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March 7, 2017

MEMORANDUM

- TO: Power Committee
- **FROM:** Mike Starrett
- **SUBJECT:** Methane Emissions from Reservoirs

BACKGROUND:

- Presenter: Mike Starrett
- Summary: In September 2016, Washington State University released a study on greenhouse gas emissions from existing reservoirs around the world (hydroelectric and otherwise). This study concluded that global methane emissions from reservoirs have likely been under reported and may be a greater contributor of greenhouse gas emissions than previously understood.

Staff reviewed the study and have initially concluded that there is not enough data available to make detailed emissions estimates specific to the Pacific Northwest's reservoir system. In addition, staff finds that the region's reservoirs likely do not have the characteristics most strongly associated with high emissions.

At the Power Committee meeting, staff will present a summary of the study, how it pertains to the Pacific Northwest, and how it compares to other sources of methane emissions.

Relevance: This study was picked up by the Washington Post and other news outlets. It is important for the Council to offer its independent analysis on studies like this, especially when they come with attention-grabbing headlines that stir up a lot of interest regionally and nationally.

More Info: Washington State University press release on its study -<u>https://news.wsu.edu/2016/09/28/reservoirs-play-substantial-role-global-</u> warming/

> Washington Post article, "Reservoirs are a major source of global greenhouse gases, scientists say" - <u>https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-</u>environment/wp/2016/09/28/scientists-just-found-yet-another-way-thathumans-are-creating-greenhouse-gases/?utm_term=.28a888a1e0d7





























