



Washington Rural Electric
COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

**Policy Position of the
Washington Rural Electric Cooperative Association
Electric Energy**

Washington's economy has been built on abundant, reliable and inexpensive electric energy. Based primarily on hydropower, the "energy advantage" enjoyed by Washington has allowed traditional manufacturing facilities to provide family-wage jobs, meet strict environmental regulations, offset high transportation costs and still compete successfully in the global marketplace. Additionally, the critically important agriculture segment of Washington's economy is dependent on reliable and economical electric energy.

In recent years, traditional manufacturers have been joined by high-tech firms in requiring large, reliable amounts of electricity. Unfortunately, Washington has lost its energy advantage, and traditional manufacturers and certain agriculture sectors are now struggling to compete.

Available BPA hydropower can no longer meet growing regional demands, and hydro production is being further restricted by litigation and efforts to protect Endangered Species Act-listed salmon runs on the Columbia-Snake River system. Additionally, most of the region's non-federal dams are facing a costly federal relicensing process. Generation costs for other existing and new resources also remain relatively high.

Against this backdrop, it is vital that Washington public policy encourages development of a reliable supply of affordable energy and ensures that its laws and regulations enhance, rather than impede, the development of affordable energy supplies and necessary infrastructure.

The electric cooperatives and mutual companies in Washington:

- Support policies that promote and ensure reliable, abundant energy supply at reasonable costs.
- Believe that hydroelectric power is and must be recognized as a renewable resource and the low-cost attributes and capabilities of the hydroelectric system must be preserved.
- Support cost-effective conservation measures and the generation of competitively-priced electric energy from renewable resources including hydroelectric generation.
- Believe market forces will deliver alternative energy technologies as they become cost effective, and supports state incentives, not mandates, removing regulatory barriers, and voluntary programs to hasten that development.
- Oppose statutorily mandated fees that are unrelated to the provision of energy services.
- Oppose breaching Snake River Dams and the resulting loss of abundant, affordable, and available renewable power and the negative impact on salmon and steelhead populations that would result from dam breaching.
- Believe that the State's Energy Strategy must remain a guiding document, not a governing document. Any efforts to review or update the state strategy must include broad-based stakeholder participation.
- Believe that a stable regulatory climate is necessary to encourage investment in the generation and transmission resources needed to sustain and encourage economic growth, and that the state should affirmatively facilitate the siting and development of electric transmission that is essential to accommodate economic growth. - Adopted: January 30, 2007.

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