



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

Minutes for Systems Analysis Advisory Committee September 24, 2026

Dor Hirsh Bar Gai, NWPCC, began the meeting at 9:00am. Chad Madron, NWPCC, explained the best way to interact with the Zoom webinar platform. John Ollis, NWPCC, called for attendance.

Discussion of the Draft 9th Power Plan

Aliza Seelig, PNUCC, asked if staff tested all 13 portfolios through GENESYS [Slide 7]. Hirsh Bar Gai answered yes, all the portfolios were tested. Seelig asked when that was run. Ollis said the checked sensitivities and strategies will be discussed later in the day.

Seelig said this made sense but added that this was not obvious to interested parties as there was discussion about only running a few things. Ollis said that is true and pointed to differences in checks that will be discussed later. Seelig said it would be helpful to see how things have changed as this pathway was not clear from the start. Ollis thought staff may not have been clear about conducting checks.

Jennifer Light, NPWCC, added that this is not a process change and was discussed from the beginning. Light said the quick checks represent 1/5th of the full checks budget.

Scott Levy, Blue Fish, asked about the cost for a single run. Ollis said each check is \$3000.

Levy wrote, “Regional Footprint Map - a count 17 in-region and 17 outside-region, but I recall the 9th Plan discussing 17 and 14 respectively. What am I counting incorrectly (in- or out-)?” in the chat [Slide 10]. Hirsh Bar Gai offered to double check and get back to him.

Rachel Gardner-Clark, Tacoma Power, asked about the extrapolation process [Slide 13]. Hirsh Bar Gai explained the process. Gardner-Clark said she understood the process from the load side but did not understand how it all worked together. Hirsh Bar Gai said the next slide addresses this.

Gardner-Clark asked if the last step illustrated on [Slide 14] combines the aggregate of the stand-alone studies. Hirsh Bar Gai said yes, for the interim approach, not the final study. Ollis added more context.

Seelig called this helpful, reiterating the strategy back to staff. Hirsh Bar Gai said the adequacy checks for OptGen build outs are stand-alone studies. He said they were the “only” GENESYS runs. Hirsh Bar Gai said the implied deficit was calculated from them. He said the OptGen runs

did not have more than one simulated load trajectory for the strategy check, while the full distribution check means considering the results from five individual, stand-alone studies.

Seelig thought sample size is why it fails in the high load but doesn't fail in the full distribution. Hirsh Bar Gai said yes. She asked if, going forward, portfolios will be tested against the full distribution. Hirsh Bar Gai said that is still in discussion, talking about past work. Ollis stressed that the final strategy of the Plan will check the full distribution while future studies may be different.

Levy referenced his discussions with BPA around the size of the high demand forecast and the appropriateness of using it.

Seelig wondered about inadequacies when the study was set up to be adequate [Slide 18]. This made her consider the initial set up and if going back and using one load path would provide adequacy. Seelig said she questioned the robustness of the approach.

Ollis said staff look at the future from a risk-informed basis and looking from a high-load trajectory doesn't check out then we would not be adequate. Ollis pointed to the uncertainty that caused staff to create five different pathways. He said it's hard to pass all of the adequacy information to the model though staff try their best and the real test is adequacy.

Seelig said this sounds like staff will always need a distribution to test strategy and thought there should be more discussion with the RAAC/SAAC to discover what to look at. She called it important to capture the differences of viewpoints within the committees.

Hirsh Bar Gai clarified that all five complete trajectories were tested for the "After Strategy." Ollis added that it was never the intent for the High Load to be completely adequate. Ollis agreed that this is ripe for discussion as staff move to the next adequacy assessment.

Essenberg liked how this slide illustrated risk if the region does end up on the high load trajectory. She then asked about other risks, recalling WPPSS and the problem of stranded assets, unrealized loads, and an overbuilt system. Essenberg asked if there is any analysis of under versus overbuilding.

Hirsh Bar Gai said the comparison analysis of sunk cost has not been a staff priority. Ollis called the high/low risk part of the broad economic risk. Ollis said balancing that is trying to set the models up with an economically sound future that protects against a high-load future.

Essenberg thought it would be good to know the risks of over and under shooting to gauge how much the region is willing to pay. Ollis thought that data was available and offered to follow up offline.

Seelig understood Essenberg's point but said limited transmission and other constraints on the system make overbuilding in the long term something to recognize as the region can't build

quickly. She asked how the strategy looks at the tradeoffs, admitting that is beyond the tests shown here.

Morrissey referenced and explained a study that looked at what happens if higher data center loads don't arrive. He wrote, "Please see Appendix N page 51 of the draft 9th Plan for discussion on the OptGen capital expansion run without the high and early growth load trajectories through 2032." In the chat.

Madron added, <https://www.nwcouncil.org/energy/ninthpowerplan/technical-elements/> - under [Global Assumptions](#) in the chat as well.

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Seelig asked, "Thanks for the reminder about the data load study. Why did the Council not run it further out? Maybe this is an offline follow up to better understand. I'm saving myself a note. I remember feeling like it should be run in all snapshot years, but I remember hearing that it was just 2032." In the chat. Ollis replied, "I believe the question from the Council was mostly on the near-term effects. But we can reconvene as staff, try to recall why we did not run further analysis and we can follow-up."

Dave LeVee, Powercast, asked if there is demand elasticity in the work, pointing to changes in the tax consequence that caused an enormous price increase in renewables. Hirsh Bar Gai said the policies and tax credit information are in Appendix B. Hirsh Bar Gai then said that feeds into OptGen, adding that the resource strategy is not one sensitivity and there was some picking and choosing. Hirsh Bar Gai said there was response from an advisory committee about hedging with demand response because of the likely economics.

Ollis added that staff incorporated a few elastic loads particularly related to hydrogen, voltage regulation, and some DR products.

Gardner-Clark said it looks like there is a concentration of issues in the winter [Slide 28]. She thought the Plan revealed problems in both summer and winter and wondered about the disconnect.

Ollis confirmed that was true before moving to a regional strategy, but moving to a regional strategy fixed some summer issues. He said this shows that winter problems are still trickier to fix. Hirsh Bar Gai added that this is the final shortfall record and falls within our risk tolerance.

Levy addressed BPA's position that this overbuilds the system, saying imports might be the answer. He addressed time of day, sunset and sunrise hours and thought a scenario with loosened import requirements might be important. Hirsh Bar Gai said staff had discussed this with advisory committee members before and need consensus on how much and in what direction.

Levy agreed but didn't think this should wait past the final Plan. Hirsh Bar Gai said this should be a future discussion calling it an important need that is on the radar.

Seelig appreciated this look but wondered about the WIEB electrification study that found Winter deficits are growing across the west, particularly as you add large loads. She asked how this risk is captured and its importance to the region.

Morrissey said he put together that forecast and it's being built into the models. He explained the process and its limitations. Seelig asked how this work influences the results for the Ninth Plan. Ollis said market reliance has been limited from an adequacy perspective. Ollis said raising loads outside the region creates more pressure to build but it will not be uniform which changes our market risk.

Morrissey added that electrification happens gradually over the next 10-20 years. He said this means it happens just a bit in the Action Plan period but gets really big later.

Seelig countered that this is why committee members discussed going beyond the 2030 optimization to look across the builds overall. Ollis said he discussed this a bit with Council Members, noting that there is more EE later in the study as the resource requirement need goes up and some talk about getting a head start on that as it takes time to build up.

Seelig thought that might be driven by the higher demand forecast, saying that market interaction is important. Ollis said load growth is also a big piece of the puzzle and staff will have to dig in.

Mary Kulas, Public Power Council, noted that [Slide 34] shows an adequate system to 2031, but the resource strategy goes to 2032. Hirsh Bar Gai answered that what you see in 2031 is where the region needs to be in 2032. Ollis agreed that this is confusing.

Kulas referenced the process and the dual target before asking if there was a light touch resource adequacy with a single target, how it was done, and if the data can work for both. Hirsh Bar Gai pointed to Appendix Q, saying all five were run with a single target.

Kulas asked for that data so the tables could be recreated, saying Appendix Q does not have data by load trajectory. Light said staff did not publish this because the strategy in the draft Plan is the dual target and this is additional analysis. Light said there's still room to move but didn't want to overanalyze a single strategy. Light encouraged members not to overly focus on the Appendix Q strategy. Kulas thanked Light saying she is just curious about the data. Light offered to make it available.

Morgan Zehrung, Washington Solar Energy Industries Association, asked if the high load trajectory deficits take 6000mW/h of solar and solar plus storage into account. Hirsh Bar Gai said all of the trajectories share the exact same resource registry and only the load changes.

Zehrung asked where to find storage discharge data. Hirsh Bar Gai offered to follow up. Zehrung then asked if this is done granularly through the utility infrastructure or an aggregate of the entire northwest. Hirsh Bar Gai moved to [Slide 9] to show how staff zonally represent the WECC.

Essenberg admitted that the dual target concept escaped her earlier and asked how the work presented today relates to it. Hirsh Bar Gai moved to [Slide 6] to show future hypothetical resources, explaining the dual target and how they got to a single target shown in Appendix Q.

Essenberg then asked if today's presentation is under the dual target modeling. Light answered yes that is the resource strategy in the Draft Plan. Essenberg confirmed that the RA analysis data Kulas was asking about are not in the Appendix. Ollis said the adequacy information starts in Appendix N page 56-58 while additional work is in Appendix Q.

Seelig wrote, "Which appendix or online workbook shows the results of the 13 sensitivities adequacy check in high load growth?" in the chat. Ollis answered, "Appendix N: Table N-14 page 56" and "Apologies. The full check is on those pages" in the chat.

Seelig said she has seen this appendix wondering what was tested. Light said that is the needs assessment which can be found in Appendix M while the adequacy check is in Appendix N. Light said there is more data and workbooks that can be accessed and added to the website.

Seelig called this confusing in the Draft Plan, saying today's presentation was helpful. Seelig said there are a lot of results and staff are waiting for requests. Light said the technical page shows a lot of results but there are lots more available. Light said changes for the final Plan might mean additions to the appendices which happens with every Plan.

Levy called this work really wonderful and sharp. He asked about the resource registries fed to GENESYS, wondering if there is a way to look at them and if the proposed resource strategy registry show individual zones.

Hirsh Bar Gai said there is one registry that is modified as needed. Annika Roberts, NWPCC, said the workbook is already posted to the technical document page. Hirsh Bar Gai then said locations are informed based on the OptGen runs.

Gardner-Clark brought up internal discussions about possible resource additions with a single regional conservation target. She realized that this is not necessarily what will be in the final Ninth Plan, but intuitively it looked like 100MW of wind or 100MW of gas. Gardner-Clark wondered how this could be possible and asked staff to discuss further.

Hirsh Bar Gai said that is a great question and staff need more time to work on the problem. Gardner-Clark thanked him for the answer.

Ollis asked for questions and follow-ups offline. Hirsh Bar Gai ended the meeting at 11:45.

Attendees via Zoom Webinar

Dor Hirsh Bar Gai, NWPCC
John Ollis, NWPCC
Daniel Hua, NWPCC
Jennifer Light, NWPCC
Tomás Morrissey, NPWCC
Jake Kennedy, NWPCC
Steve Anderson, Clark PUD
Paul Barrager, WA UTC
Ryan Bottem, Pub Gen Pool
Ana Boyd, WA UTC
Frank Brown, BPA
John Crider, EWEB
Mike Dalton, Montana
Christian Douglass, NWPCC
Carla Essenberg, BPA
Kelly Fukai, NWGA
James Gall, Avista Corp
Rachel Gardner-Clark, Tacoma Power
Sibyl Geiselman, Pub Gen Pool
Mike Hermanson, Avista Corp
Lori Hermanson, Avista Corp
Fred Heutte, NW Energy Coalition
Robert Hughes, Avista Corp
Sanjeev Joshi, Critfc

Alexandra Karpoff, Puget Sound Energy
Rebecca Klein, Seattle City Light
May Kulas, Pub Power Council
Jon Lange, Sun Energy Systems
David LeVee, Powercast
Scott Levy, Blue Fish
John Lyons, Avista
Sophie Major, WA UTC
Verene Martin, Seattle City Light
Ian McGetrick, Idaho Power
Devin Mounts, PGE
Heather Nicholson, Orcas Power & Light
Gemma O'Connor, Tacoma Power
Elizabeth Osborne, NWPCC
Craig Patterson, independent
John Purvis, Clallam PUD
Annika Roberts, NWPCC
Aliza Seelig, PNUCC
Joni Sliger, ODOE
Kevin Smit, NWPCC
Jaime Stamatson, Montana
Mike Swirsky, Critfc
Joe Walderman, NWPCC
Morgan Zehrung, Forecast Energy