



February 18, 2026

The Honorable Chris Wright  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20585

Secretary Wright,

Avista Corporation, Idaho Power Company, NorthWestern Energy, PacifiCorp, Portland General Electric Company, and Puget Sound Energy, Inc. (together, the “investor-owned utilities” or “IOUs”) offer the following comments in response to the vacancy of Administration at the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). We thank Administrator Hairston for his years of service to our region and wish him well in his future pursuits.

The Federal Columbia River Power System and Federal Columbia River Transmission System were built to benefit all citizens of the Pacific Northwest; not select parts of the region or customers of any specific classification of electric utility, but all. For the region’s IOUs, BPA’s actions to carry out that mission have been deficient for some time, and BPA’s lack of transmission development in the region is the most visible example of this deficiency. The region is experiencing unprecedented load growth, and BPA is critical to meeting these challenges by expanding its transmission network, integrating privately financed lines, and exploring innovative business and partnership models that speed interconnection of new generation resources. To lead that development, the region’s IOUs urge the consideration of a leader that will prioritize transmission investment and assure efficient market structures and non-discriminatory service in order to ensure that all customers in the region – including investor-

owned utilities – do not face barriers to energy resource development. To that end, we urge the consideration of a bold leader that leads with the following qualities.

**Visionary and Transformational Leadership to Drive Transmission Expansion:** BPA has become an essential conduit to our companies' ability to deliver power to nearly 4.5 million residential, commercial, and industrial customers; even though our organizations buy relatively little power from the agency. However, BPA's transmission system has lacked investment for recent decades and the system is beginning to show its age. The agency's transmission capacity, both intra- and interregional, is effectively fully subscribed and its constrained system has become a barrier for new resources and new large load development. Critical projects have been identified but without the push of a new Administrator, projects will linger without timely completion. For this reason, the next Administrator, and BPA, must prioritize transmission development and be open to new and creative partnerships and business models that enable a more rapid development of transmission in the region.

**Managerial Experience and Institutional Influence:** The next Administrator must join BPA with a demonstrated track record of managing large and complex organizations and influencing institutional change. These qualities will be particularly important as the next Administrator will lead an organization of approximately 3,000 geographically dispersed employees, all of whom need to share a vision for the next 100 years of electric service. The need for driving institutional change is pressing and the issues are complex from a financing, regulatory and legal perspective. In addition to the transmission buildout necessary to meet growing loads, the next Administrator must also prioritize remedies to address the crippling interconnection backlog that has caused lengthy and expensive delays to bringing new energy resources onto the system. Without experience leading large organizations and possessing the ability to manage multiple workstreams, the burden of transformational change will continue to overwhelm the organization and perpetuate the problems that exist today for transmission development and interconnection processes.

**Risk Tolerance, Intelligence and Courageous Decision-Making:** The next Administrator must have business and political acumen, credibility, and the ability to make bold and courageous decisions. This position requires an individual capable of navigating the political interests of the Administration, Congress, State Governments, tribes, utilities, and other stakeholders without succumbing to stasis. Specifically, the region's IOUs will look to the pending matters of negotiating the Residential Exchange Program (REP) and determinations of the underpinnings of the REP (the Agency's interpretation of the Regional Purchase and Sales Agreements (RPSA), Average System Cost methodology, and 7(b)(2) methodology) as an early test of the next Administrator's tact. The current trajectory of the pressing REP and RPSA, and related implementation issues leave Northwest IOUs concerned that the future of the federal system may heavily favor the interests of preference customers.

We appreciate the Department of Energy's consideration of our companies' thoughts and urge the Administration to seize this opportunity to modernize and expand the Northwest power grid. Northwest IOUs stand ready to work with the next Administrator to ensure the Agency's success and thank you for your steadfast leadership and commitment to our region.


Sincerely,



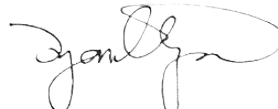
Mary Kipp  
President & CEO  
Puget Sound Energy



Heather Rosentrater  
President & CEO  
Avista Corporation



Lisa Grow  
President & CEO  
Idaho Power Company



Ryan Flynn  
President  
Pacific Power



Brian Bird  
President & CEO  
NorthWestern Energy



Maria Pope  
President & CEO  
Portland General Electric

Cc: Mr. James Danly, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy

Mr. Alex Fitzsimmons, Under Secretary of Energy (Acting), U.S. Department of Energy