

**Lonsdale testimony to BPA Hearings,**  
**September 30, 2002**

I am Sandy Lonsdale, Environmental Policy Manager for Vulcan Power Company, an independent geothermal power developer based in Bend, Oregon. I am a longtime Oregon public lands advocate. I care deeply about our environment here in Oregon. For the past several years, my environmental concerns for Oregon have moved from Old Growth Forest protection to concerns for Oregon's clean air and water supplies. Gas-fired power plants, although relatively clean when compared to coal plants, pump significant amounts of pollution into our environment, global warming gasses into our atmosphere, and consume massive amounts of water, a very precious commodity in arid central and eastern Oregon. **Any future load growth not met by new renewables and conservation will likely be met by new gas plants. It is crucial that the BPA help develop new renewables and conservation programs to prevent an over-reliance on gas-fired generation.**

My concerns about energy issues led me to discover a green power company in Bend, where I learned about geothermal energy. Vulcan Power Company has the majority of the highly prospective geothermal leases at Newberry Volcano just south of Bend, where government studies have shown a tremendous potential for clean, baseload geothermal power. In fact, the BPA itself deemed Newberry to be the highest ranked geothermal prospect in the Northwest. That was about 10 years ago.

I have been to the proposed geothermal site at Newberry, and quite frankly, a small, responsibly developed power plant on that site might be an ecological improvement on that clearcut piece of public forest.

An example of Vulcan's environmental commitment is its dedication of five percent of future project income to the Native Range Restoration Project, a project I work on at Vulcan, to help public agencies restore arid grasslands overgrazed by livestock and overrun by invasive weeds and unnatural fire cycles. Vulcan commits to this project wherever power developments are sited on public land.

Geothermal projects, such as Newberry, and other quality renewable energy resources are good examples of the types of power development that the BPA should support wholeheartedly. Poll after poll has shown that Oregonians support adding renewable energy to the Northwest power mix. Scientists have predicted that global warming will reduce Northwest snowpack, not only reducing water supplies for hydropower production, but also further endangering Northwest salmon that rely on healthy and consistent stream flows. The situation in the lower Klamath River today may foreshadow future problems elsewhere in the region.

The Northwest has had the lowest energy rates for decades, but these rates have not reflected the true environmental costs of BPA power. Northwest native salmon have defined our people for generations. The value of these salmon runs is incalculable. We must not allow more Northwest wild salmon runs to die. The BPA must commit to developing new renewable energy sources in the Northwest.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

## Mark Albert

- Good evening, my name is Mark Albert. I am an electrical engineer working for Vulcan Power Company in Bend, Oregon.
- 6 years ago, I attended a meeting similar to this one addressing Northwest energy policy called the Comprehensive Review of the Northwest Energy System. I spoke to the committee about the hidden economic and environmental costs of conventional power sources such as hydro and fossil fuels. I pleaded that they understand how important the environment and renewable energy is to the people of the Northwest and that they follow a responsible renewable energy blueprint.
- My firm beliefs led me to join Vulcan Power Company, a geothermal company in Bend, to work to protect our planet and help right the decades of wrongs that energy policy in the Northwest has endured. Vulcan has multiple projects throughout the region where they are trying to generate clean, green baseload geothermal power. All that is holding things up is a utility or power purchasing entity to sign a power purchase contract
- But since then, I have watched Oregon and the Northwest lag far behind other states in the west on renewable energy. CA, NV, TX have implemented significant renewable energy requirements that will add Thousands of MW of green power to those states. But in 6 years, no baseload geothermal has come on line in the Northwest, very little biomass and solar, and only modest amounts of intermittent wind. It has been frustrating, it has been aggravating, and, frankly, it has been embarrassing. One of the most perplexing mysteries in my life is how the Pacific Northwest can have so many people that care so much about the environment, and still lag so far behind states like Texas and Nevada on renewable energy policy.
- The Economic Benefits of 100 MW of Geothermal is Huge – (*handout*)
  - New sustainable jobs
  - Increased Taxes and Energy royalty payments to local and state Govts
  - Clean Air Benefits and the benefits to the system of reliable, baseload, 24 hours per day geothermal
- Renewable Energy is an Insurance Policy Hedge against Gas Price increases and volatility. Renewable energy plants built today will offset the need for more gas plants in the future. Because nearly all the gas that will fuel the gas fired plants being built today will come from the mature Western Canadian Gas Basins, regional dollars spent on gas will leave the region and leave the country.
- Thank you for the opportunity to share my views on this very important matter. I sincerely hope that BPA can find better ways to solve its economic problems than cutting back funding on 2 of its most important responsibilities: Salmon and Renewable Energy.
- The gentlemen following me is a colleague of mine in the quest for sustainable energy policy. His name is Sandy Lonsdale and he has been a leader in the environmental community in Oregon for nearly 15 years.