

Between the Lines



Customer Newsletter Spring 2020 BentonPUD.org

Now is the time to save the dams !

The Columbia River Systems Operations Draft Environmental Impact Statement (CRSO DEIS), which includes recommendations on the future operations of the four lower Snake River dams, was released on February 28. At that time a 45-day public comment period began. Benton PUD encourages our customers to provide their comments and support regarding the lower Snake River dams.

What is the EIS ?

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation and the Bonneville Power Administration prepared the draft environmental impact statement in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act on operations, maintenance and configurations for 14 federal projects in the Columbia River System in the interior Columbia River Basin.



It's time to take action !

Your comments are critical to ensuring hydro power remains the primary source of reliable, low-cost and clean electricity in the Pacific Northwest. Please take a few minutes to comment in support of the lower Snake River dams.

Comment online

Go to www.comments.crso.info before April 13.

Comment by mail

Mail your comments directly to the public agencies. Letters must be posted by April 13.

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Attn: CRSO EIS
P.O. Box 2870
Portland, OR 97208-2870**

Comment at a public comment meeting

Attend the local public comment meeting on:

**Wednesday, March 18
Red Lion Hotel
1101 N. Columbia Center Blvd.**

Doors open at 4:00 p.m. Verbal comments will be received from 5:15 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.

Challenging times ahead !

Maintaining affordable and reliable electricity in a 100% clean era

Almost one year ago the Washington Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) was signed into law, requiring electric utilities to remove coal from their portfolios by 2025 and all carbon-emitting resources by 2045. While wind and solar power are popular choices for meeting 100% clean electricity goals, the intermittency and variability of these resources makes them unsuitable for maintaining the precise moment-to-moment balance between electricity production and consumption required for reliable power grid operations. Weather conditions in the Pacific Northwest can be particularly problematic for wind and solar power as extreme temperatures are often accompanied by high-pressure conditions which can result in low or no wind or sunshine over large areas for many consecutive days.

The leading candidate for replacing coal power are natural gas-fired plants. However, CETA's 100% clean requirement along with other financial penalties being contemplated through various carbon tax proposals is having a chilling effect on the development of new fossil-fueled power plants. While 100% clean by 2045 is the goal of CETA, the time is now to begin planning for meeting electricity demands on the coldest and hottest days in the coming decade.

Like other utilities in the Pacific Northwest, Benton PUD's hydro and nuclear-rich power supply delivers energy surpluses most months but can come up short during high usage periods. These capacity shortages occur most often during hot summer months when hydro resources have dwindled, air conditioners are cranked up and large farms are pumping water for crops. Capacity deficits can also occur in winter months during extreme cold temperatures like the polar vortex we experienced last March. For many years Benton PUD has counted on regional wholesale electricity markets to deliver enough incremental energy to fill in the capacity gaps that occur during a few months each year; but times are changing, and we are concerned.

Where does your power come from ?

Hydro	79.6%
Nuclear	9.8%
Wind	5.2%
Market Purchases	3.1%
Other	1.8%
Natural Gas	.5%

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Challenging times ahead : continued

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NWPPCC) recently released the "Pacific Northwest Power Supply Adequacy Assessment for 2024" and identified the possibility of more than 4,800 megawatts of coal-fired generating capacity retiring between now and 2028. This is equivalent to the capacity of four Columbia Generating Station nuclear plants. Based on current retirement information there is a 26% probability by 2026 that grid operators will be required to take extraordinary actions to keep the lights on under certain peak electricity demand scenarios, including the possibility of some level of blackouts. This high loss-of-load probability is well above the longstanding 5% threshold set by the NWPPCC. Other independent regional capacity assessments are also signaling serious concerns about grid reliability.

Late last year, Benton PUD Commissioners passed Resolution 2523 supporting the efforts of the Northwest Power Pool to develop voluntary but enforceable resource adequacy (RA) standards. Utilities who commit to RA standards would be required to secure firm generation resources through construction of their own plants or through contracts with other plants well in advance of forecasted needs. The goal is to implement RA standards in 2022. Benton PUD believes maintaining a reliable power grid is about the health, safety and well-being of citizens and we are committed to doing our part to help make sure the lights stay on.

The challenges facing the Northwest electricity grid are significant and will require timely and unprecedented collaborative actions by utilities and their customers. Benton PUD believes we must preserve our already clean and reliable hydro and nuclear generation resources while not closing the door on possible investments in cleaner burning natural-gas plants needed to fill in the critical energy gaps left by wind and solar power development.

Benton PUD is charging forward with electric vehicles

Do you have questions about electric vehicles? We have answers.

Benton PUD has launched EV Connections, a program to assist our customers in the process of deciding whether to purchase an electric vehicle.

According to Bloomberg NEF, by 2037, electric vehicle sales are expected to surpass those of internal combustion engines. While less than 1% of national annual car sales in 2018 were electric, as of December 2019, there were about 300 Washington registered all-electric vehicles in Benton County.



Owning an electric vehicle can come with many financial and environmental benefits depending on where you live. Since they don't require oil changes and other costs, owning an electric vehicle is expected to decrease vehicle maintenance costs.

Thanks to the Pacific Northwest's abundant supply of hydro power and nuclear power from the Columbia Generating System, EVs are "fueled" by nearly 100% clean energy, making them environmentally friendly.

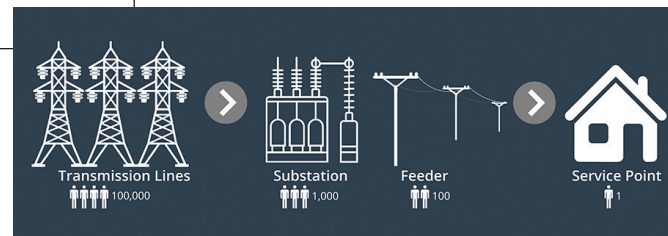
Electric vehicles also have fewer parts, can be conveniently charged at home, offer a quiet ride without engine noise, and may be eligible for state and federal incentives and customer rebates.

Benton PUD is now offering a \$250 rebate for customers buying or leasing a qualifying new electric vehicle. The electric vehicle must be all-electric with rechargeable batteries and no gasoline engine.

For more information about electric vehicles or to apply for the \$250 rebate call us at 509.582.1234 or visit BentonPUD.org/ElectricVehicles.

Update your contact information and manage notifications on SmartHub

We want to ensure doing business with Benton PUD is easy and efficient. Please log into your SmartHub® account on the web or the SmartHub App to review and update your contact information. It's quick and easy - just go to Notifications, then Manage Contacts. It is important that we have current information so we can reach you regarding your Benton PUD account. You can enroll in email and text notifications to help manage your account, learn about outages, set usage alerts and much more. If you have not yet enrolled in SmartHub, go to our website at BentonPUD.org, or enroll on your smartphone through the SmartHub app.



Drone technology will assist with line inspections

Benton PUD has over 1,000 miles of overhead transmission and distribution line and service wire in our service area. Patrolling these assets can be costly and sometimes impossible due to rugged terrain or other obstructions that limit accessibility. To assist our crews, Benton PUD recently purchased an unmanned aircraft (or drone). The drone will be used to visually inspect lines, wire and other equipment and assess and document damage. A mounted infrared camera allows crews to detect overheating of lines or equipment from a safe distance. Linemen certified as drone operators are FAA licensed drone pilots.



Be prepared for an outage

Power outages in our area are rare, but they do happen so it is important to be prepared. Some simple items to keep handy include flashlights, batteries, candles, matches, a charged power bank, a manual can opener, one gallon of water per person per day and blankets.

If you need power for medical reasons, it's especially important to be prepared. Make sure you have a plan. Have a back-up power supply or be ready to go somewhere else that has power, including the hospital. We encourage you to plan now, so you aren't caught in a difficult situation in the event of a power outage.

How we restore power

During an outage you may not see our crews, but we want you to know they are working to restore your power. The restoration process begins at the point where the power feeds into Benton PUD's system. This could be a transmission or distribution line or substation. After repairs have been made at this feeder point, crews work as safely as possible to repair remaining damage, beginning with areas serving the greatest number of customers and continuing until electricity is restored to each customer's home.

As crews work to restore power in the field, we ask you stay at least 50 feet away from all downed power lines and let crews focus on their work. Doing so, keeps our crews and you safe.

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