

Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act



A history and summary of key provisions of the Power Act

Columbia River Basin

268,000
square miles
or

668,220
square
kilometers





Federal Columbia River Power System

Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS)

Includes:

- 31 multi-purpose dams
- 1 non-federal nuclear power plant

Dams owned and operated by:

- Corps of Engineers or
- Bureau of Reclamation

Power from FCRPS marketed by:

- Bonneville Power Administration

Understanding the Power Act

- Legislative response to:
 - Regional energy crisis
 - Salmon crisis
 - public participation crisis

The Power Act: response to a regional energy crisis

- Early 1970's: Prediction that demand for electricity will outstrip supply
- Predicted shortage leads to
 - ill-fated Hydro-Thermal Power Plan
 - Preference customers vs. non-preference customers fight over who gets access to the (low-cost) hydroelectric power

The Power Act: response to a salmon crisis

- Declining salmon runs especially in the Snake River
- Petitions to list under ESA being considered
- Drop in populations correlated with dams coming on line (among other things)
- Salmon advocates and other believe runs can be restored with fish passage improvements and by considering fish needs when operating the system of dams on the Columbia and its tributaries

The Power Act: response to a participatory crisis

- Anyone listening?
- Desire for more regional and public involvement in decisions affecting energy and fish and wildlife resources

Dec. 5, 1980: Power Act signed

Purposes include:

- To encourage conservation and efficiency in the use of electric power and the development of renewable resources within the Pacific Northwest
- To assure the region of an adequate, efficient, economical, and reliable power supply

Power Act: purposes (cont'd)

- To protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife of the Columbia River and its tributaries, particularly anadromous fish which are of significant importance to the social and economic well-being of the northwest and the nation and which are dependent on suitable environmental conditions substantially obtainable from the management and operation of FCRPS and other power generating facilities on the Columbia and its tributaries

Power Act: purposes (cont'd)

- To provide for the participation and consultation of the pacific northwest states, local governments, consumers, customers, users of the Columbia including Federal and State fish and wildlife agencies and Indian tribes and the public at large within the region in developing regional plans and programs

Power Act: Created a regional planning body

- Authorized creation of the 8 member Council by interstate compact
 - Governors of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington each appoint 2 members
- Gave Council 3 core responsibilities:
 - developing power plan
 - developing a fish and wildlife program
 - Providing a forum for public involvement and open decision making with regards to energy and fish and wildlife issues

Power Act: Developing a power plan

- Take a long term planning view
minimum of 20 year planning horizon
- Keep the plan up to date
review the plan at least every 5 years
- Develop the plan in a transparent manner
- Encourage broad regional participation
include federal/state agencies, political subdivisions,
and Indian tribes

Power Act: Prioritizing resources in power plan

1. Cost-effective conservation (energy efficiency)
2. Renewable resources
3. Generating resources utilizing waste heat or generating resources of high fuel conversion efficiency
4. All other resources

Power Act: More power plan requirements

- 20 year demand forecast for the region
- forecast of power resources the region will need and a plan on how to acquire those resources
- energy conservation program
- reserve and reliability requirements
- Recommendations for research and development
- Fish and Wildlife Program developed by the Council

Power Act: Increased BPA's authority and obligations

- Bonneville now has authority to “acquire” generating resources
- Bonneville must acquire enough resources to serve all utilities that choose to apply to Bonneville for power to meet firm loads (*preference and non-preference*)
- Bonneville is expected to spread the benefits of low-cost hydro
- Bonneville must acquire conservation and major resources consistent with Council's power plan

Council's 6th Power Plan

- Provides a resource strategy that ensures the Pacific Northwest an adequate, efficient and economical power supply over the next 20 years
- Provides guidance on the types of resources that should be considered and their priority of development
- Assesses risks associated with uncertain future conditions

6th Power Plan uncertainties

Include:

- Cost of energy
- Climate change policies
- Electricity demand
- Water supply
- Hydroelectric operations
- Fish and wildlife issues

Development of 6th Power Plan

- Dec 2007: issue paper released for public comment
- 2 years of: Technical and policy analyses; additional issue papers, draft forecasts released for public comment; public meetings of many advisory committees
- Sept 2009: draft sixth power plan released for public comment
 - Over 750 written comments received
 - 9 public hearings in 4 states
 - informal consultations
- Redrafting, deliberation, redrafting, more deliberation
- Feb 2010: 6th Power Plan adopted

6th Power Plan: Resource strategy – 5 recommendations

- Do more conservation
- The most readily available and cost-effective renewable resource is wind power; additional strategies are needed to integrate it into the power system
- Improve system operating procedures and business practices to better integrate wind and other reserves to improve the efficiency and flexibility of the power system

- Any remaining needs for new energy should be met with natural gas-fired generation for the next few years
- Expand efforts to find long-term resource alternatives.