

Steve Wright  
BPA Comment  
PO Box 12999  
Portland, OR 97208

Mr. Wright;

October 18, 2002

As Bonneville Power Administration prepares to enter into long-term power contracts with Northwest utilities beginning in 2006, Northwest Sustainable Energy for Economic Development (Northwest SEED) respectfully submits the following suggestions on behalf of our broad regional network of supporters of renewable energy located throughout the Northwest region.

#### **About Northwest SEED**

Northwest SEED works to build partnerships to mobilize consumers and maximize local benefits from harvesting "home grown" energy resources - wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, low-impact hydro, conservation, and bio-based products - while maintaining reliable electric service and creating new revenue streams and high quality jobs throughout the Pacific Northwest. As a diverse network of individuals and organizations, Northwest SEED works to engage and build support among rural communities, Tribes, utilities and businesses to ensure local participation, accountability, and long-term benefits of truly sustainable energy. Northwest SEED supports and develops creative programs, policies, and financing approaches to build rural economies and meet the region's power needs through affordable, distributed "green" generation.

#### **Renewable Energy for the Region's Future**

BPA has a unique and historic role as a leader in promoting the use of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. BPA invested nearly \$200 million annually in world-class conservation programs in the 1980s and early 1990s because the agency knew it was the right thing to do for the economy, ratepayers and environment. BPA gutted those investments in the mid-90s, a decision that cost the region hundreds of millions of dollars in added power costs when prices spiked last year. BPA has begun to rebuild these programs in recent years but has a long ways to go. Now the agency has another opportunity to lead the Northwest towards a clean energy future.

Northwest SEED and our network of urban and rural clean energy supporters believe that strong support for renewables and energy efficiency must play a pivotal role in BPA's long-term planning processes, in order to protect the environmental and economic future of our region. The following key ideas should be included in any strategic plans for the agency's future operations:

- 1) **Continued meaningful investment in renewable energy.** Investment in renewables, especially locally owned and operated projects have long-term

environmental and economic benefits for our region. Reduced dependence upon fossil fuel inputs, including coal, oil and natural gas, insulates utilities and ratepayers from the effects of unpredictable fuel price fluctuations. Fewer polluting fossil-fuel power plants means cleaner air, land and water for current and future generations of Northwest residents. Increased regional generating capacity reduces dependence upon the volatile wholesale power market, whose price fluctuations can cause violent rate hikes like those seen during the “Energy Crisis” of last year.

- 2) **Support for energy efficiency and conservation initiatives.** Lower demand helps reduce the need for new power plants and decreases dependence on the regional wholesale power market to fill gaps in regional supply. Consumer awareness campaigns, support for energy efficiency improvements and low-income weatherization programs can all help regional consumers to lower their power bills, ease pressure on the grid during peak times, and lower total regional energy consumption.
- 3) **Aim for 20% by 2020!** We believe that a regional energy portfolio that includes twenty percent renewables is an achievable goal. Renewable energy continues to become more cost-competitive, even excluding the added value of price stability that many long-term renewables Power Purchase Agreements include. More and more consumers are recognizing the clear local and global benefits of renewable energy, and are taking advantage of “green power” programs to purchase clean energy through their local utilities.

Renewable energy is the right choice for our regional economy and environment. A strong commitment to renewables now will help ensure a clean and affordable energy future for the Pacific Northwest.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our suggestions.

Most sincerely,

Heather Rhoads-Weaver  
Executive Director, Northwest SEED