

Staff summary of Issues & Recommendations

Renewable Energy

*Preliminary draft, please refer to full recommendations for complete review

10/29/2013 10:08 AM

2009 Fish and Wildlife Program Section

None

Overview

The Council received recommendations that it incorporate specific guidance on reducing fish and wildlife impacts associated with renewable energy development.

The Council also received a recommendation that it provide guidance on to energy producers in the region on the risks of using certain invasive plants as biofeedstocks.

I. Summary

A. Consider the effects of renewable energy development on fish and wildlife

- a) The USFWS (), Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation (), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (), Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation (), recommended including in the program, guidance and recommendations for reducing the impacts of renewable energy development on aquatic and terrestrial resources.

B. The program should play a key role in developing policies and methods for monitoring and controlling invasive species--including by providing guidance to energy producers in the region on the risks of using some invasive plants with high bioenergy capacity as bioenergy feedstock.

- a) The Washington Invasive Species Council () recommended the program provide guidance to hydro producers in the Pacific Northwest region of the perils of using invasive species as alternative fuel sources.

II. Renewable Energy Recommendations

State Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Other State or State Supported Agencies

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife ()

- a) Recommend the Council develop, and BPA fund,
 1. Programs and processes to evaluate the impacts of fish and wildlife resources of all renewable energy sources (past, proposed and potential) and associated transmission infrastructure;

2. A region-wide assessment of suitability for siting terrestrial and aquatic renewable energy projects, prioritize possible sites, and examine potential site-specific and system-wide impacts to fish and wildlife. The outputs from this analysis should include a map of priority power generation development sites and power generation exclusion zones or protected areas, as was done for hydropower;
3. Explicit evaluation of transmission system expansion and its potential to impact fish and wildlife as part of development scenarios and assessments; and
4. Identification, assessment and analyses of appropriate fish and wildlife mitigation

Sound energy management includes the consideration of direct and indirect impacts to fish, wildlife, and their habitat. The recommended language aims to provide direction to the Council on how to address renewable power’s fish and wildlife impacts and incorporate it into overall planning efforts.

The program could mandate establishing areas protected from wind power generation as was done with protected areas for hydropower development. The first steps to doing this could be studies identifying and characterizing critically-important regional fish and wildlife resources likely to be affected by wind power projects. The program should also require consideration of wildlife and their habitat potentially at risk from impacts from wind and solar projects and should explicitly identify linkages between energy development and fish and wildlife life histories. For example, wave energy development might be identified as potential affecting anadromous fish which already suffer from the effects of CR Mainstem and tributary energy projects.

Washington Invasive Species Council ()

a) Renewable Energy Recommendation: Provide guidance to hydropower producers in the Northwest region on the use of invasive species as alternative fuel sources. Also require the consideration of invasive potential and ecological risks associated with all novel feedstock species, cultivars, and hybrids. Studies have shown that some plants with the highest bioenergy capacity, such as giant reed (*Arundo donax*), are highly invasive and potentially harmful to native fish, wildlife and ecosystems.

Indian Tribes and Tribal Organizations

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation ()

Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation, Inc. ()

- a) Recommend the Council develop, and BPA fund,
1. Programs and processes to evaluate the impacts of fish and wildlife resources of all renewable energy sources (past, proposed and potential) and associated transmission infrastructure;
 2. A region-wide assessment of suitability for siting terrestrial and aquatic renewable energy projects, prioritize possible sites, and examine potential site-specific and system-wide impacts to fish and wildlife. The outputs from this analysis should include a map of priority power generation development sites and power generation exclusion zones or protected areas, as was done for hydropower;

3. Explicit evaluation of transmission system expansion and its potential to impact fish and wildlife as part of development scenarios and assessments; and
4. Identification, assessment and analyses of appropriate fish and wildlife mitigation

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The program could mandate establishing areas protected from wind power generation as was done with protected areas for hydropower development. The first steps to doing this could be studies identifying and characterizing critically-important regional fish and wildlife resources likely to be affected by wind power projects. The program should also require consideration of wildlife and their habitat potentially at risk from impacts from wind and solar projects and should explicitly identify linkages between energy development and fish and wildlife life histories. For example, wave energy development might be identified as potential affecting anadromous fish which already suffer from the effects of CR Mainstem and tributary energy projects.

Federal Fish and Wildlife and Other Federal Agencies

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) ()

a) Recommend the program include recommendations for reducing impacts of renewable energy development on aquatic and terrestrial resources to encourage environmentally sustainable development of projects. The recommendations may be applicable in a variety of Federal, State, and local decisions such as permit issuance or other supporting authorizations.

Recommend the Council consider, when incorporating guidance for renewable energy development, including the following:

1. Past, proposed and potential project actions, including transmission infrastructure projects, should evaluate their impacts on fish, wildlife and their habitats;
2. A region-wide assessment of suitability for siting terrestrial and aquatic renewable energy projects, prioritize possible sites, and examine potential site-specific and system-wide impacts to fish and wildlife. The outputs from this analysis should include a map of priority power generation development sites and power generation exclusion zones or protected areas, as was done for hydropower;
3. Explicit evaluation of transmission system expansion and its potential to impact fish and wildlife and their habitats as part of development scenarios and assessments; and
4. Identification, assessment and analyses of appropriate mitigation for fish and wildlife and their habitats.