



October 18, 2002

Stephen J. Wright  
BPA Comments  
P.O. Box 12999  
Portland, OR 97208

RE: Energy Planning and Marketing for the Future

Dear Mr. Wright:

The Mountaineers with nearly 15,000 electric rate paying members, is one of the oldest and largest outdoor recreation and conservation clubs in the Pacific Northwest. Founded in 1906, the Mountaineers antedate BPA by more than thirty years. We have a long history of involvement in public policy issues to protect the environment and enhance the quality of life. Through the myriad of recreational activities we offer, Mountaineers are witnessing significant increase in air pollution, from the summits of our region's mountains to the headwaters of our bodies of water. The acquisition of new energy resources and the marketing of electric power have such profound implications for the environment that we welcome this opportunity to comment.

BPA currently markets and controls approximately 45% of the electric power in the Pacific Northwest. This consists chiefly of the hydroelectric power from the Federal Columbia River Power system (FCRPS), and one nuclear power plant (WPPSS, WNP-2). With such significant influence comes great responsibility. The Columbia - Snake River hydroelectric system is a public resource. It derives its power from the flow of water in public rivers and was built by public money. As a public resource, control of the FCRPS is best left in the hands of a public agency and not relinquished to the utilities. As a public agency, BPA has both moral and legal obligations to operate the system in the broadest best interest of all the citizens of the Pacific Northwest.

The Mountaineers supports the Public Interest Proposal (PIP) for the acquisition of new power resources, the marketing of current power and the restoration of endangered wild salmon. BPA should:

- Meet all new regional energy needs and resource replacement requirements with conservation and renewable resources. BPA is legally obligated to seek out these sources first, see Northwest Power and Conservation Act, 1980. These resources may be acquired either by individual utilities or by BPA directly. Long-term conservation and renewable resources are the most cost effective and environmentally friendly means of meeting future power demands. They also offer the greatest price stability, being independent of future fuel cost and availability.
- Re-establish the program for low-income weatherization with a goal of weatherizing one-twentieth of all unweatherized dwellings annually.
- Recognize and act to meet your moral and legal obligations under the Northwest Indian Tribes treaties of 1855, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Northwest Power and Conservation Act, 1980 to restore endangered wild salmon to the Columbia and Snake River Systems.

- Provide an equal and powerful voice at the table to represent salmon. The Indian tribes have been suggested for this role.
- Provide incentives for the construction of energy-efficient buildings and the manufacture and installation of energy efficient heating, cooling and water-heating equipment.
- Provide incentives to buyers for the purchase of energy-efficient equipment and appliances and alternatively fueled products.
- Remove the economic incentives for both BPA and various utilities both public and private to fail to support salmon restoration and conservation and renewable resource acquisition in favor of short-term gains, i.e. keeping rates low!
- Make conservation and renewable resource acquisition and salmon restoration goals enforceable by strict financial penalties for those utilities failing to meet their goals. The rules governing these goals and penalties must be ironclad. Far too frequently in the past utilities have been allowed to sidestep and avoid laudable goals and commitments in order to improve their balance sheet with no negative consequences to the utility, but with dire results for the programs.

The Mountaineers supports clean and affordable energy. We support restoration of wild salmon. We believe that the Public Interest Proposal offers the best plan for achieving these goals and we urge BPA to adopt it.

Thank you for the opportunity to make these comments and please keep us informed of all future occasions to review BPA proposals and to make comments on BPA's future.

Sincerely,

THE MOUNTAINEERS

*Glenn Eades,*

President

cc: Senator Patty Murray  
 Senator Maria Cantwell  
 Governor Gary Locke  
 Northwest Power Planning Council