six years. Of course it's a -- it's a 20-year
2 forecast so we have results for all those years, but the
3 focus is the action plan period, you know, before we
4 update it again.

5 So going down the list, the demand side
6 resources like conservation, energy efficiency, provide
7 energy and capacity -- capacity that minimize the need
8 to build out extra transmission and other resources. So
9 that reduces our load essentially, so we don't need
10 quite as many of those new resources.

11 Renewable energy combined with storage to
12 support the region. They support adequacy and -- and
13 meeting clean goals. And you can see some of the
14 numbers in the table there. We're -- we're recommending
15 for conservation, a thousand -- store a thousand average
16 megawatts. And with our modeling work this time around,
17 we've shown different values in different places in the
18 region.

19 So we're -- we're setting two different
20 conservation targets this -- this time, proposing in
21 this Draft Plan 860 average megawatts for Oregon and
22 Washington. That's where the largest loads and load
23 growth is. And then 200 average megawatts for Idaho and
24 Montana. And you can see there the different avoided
25 costs to those. Some -- the -- the higher value is --

1 is mostly in Northwest Washington where there's a lot of
2 loads and load growth and transmission constraints, and
3 less constrained and more availability in Idaho and
4 Montana.

5 And you can see demand response 590 megawatts,
6 voltage regulation 220 megawatts, and then the renewable
7 is 9000 megawatts. Those are some pretty big numbers,
8 and numbers that we haven't seen recently, so that --
9 that response to that load growth.

10 We also have natural gas. New natural gas
11 provides energy to the system at times of low water.
12 And you can see there 2100 megawatts of natural gas are
13 part of the plan. In addition to that we have storage,
14 battery storage of 5200 megawatts. And again, that's
15 also a fairly large number and one we haven't seen
16 before.

17 These resources are supported by a suite of
18 other recommendations to address transmission,
19 permitting data center integration, and all kinds of
20 things that surround these particular numbers, but these
21 are probably the -- the highlight of what you hear most
22 about, and so here are those numbers.

23 The Council's plan, you know, provides
24 important guidance for the whole region. Many entities,
25 all the utilities in the region in some way are affected

1 by the plan, but it has directly a connection to
2 Bonneville as the -- as the power marketer in region
3 they're required to acquire resources that it determines
4 consistent with the power plan. So they have a direct
5 link to -- to provide those resources consistently.

6 The Draft -- the Draft Ninth Plan recommends
7 Bonneville acquire its share of the conservation
8 resource, support its customers in acquiring other
9 demand side resources, and acquire renewables if energy
10 is needed beyond conservation. And then assess the cost
11 effectiveness between storage and natural gas if there's
12 a capacity need.

13 And even beyond the resource strategy, I
14 alluded to some of this a second ago, but we do more,
15 you know, we touch on all kinds of things. Transmission
16 planning is one of them. We don't do detailed
17 transmission planning, but we have to know about the
18 constraints and -- and the costs and things of building
19 new transmission line. That does get factored in to our
20 -- our power planning.

21 We also don't get too deeply into permitting
22 and siting of resources, but again we need to know about
23 that because we can't -- we can't recommend building
24 power plants where they can't be built, so things like
25 that we have to take into account, but we don't do those

1 things directly.

2 And then the last bullet there too, we don't
3 set electricity rates or make decisions about resource
4 retirement, so if resources are going to be retired that
5 doesn't come from us. We need to know that, if that's
6 going to happen, we work that in to our planning, but
7 those are not our -- in our purview.

8 Okay. The public comment, you've already
9 heard most of this, please sign up on the sheets. When
10 you're ready to make a comment, please come up to the
11 microphone here. If you have questions, the staff
12 standing around can help you. Be courteous. Please
13 keep it brief and on topic. We do, I think, have plenty
14 of time tonight but please keep it focused for others.
15 And your comments will become part of the official
16 public record.

17 And if you do have written comments, we will
18 accept those. It does make it easy for us if you have
19 those, and hand those over after you speak, if you can.
20 And you can also submit online. If your friends or
21 relatives couldn't make it tonight, they can always
22 submit those written comments online, and here's how you
23 do that. There's a QR code and information there if you
24 want to do that online. Just go to our website. It's
25 all there.

1 And we want to hear from you. Thank you.

2 ED SCHRIEVER: It will be the chairman's
3 deference to extend the comment period to five minutes,
4 so feel comfortable. We have two people signed up to
5 testify tonight. I appreciate that.

6 As long as you're not repeating yourself and
7 going on and on about things that aren't related to the
8 power plan, I'm going to give you some -- some time at
9 the mic.

10 I believe first is the honorable Jim Robbins.

11 JIM ROBBINS: Honorable?

12 ED SCHRIEVER: Did I say that out loud? Jim,
13 when you come to the mic would you please say and spell
14 your name?

15 JIM ROBBINS: I will do that.

16 ED SCHRIEVER: Thank you, sir.

17 JIM ROBBINS: My name is Jim Robbins, J-I-M,
18 R-O-B-B-I-N-S, and a number of the Council members and
19 some of -- a number of the Northwest Power and
20 Conservation staff know me as a board member of Kootenai
21 Electric, and also a board member of Idaho Consumer
22 Utility Association.

23 I also come here as a concerned user of power
24 from the Bonneville Power Administration, which this
25 plan has a great deal of influence on what they do and

1 how they -- how they act. And as I look at the plan, my
2 first concern is the recommendations on resources.

3 If we learned anything at all about the -- the
4 resources in the Northwest, a couple of years ago in the
5 January three-day cold spell with no wind, in which
6 there was zero wind production on the grid, we came very
7 dangerously close to losing the power grid under those
8 conditions.

9 And when I look at this plan, you're doubling
10 down on the very wind that doesn't show up under these
11 extreme conditions, and I find that extremely troubling.
12 I spent nearly 60 years in delivering energy in this
13 Pacific Northwest, both natural gas and then electric.

14 I've gone through and paid attention to the
15 severe weather events that have occurred. The three-day
16 event in January was small compared to those in the
17 past. I urge the staff and Council to look at 1988/89
18 winter event, lasted almost two weeks. The 1995/96
19 winter, same kind of conditions. 2016 and '17, similar.

20 No wind. Extreme cold. It was zero degrees
21 in Seattle, and minus 20 on the east side of the
22 Cascades, and I have no idea how cold Montana was. And
23 you're proposing 9000 average megawatts of wind, which
24 was the very thing that doesn't show up. I find this
25 dangerous.

1 If we learned anything out of history, recent
2 history in Texas of losing the grid, people die when the
3 power grid goes down, and I think we should try to avoid
4 that here. I would like to see a whole lot more gas --
5 gas generation in place, and a whole lot less wind.

6 Don't take my word for it. The Western
7 Electric Coordinating Council whose responsibility it is
8 to assess the reliability of the bulk power system in
9 the U.S. and the west makes the following statement in
10 their most recent production. The Northwest and basin
11 are expected to be at an elevated risk of electric
12 shortfall during potential extreme weather events.
13 That's for 19 -- for 2026.

14 So I urge the Council to reconsider the stack
15 that they have and get more dispatchable base load power
16 production so that we don't run out of power in these
17 critical period times.

18 Now with this alleviation to a little bit more
19 time, let me also expand on one other thing I find
20 troubling. This 9000 average megawatts of wind under
21 the current designs will take up 550 to 750,000 acres of
22 land. Now, do you think that's going to be built on the
23 west side of the Cascades? Not likely.

24 And the politics that are currently in place
25 is not going to allow where the wind blows on the west

1 side, which is offshore. So that means that Eastern
2 Washington, Eastern Oregon, Idaho, and Montana will take
3 the brunt of all these wind turbines. If Lava Ridge
4 project told us anything, the public and consequently
5 the politics are not too happy with people building
6 large wind projects where the power really goes
7 someplace else.

8 So I just add that as a piece of advice,
9 recognizing the land requirements and the structure
10 requirements for that much wind. So thank you.

11 ED SCHRIEVER: Thank you, Jim.

12 And potentially our final speaker of the
13 night, Abby Saks.

14 ABBY SAKS: Hello, my name is Abby Saks, A-B-
15 B-Y, S-A-K-S. I live in Spokane, and I'm a ratepayer of
16 Avista. I am also with Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition.
17 While I do live in Spokane, our energy grid is deeply
18 connected with Coeur d'Alene's, with both cities being
19 serviced by Avista, and we're also obviously a part of
20 the same water system, the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum
21 Prairie Aquifer.

22 The river that runs through Spokane that just
23 ran dry this summer runs from Lake Coeur D'Alene,
24 through the city, past Post Falls Dam and into
25 Washington. And while our states have very different

1 energy land escapes, we are affected by climate change
2 in very similar ways. Fires like the ones that just
3 devastated Spokane are occurring across the Northwest,
4 including Montana and Idaho.

5 Our region must work together to limit these
6 impacts of climate change, and to do so it must foster
7 an energy future where electricity is affordable and
8 clean, and supports healthy and abundant salmon and
9 steelhead populations. These things can and should
10 coexist, and the power plan presents an opportunity to
11 work towards this future.

12 So first I urge you to adopt strong
13 conservation targets and encourage region-wide
14 collaboration to meet these goals. Our energy grid must
15 be improved and amended collaboratively without setting
16 these different standards for different states.

17 Second, our region's transmission system is
18 severely outdated which has limited our ability to bring
19 clean energy projects onto the grid, and not only is
20 this threatening energy reliability as demonstrated --
21 as demand increases and as demonstrated in blackouts in
22 Spokane where transmission system wasn't able to deal
23 with the rapid demand increase -- or rapid demand.

24 But this also is putting further pressure on
25 the hydro system which is already limited after years of

1 drought and low snowpack. In the final power plan, I
2 urge you to more robustly pursue new clean resources to
3 meet future needs, remove barriers to necessary
4 transmission connections across the four states, and
5 request BPA to prepare for and acquire renewable
6 resources and lead the region in expanding transmission
7 capacity in order to integrate them into the grid.

8 For much of Eastern Washington and Idaho our
9 summers are sunny and dry. We have the perfect
10 conditions for solar to power our increasingly growing
11 need for AC at this time of year, AC that's used in
12 Spokane and Tri-Cities and Yakima and other cities in
13 Eastern Washington. There is also an immense
14 opportunity for wind year round across Central
15 Washington. However, we need adequate transmission
16 capacity to fully realize this potential.

17 As we see the impacts of the climate crisis
18 worsen, our salmon populations also continue near
19 extinction. This past August I was able to go to
20 Stanley, Idaho, where the Salmon River and Redfish Lake,
21 bodies of water that both got their names from once
22 abundant salmon populations, were noticeably empty of
23 salmon. I believe five wild sockeye are returning to
24 the Salmon basin this year.

25 And just this past weekend I attended the Free

1 the Snake Flotilla in Lewiston, Idaho, where over three
2 hundred people from Oregon, Idaho, and Washington
3 rallied for salmon recovery and a free-flowing lower
4 Snake River. Seeing the dire state of salmon and river
5 health across -- or consensus and support for lower
6 Snake restoration across the Northwest is growing.

7 So along these lines, the power plan resource
8 strategy can replace the 700 megawatts produced annually
9 from the four lower Snake River dams, and the Council
10 should provide technical support and modeling in
11 partnership with Washington State to incorporate Lower
12 Snake River dam's energy replacement into our region's
13 future power plans.

14 And finally, I urge you to request that BPA
15 help regional utilities implement demand response
16 programs and Americanize energy conservation program
17 delivery, especially to address the unique aspects of
18 serving rural communities.

19 In the final plan, I urge the Council to
20 embrace this really critical opportunity to build an
21 energy generation to benefit fish, our water and rivers,
22 and our communities so that we don't see another river
23 running dry next year. Thank you -- or in the future.

24 ED SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

25 While our comments might have been few, they

1 were well prepared and very much appreciated.

2 We will stand at recess until such time we
3 have more people to provide comments.

4 (WHEREUPON, the Public Meeting concluded at
5 6:30 p.m.)

CERTIFICATE

I, Greg Salina, do hereby certify that I reported all proceedings adduced in the foregoing matter and that the foregoing transcript pages constitutes a full, true and accurate record of said proceedings to the best of my ability.

I further certify that I am neither related to counsel or any party to the proceedings nor have any interest in the outcome of the proceedings.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 26th Day of September, 2026.



Greg Salina, CER No. 1441

1 100 9:2 16th 5:3 17 15:19 19 16:13 1980 4:16 6:17 1988/89 15:17 1995/96 15:18 2 20 7:23 9:1 15:21 20-year 7:23,25 10:1 200 10:23 2016 15:19 2021 4:20 2026 5:3 7:8 16:13 2027 5:25 9:24 2032 9:24 2100 11:12 220 11:6 5 50 9:2 5200 11:14 550 16:21 590 11:5	6 60 15:12 6:30 4:2,7 7 700 20:8 750,000 16:21 8 860 10:21 9 9000 11:7 15:23 16:20 A A-B- 17:14 Abby 17:13,14 ability 18:18 abundant 18:8 19:22 AC 19:11 accept 13:18 accepting 5:2 account 9:5,11 12:25 acquire 12:3,7,9 19:5 acquiring 12:8 acres 16:21 act 4:16 5:3 6:17,	18 7:2 15:1 action 10:3 add 9:15 17:8 addition 11:13 address 11:18 20:17 adequacy 10:12 adequate 7:19 19:15 adjourn 4:5 Administration 7:1,3 14:24 administrative 4:14 5:15 adopt 18:12 adopted 7:7 advice 17:8 affected 11:25 18:1 affordable 18:7 airline 3:13 airport 3:12 Allen 3:9 4:10 alleviation 16:18 alluded 12:14 amended 18:15 Americanize 20:16 analysis 9:12 annually 20:8 apologizes 3:12 appendices 4:25 appoint 6:21	appointed 6:19 appreciated 21:1 approve 5:23 Aquifer 17:21 asks 8:2 aspects 20:17 assess 12:10 16:8 Association 14:22 attendance 5:12 attended 19:25 attention 15:14 August 19:19 authorized 6:17 availability 11:3 average 10:15,21, 23 15:23 16:20 Avista 17:16,19 avoid 16:3 avoided 10:24 B B-Y 17:15 back 3:18 6:3 background 6:7, 14 balancing 7:12 barriers 19:3 base 16:15 basin 16:10 19:24 basis 7:8
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battery 11:14 benefit 20:21 big 11:7 bigger 3:14 bit 6:13 16:18 blackouts 18:21 blame 3:13 blows 16:25 board 14:20,21 bodies 19:21 Bonneville 7:1,3 12:2,7 14:24 BPA 19:5 20:14 briefly 4:5 bring 18:18 broad 6:24 9:17 brunt 17:3 build 10:8 20:20 building 12:18,23 17:5 built 12:24 16:22 bulk 16:8 bullet 13:2 business 4:13	carefully 5:21 Cascades 15:22 16:23 center 11:19 centers 8:25 Central 4:9 19:14 chairman's 14:2 change 8:1 18:1,6 circulated 5:14 cities 17:18 19:12 city 17:24 Clayville 4:9 clean 10:13 18:8, 19 19:2 climate 18:1,6 19:17 close 15:7 Coalition 17:16 code 13:23 Coeur 17:18,23 coexist 18:10 Cogswell 4:11 cold 9:10 15:5,20, 22 collaboration 18:14 collaboratively 18:15 combined 10:11 comfortable 14:4 comment 3:17 4:7,24 13:8,10 14:3	commenting 5:10 comments 3:24 4:3 5:2,13,17,18, 19,21 6:15 13:15, 17,22 20:25 21:3 communities 20:18,22 compared 8:22 15:16 completed 7:6 concern 15:2 concerned 14:23 conditions 9:9 15:8,11,19 19:10 connected 17:18 connection 12:1 connections 19:4 consensus 20:5 conservation 4:17 10:6,15,20 12:7,10 14:20 18:13 20:16 considered 5:22 consistent 12:4 consistently 12:5 constrained 11:3 constraints 8:14 11:2 12:18 Consumer 14:21 continue 19:18 conversation 6:2 Coordinating 16:7 correctly 3:25	cost 8:11 9:18 12:10 cost-effective 9:14 costs 10:25 12:18 Council 3:10 4:9, 17,21,22 5:2,4,5, 14,22,23 6:12,19, 21,22 7:8 14:18 15:17 16:7,14 20:9,19 Council's 3:16 4:19 5:1,20 9:19 11:23 counterpart 3:9 couple 15:4 court 3:23 5:12 courteous 6:4 13:12 crisis 19:17 critical 16:17 20:20 crowd 3:14 current 4:19 16:21 customers 12:8
C			D
call 3:19 called 3:22 capabilities 8:13 capability 8:3 capacity 10:7 12:12 19:7,16			D'ALENE 17:23 d'alene's 17:18 Dam 17:24 dam's 20:12 dams 8:16 20:9 dangerous 15:25

dangerously 15:7	dispatchable 16:15	8:25	extremely 15:11
data 8:25 11:19	doubling 15:9	elevated 16:11	extremes 9:9
deal 14:25 18:22	Doug 3:7	embrace 20:20	
decision 5:22,24	draft 3:16 4:22,25 5:3 6:14 9:24 10:21 12:6	empty 19:22	F
decisions 13:3	drilled 7:18	encourage 5:9 18:13	factored 12:19
deeply 12:21 17:17	Driven 8:25	end 5:24	fairly 11:15
deference 14:3	drought 19:1	energy 7:12 10:6, 7,11 11:11 12:9 15:12 17:17 18:1, 7,14,19,20 20:12, 16,21	Falls 17:24
degrees 15:20	dry 17:23 19:9 20:23	engaged 4:21	feel 14:4
delayed 3:10	E	ensure 7:19	final 5:22,24 17:12 19:1 20:19
delivering 15:12	early 5:25	entities 11:24	finally 20:14
delivery 20:17	east 15:21	environmental 8:16	find 15:11,24 16:19
demand 10:5 11:5 12:9 18:21, 23 20:15	Eastern 17:1,2 19:8,13	escapes 18:1	Fires 18:2
demands 8:9	easy 13:18	essentially 10:9	fish 7:5,11,13 20:21
demonstrated 18:20,21	economical 7:20	event 15:16,18	five- 4:21
designs 16:21	ED 3:9 14:2,12,16 17:11 20:24	events 15:15 16:12	flight 3:10
detailed 12:16	effective 9:18	excuse 9:15	Flotilla 20:1
determines 12:3	effectiveness 12:11	executive 4:11	focus 9:25 10:3
devastated 18:3	efficiency 10:6	expand 16:19	focused 13:14
develop 4:17 6:23,24	efficient 7:20	expanding 19:6	folks 4:3
developing 7:19	eighth 4:20	expected 16:11	forecast 9:1,3 10:2
development 7:24	electric 4:17 14:21 15:13 16:7, 11	expects 5:24	forecasting 8:7
die 16:2	electricity 13:3 18:7	extend 14:3	forecasts 7:24
dire 20:4	electrification	extinction 19:19	forward 6:15 7:14
direct 12:4		extra 10:8	foster 18:6
directly 12:1 13:1		extreme 8:24 15:11,20 16:12	found 5:7,20
director 4:11			Free 19:25
directs 4:16			free-flowing 20:3
			friends 13:20

full 5:6 fully 19:16 future 8:8,9,12 9:16 18:7,11 19:3 20:13,23 futures 9:7 G gas 11:10,12 12:11 15:13 16:4, 5 generation 4:18 8:4 16:5 20:21 give 6:7,13 14:8 go-round 7:6 goals 10:13 18:14 good 7:8 governors 6:19 great 14:25 grid 9:16 15:6,7 16:2,3 17:17 18:14,19 19:7 Grob 3:7 growing 19:10 20:6 growth 8:9,20,22 9:4 10:23 11:2,9 guidance 11:24 guide 7:18 H hand 13:19 happen 13:6	happy 3:15 17:5 health 20:5 healthy 18:8 hear 11:21 14:1 heard 8:21 13:9 hearing 3:16 4:1, 15 5:13 6:1 hearings 5:4,7 9:22 heat 9:9 high 8:2 high-level 6:13 8:19 9:23 higher 10:25 highlight 11:21 history 16:1,2 hold 5:4 honorable 14:10, 11 hoped 3:14 hundred 20:2 hydro 8:14 18:25 I Idaho 3:10 4:10 5:6 6:20 10:23 11:3 14:21 17:2 18:4 19:8,20 20:1,2 idea 15:22 immense 19:13 impacts 18:6 19:17	implement 20:15 important 6:7 7:17 11:24 improved 18:15 include 9:13 included 5:15 includes 5:5 including 4:24 8:14 18:4 incorporate 20:11 increase 9:2 18:23 increases 18:21 increasingly 19:10 influence 14:25 information 4:24 6:8 13:23 input 6:25 Instructions 5:19 integrate 19:7 integration 11:19 interested 5:10 involved 7:16 J J-I-M 14:17 January 15:5,16 Jeff 3:9 4:10 Jim 14:10,11,12, 15,17 17:11 June 7:8	K keeping 7:10 Kevin 6:6,9,11 kick 6:6 kind 9:23 15:19 kinds 11:19 12:15 Kootenai 14:20 L Lake 17:23 19:20 land 16:22 17:9 18:1 large 11:15 17:6 largest 10:22 lasted 15:18 latest 4:21 Lava 17:3 lead 19:6 learned 15:3 16:1 leave 5:17 legal 7:2 level 8:2 Lewiston 20:1 limit 18:5 limited 18:18,25 limits 8:13 lines 20:7 link 12:5 list 3:18 10:5 listen 4:3,4 6:2
--	--	--	---

live 17:15,17 load 8:8,20,22 9:3 10:9,22 11:2,9 16:15 loads 9:8 10:22 11:2 located 5:11 long 14:6 longer 4:1,5 losing 15:7 16:2 lot 7:10 8:1,24 9:3 11:1 16:4,5 loud 14:12 low 11:11 19:1 lower 20:3,5,9,11	members 5:14 6:19,21,22 14:18 mic 14:9,13 microphone 3:21 6:5 13:11 mid-august 4:23 migrating 7:11 mind 7:4 mindful 8:12 minds 7:18 minimize 10:7 minus 15:21 minutes 14:3 modeling 10:16 20:10 Montana 3:8 5:6 6:20 10:24 11:4 15:22 17:2 18:4 moving 7:11	20:6 noticeably 19:22 number 11:15 14:18,19 numbers 10:14 11:7,8,20,22 nutshell 8:17 nwcouncil.org. 5:1	paid 15:14 part 6:25 9:22 11:13 13:15 17:19 participate 3:15 partnership 20:11 past 15:17 17:24 19:19,25 people 3:19 14:4 16:2 17:5 20:2 21:3 percent 9:2 perfect 19:9 period 4:5 10:3 14:3 16:17 permitting 11:19 12:21 Peter 4:11 piece 17:8 place 16:5,24 places 10:17 plan 3:16,25 4:18, 19,20,22,23,25 5:3,16,23,24 6:8, 14,23,24 7:7,9, 15,19,22 8:2,20, 23,24 9:20,24,25 10:3,21 11:13,23 12:1,4,6 14:8,25 15:1,9 18:10 19:1 20:7,19 planning 6:12 8:18 12:16,17,20 13:6 plans 20:13
M	names 19:21 narrow 9:17 Nate 4:9 natural 11:10,12 12:11 15:13 needed 12:10 night 17:13 Ninth 4:23 5:3,23 9:24 12:6 Northwest 4:16, 23 5:23 6:17 7:21 11:1 14:19 15:4, 13 16:10 18:3	O	
make 4:14 5:24 13:3,10,18,21 makes 16:9 making 5:22 manager 6:11 marketer 12:2 means 8:4 17:1 meet 8:5,12 9:16 18:14 19:3 meeting 7:11 10:13 megawatts 10:16, 21,23 11:5,6,7, 12,14 15:23 16:20 20:8 member 3:10 5:18 6:9 14:20,21	N	occurred 15:15 occurring 18:3 October 5:3 office 4:9,12 official 13:15 offshore 17:1 online 5:7,18,19 13:20,22,24 open 9:20 opportunity 18:10 19:14 20:20 order 3:19 4:13 19:7 Oregon 5:6 6:20 10:21 17:2 20:2 outdated 18:18 outline 6:14 overview 6:13	
		P	
		Pacific 15:13	

plants 12:24 plenty 13:13 politics 16:24 17:5 populations 18:9 19:18,22 portfolio 9:13,14, 15 Portland 4:12 Post 17:24 potential 16:12 19:16 potentially 17:12 power 3:16 4:8, 16,18,19,20,22, 23 5:16,23 6:8, 12,17,18,23 7:1, 2,3,7,9,13,15,19, 20 8:4,10,17,20 9:20 12:2,4,20,24 14:8,19,23,24 15:7 16:3,8,15,16 17:6 18:10 19:1, 10 20:7,13 Prairie 17:21 prepare 19:5 prepared 21:1 presentation 6:7 presents 18:10 pressure 18:24 pretty 11:7 prior 7:7 process 9:21 produced 20:8 production 15:6 16:10,16	program 7:5 20:16 programs 20:16 project 17:4 projects 17:6 18:19 pronounced 8:24 proposing 10:20 15:23 provide 3:17 10:6 12:5 20:10 21:3 public 3:17 4:15, 23 5:4 6:25 9:20, 21 13:8,16 17:4 pursue 19:2 purview 13:7 putting 18:24 Q QR 13:23 quality 8:16 questions 13:11 R R-O-B-B-I-N-S 14:18 rallied 20:3 ran 17:23 range 9:3,7,17 rapid 18:23 ratepayer 17:15 rates 13:3 read 8:21	ready 13:10 realize 19:16 received 5:21 recent 16:1,10 recently 11:8 recess 21:2 recognizing 17:9 recommend 12:23 recommendation s 11:18 15:2 recommending 10:14 recommends 12:6 reconsider 16:14 record 4:14 5:13, 15 13:16 recorded 3:24 recorder 3:23 recovery 20:3 Redfish 19:20 reduces 10:9 referred 4:20 region 9:1 10:12, 18 11:24,25 12:2 18:5 19:6 region's 18:17 20:12 region-wide 18:13 regional 4:17 7:12 9:14,20 20:15	regulation 11:6 related 14:7 relatives 13:21 released 4:22 reliability 16:8 18:20 reliable 7:20 remove 19:3 renewable 10:11 11:6 19:5 renewables 12:9 repeating 14:6 replace 20:8 replacement 20:12 report 6:23 reporter 5:12 represented 5:5 request 19:5 20:14 required 12:3 requirements 8:15 17:9,10 requires 5:4 resource 7:24 9:13,14,24 12:8, 13 13:3 20:7 resources 6:12 8:4,5 9:8,15 10:6, 8,10 11:17 12:3, 5,9,22 13:4 15:2, 4 19:2,6 response 11:5,9 20:15
---	---	--	--

responsibility 7:2 16:7	Saks 17:13,14	Snake 20:1,4,6,9, 12	storage 10:11 11:13,14 12:11
restoration 20:6	salmon 17:16 18:8 19:18,20,22, 23,24 20:3,4	snowpack 19:1	store 10:15
results 9:23 10:2	Save 17:16	sockeye 19:23	strategy 9:24 12:13 20:8
retired 13:4	schedule 5:7	solar 19:10	strong 18:12
retirement 13:4	Schriever 3:9 6:10 14:2,12,16 17:11 20:24	someplace 17:7	structure 17:9
returning 19:23	Seattle 15:21	speak 13:19	submit 5:18 13:20,22
review 4:18,22,24 5:16	serviced 17:19	speaker 17:12	submitting 5:19
reviewed 3:25	serving 20:18	spell 3:23 14:13 15:5	suite 9:15 11:17
Ridge 17:3	set 13:3	spells 9:10	summer 17:23
risk 8:12 9:5,11 16:11	setting 10:19 18:15	spent 15:12	summers 19:9
risks 9:8	severe 15:15	Spokane 3:12 17:15,17,20,22 18:3,22 19:12	sunny 19:9
river 17:22 19:20 20:4,9,12,22	severely 18:18	stack 16:14	supply 7:20
rivers 20:21	share 12:7	staff 4:8,10 5:14, 18 13:11 14:20 15:17	support 10:12 12:8 20:5,10
road 8:10	sheets 5:11 13:9	stand 21:2	supported 11:17
Robbins 14:10, 11,15,17	shortfall 16:12	standards 18:16	supports 18:8
robustly 19:2	show 15:10,24	standing 13:12	surround 11:20
role 7:12	shown 10:17	Stanley 19:20	system 8:3,10,14 11:11 16:8 17:20 18:17,22,25
room 3:18 4:4,8 5:11	side 10:5 12:9 15:21 16:23 17:1	start 9:17	
round 19:14	sign 3:18 5:10 13:9	starting 7:9	T
run 4:1 16:16	signed 3:20 14:4	state 3:7,22 5:5 6:1 20:4,11	table 10:14
running 20:23	significant 8:22	statement 4:14 16:9	takeaways 8:19
runs 17:22,23	similar 15:19 18:2	states 6:20 17:25 18:16 19:4	tardiness 3:13
rural 20:18	sir 14:16	stay 4:6	targets 10:20 18:13
rushing 3:11	siting 12:22	steelhead 18:9	technical 4:25 20:10
	small 15:16		terms 7:15
S	Smit 6:9,11		
S-A-K-S 17:15			

testify 3:19 14:5 Texas 16:2 text 4:25 thing 15:24 16:19 things 8:1 11:20 12:15,18,24 13:1 14:7 18:9 thousand 10:15 threatening 18:20 three-day 15:5,15 time 4:5 10:16,20 13:14 14:8 16:19 19:11 21:2 times 11:11 16:17 today 5:18 8:3,6 told 17:4 tonight 3:24 4:2 6:25 13:14,21 14:5 topic 13:13 total 6:22 touch 12:15 touched 6:16 transcribed 3:25 transcript 5:13 transmission 10:8 11:2,18 12:15,17,19 18:17,22 19:4,6, 15 transparent 9:20 Tri-cities 19:12 troubling 15:11 16:20	turbines 17:3 U U.S. 16:9 uncertainty 9:5 unique 20:17 update 7:22,25 10:4 urge 15:17 16:14 18:12 19:2 20:14, 19 user 14:23 utilities 11:25 20:15 Utility 14:22 V Valley-rathdrum 17:20 values 10:17 visit 5:1 voltage 11:6 W Washington 5:6 6:20 10:22 11:1 17:2,25 19:8,13, 15 20:2,11 water 7:10,11 8:15 11:11 17:20 19:21 20:21 ways 18:2 weather 9:8 15:15 16:12	website 5:1,20 13:24 weekend 19:25 weeks 15:18 west 16:9,23,25 Western 16:6 wheels 3:11 wild 17:16 19:23 Wildlife 7:5 wind 15:5,6,10, 20,23 16:5,20,25 17:3,6,10 19:14 winter 15:18,19 wishing 3:17 word 16:6 words 7:16,17 work 10:16 13:6 18:5,11 worsen 19:18 written 5:17 7:3 13:17,22 www.nwccouncil. org. 5:8 Y Yakima 19:12 year 4:22 5:25 19:11,14,24 20:23 years 4:19 7:22, 23,25 8:1,23 9:1, 25 10:1,2 15:4,12 18:25
---	--	--