

Mike Milburn
Chair
Montana

Doug Grob
Montana

Jeffery C. Allen
Idaho

Ed Schriever
Idaho



Northwest Power and Conservation Council

Thomas L (Les) Purce
Vice Chair
Washington

KC Golden
Washington

Margaret Hoffmann
Oregon

Charles F. Sams III
Oregon

August 4, 2026

DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: Council members

FROM: Jennifer Light
Director of Power Planning

SUBJECT: Final review and possible decision to release draft Ninth Power Plan for public review and comment

PROPOSED ACTION: Staff will review changes to a working draft of the Council's draft Ninth Northwest Power Plan, as well as provide an overview of the newly created Technical Appendix Q that analyzes the implications of a single target approach to conservation. Following that discussion, staff will incorporate any suggested changes. Based on the discussions to date, staff believe there are few, if any, remaining changes needed for the draft plan, and staff recommend that the Council vote to release the draft Ninth Power Plan for public review and comment.

SIGNIFICANCE: Under the Northwest Power Act, the Council is required to review its power plan no less frequently than once every five years. The Council initiated its review of the power plan in February 2025, with a goal of developing a final power plan by the end of 2026. The Council decision to release a draft for review and comment is an important milestone in the process to adopt an updated power plan.

BACKGROUND

Under the Northwest Power Act, the Council is required to put together a regional conservation and electric power plan and to revise that plan no less frequently than once every five years. The Council's current power plan, the 2021 Power Plan, was adopted by the Council in February

2022. Given the dynamic changes in the power system, the Council officially initiated review of the power plan in February of 2025, well in advance of the five-year requirement.

While the official review of the power plan started in February of last year, preparation of the Ninth Plan started even earlier. In spring of 2024, the Council released an issue paper on the Preparation of the Ninth Plan to solicit feedback from the region to inform the scoping of the Plan. The Power Division staff also began preparing data and models, including a new long-term load forecast (Itron) and regional capital expansion (OptGen) models. These models provided the ability for the Council to analyze the region at a zonal level (17 zones).

In spring and summer of 2025, the power division prepared long-term load forecast, estimates of new resource potential and costs, and a suite of other cross-cutting assumptions to inform power system planning. With modeling inputs complete, the Council initiated scenario modeling for the draft Ninth Power Plan. This included conducting market availability studies, regional needs assessments, and an in-region resource optimization across multiple sensitivities. The scenario modeling was completed in early spring of 2026, at which time the Council analyzed the results and began developing recommendations for inclusion in the draft Ninth Power Plan. The Council has also worked through several iterations of draft language for the draft Power Plan.

Based on all the work to date, staff believe the Council is close to a decision to release the draft Ninth Power Plan. The Council is scheduled for discussion and possible decision to release the draft for public review on August 11. If the Council reaches a decision to release the draft, staff recommend that the comment period be closed on October 16, 2026. This allows at least a 60-day public comment period. The Council may opt for a longer public comment period. Staff do not recommend a comment period shorter than 60 days.

Following the decision of the Council to release a draft Ninth Power Plan, staff will publish the draft on the Council's website, circulate notice of the draft, schedule public hearings, and begin to receive written public comments through its website. This will provide a valuable period for the Council to continue conversations around the draft Power Plan. The Council will use the public comment to make necessary revisions to ensure the final Ninth Power Plan provides for an adequate, efficient, economic, and reliable power supply.

ATTACHMENTS

The proposed final draft of the Ninth Power Plan will be provided to the Council members and staff prior to the meeting.

Draft Ninth Power Plan

August 11, 2026

Game plan for this morning

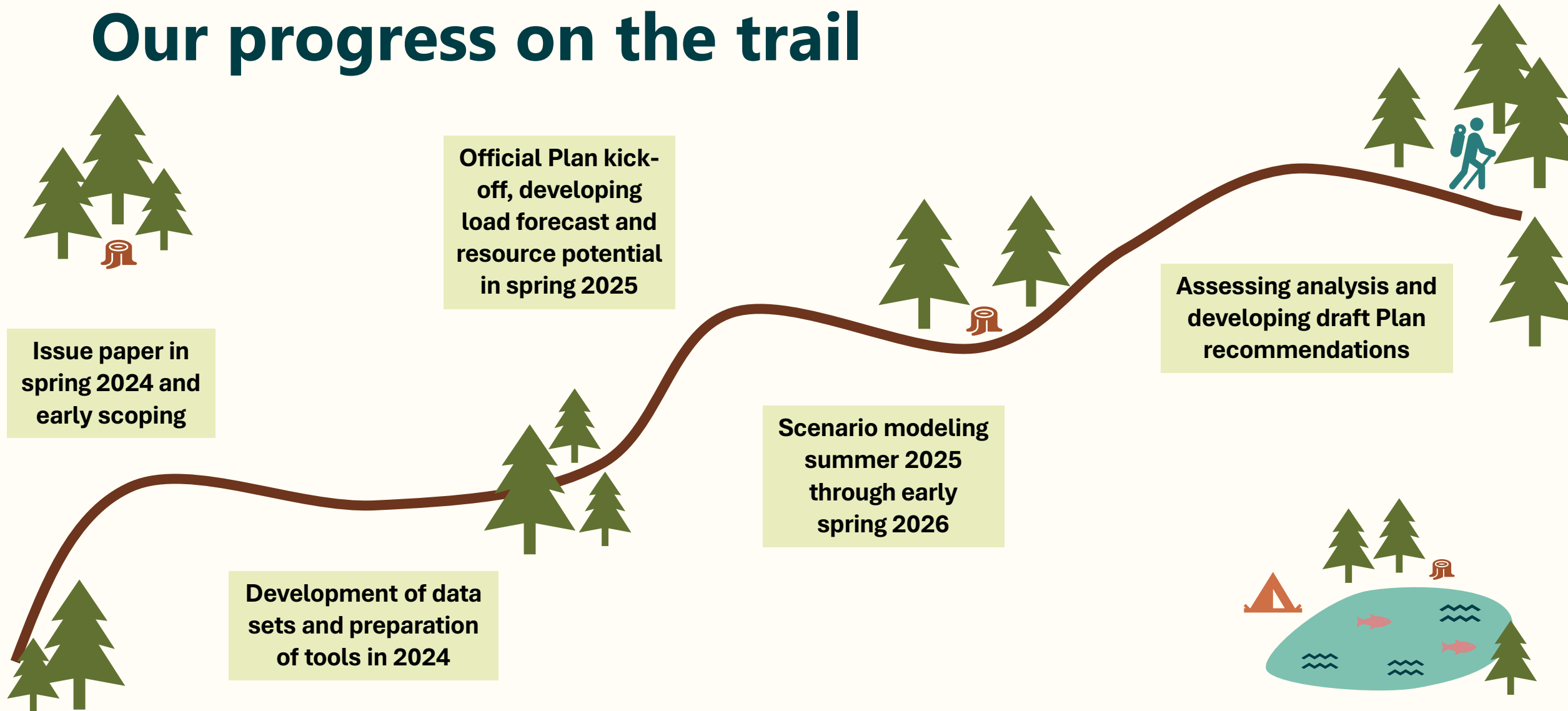
- Preparation of draft Ninth Plan document
 - Review of main Plan document
 - Presentation on new Technical Appendix Q
- What happens after release of the draft?
 - Need to determine public comment period duration
 - Special guests John Shurts and Kym Buzdygon will provide more on process
- Potential decision by Council to release the draft for public comment



Photo by [Markus Spiske](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Preparing Draft Ninth Plan Document

Our progress on the trail

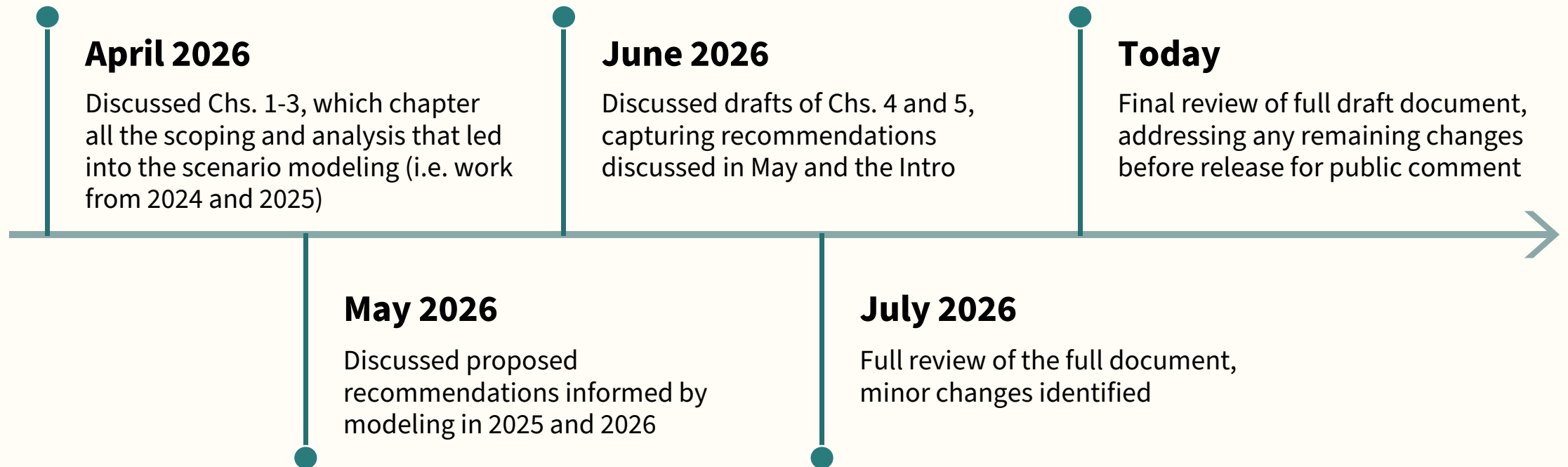


Draft Power Plan Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Chapter 1: Power Act Provisions
- Chapter 2: Existing Northwest Power System
- Chapter 3: Future Electricity Needs and Resource Potential
- Chapter 4: Action Plan – Resource Strategy and Other Recommendations for Bonneville and the Region
- Chapter 5: Conservation Program

This main document is supported by 17 technical appendices, which we will chat more about later

Developing the Draft Plan



Readying the Main Document

- Edits since the July meeting
 - All changes identified in the last meeting have been made and accepted
 - Staff have added two footnotes that highlight the comments received to date on the dual target, point to the technical appendix, and highlight Council interest in public comment on this topic (see pages 99 and 122)
- Are there any other changes?
- Once Members are good with the document, staff will make all remaining edits and prepare for posting

Technical Appendices

Technical Appendices

Cross-cutting assumptions
and scoping discussed in
Fall 2024 – February 2025

- A. Global Assumptions
- B. Existing System Parameters and Policies
- C. Environmental Methodology
- D. Climate Model Data and Assumptions
- E. Thermal Fuels Forecast

Analytical inputs developed
and discussed February –
August 2025

- F. Electricity Demand Forecast
- G. New Generating Resources
- H. Conservation Methodology and Potential
- I. Demand Response Methodology and Potential
- J. Rooftop Solar Methodology and Potential

Scenario modeling setup
and results shared October
2025 – April 2026

- K. Modeling Framework
- L. Wholesale Market Availability Results
- M. Needs Assessment Results
- N. Scenario Modeling and Results

Post draft resource strategy
elements capturing
analytical details

- O. Cost-Effective Conservation Methodology and Results
- P. Model Conservation Standards and Conservation Program Details
- Q. Analysis of Dual Versus Single Target for Conservation

New!

Technical Appendix Q Outline

- Context of proposed dual target
 - Discussion of enhanced modeling framework
 - Scenario modeling results summary
 - Council analysis and consideration behind a dual target
- Assessing a single target
 - Discussion of change in levelized cost and shift in conservation
 - Analysis of portfolio costs
 - Adequacy assessment on tested portfolio
- Summary and call out seeking public comment

Enhanced Modeling Framework

Load forecasting: Electricity demand shows up differently across the region, with certain types of new load growth being more focused in some zones.



Resource availability: Some resources may not be available, or might be limited, in specific zones, and interzonal transmission capacity can be modeled.



Locational Value of Resources

Supply side: Modeling generally showed a strong locational value for supply side resources



Natural gas: Strong locational signal in terms of acquisition, utilization, and costs



Solar: Different strategies between standalone and hybrids based on location



Wind: Demonstrated value in diversifying the wind resource, both regionally and across the WECC

Demand side: Except conservation, modeling had less of a locational signal, due in part to the nature of the resources



Voltage regulation: One of the lowest cost resources and therefore every zone; although utilized differently across the region



Rooftop solar: One of the highest cost resources, making it generally uneconomic in every zone

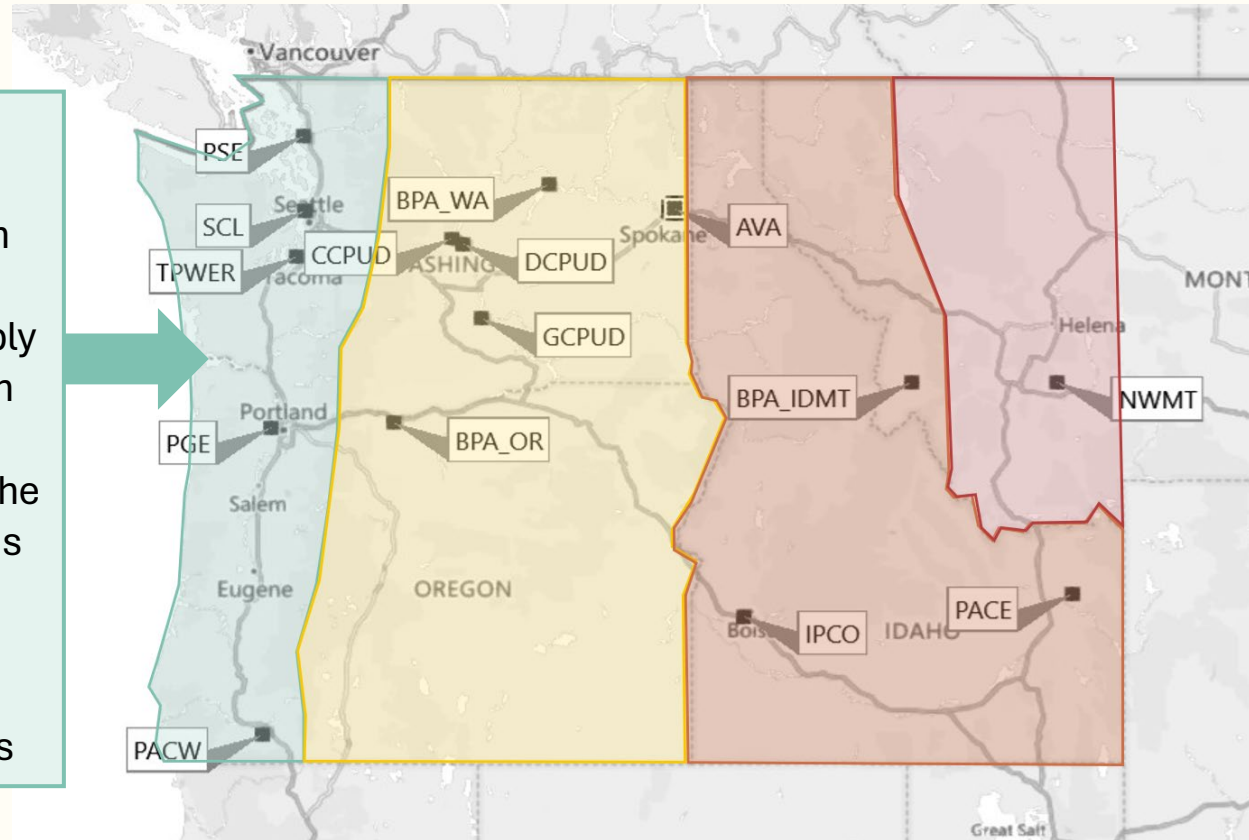


Demand response: Modeling did not show a strong economic value, minimizing a locational signal

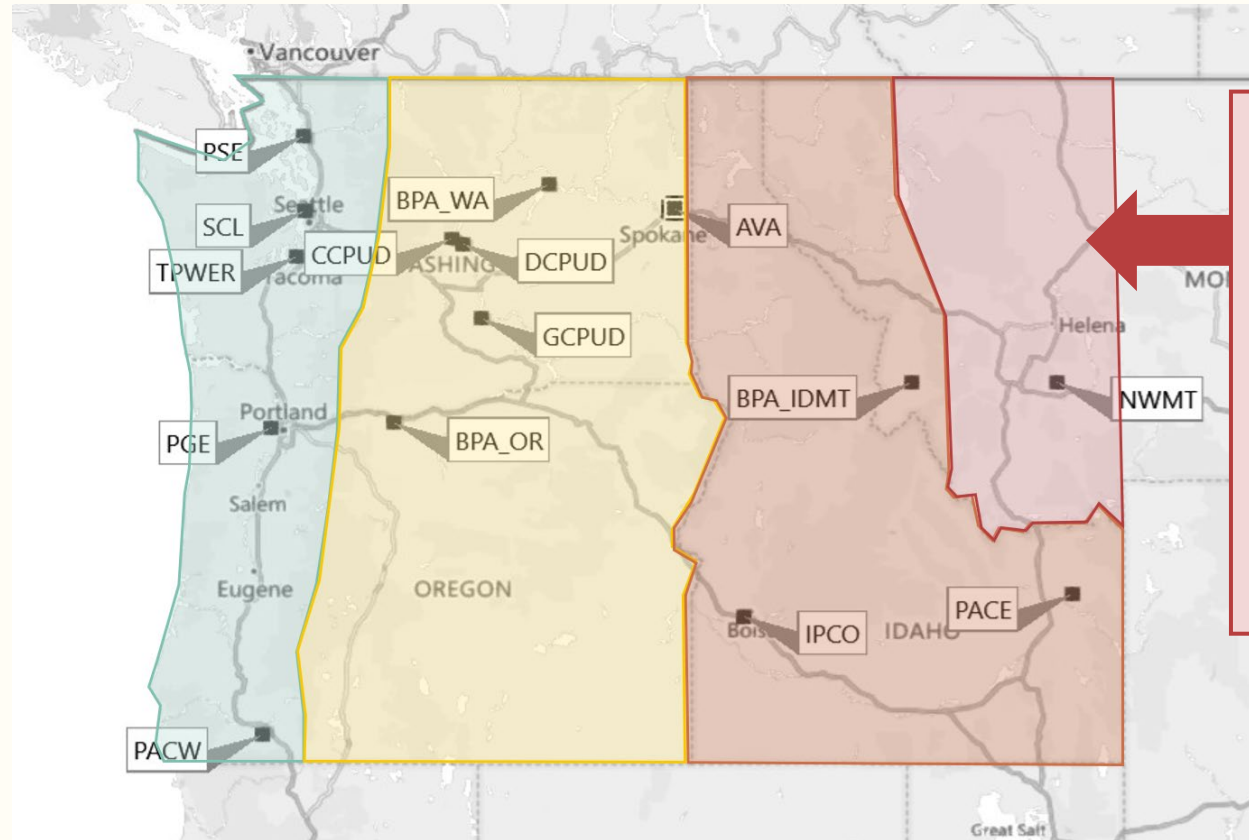
Locational Value of Conservation

West of Cascades:

- Load growth driven by electrification and some tech loads (Portland area)
- Limited options for new supply side resources, particularly in urban centers
- Policies limit and/or reduce the economics of new natural gas
- Transmission constraints across Cascades limiting viability of developing lower cost resources to serve loads



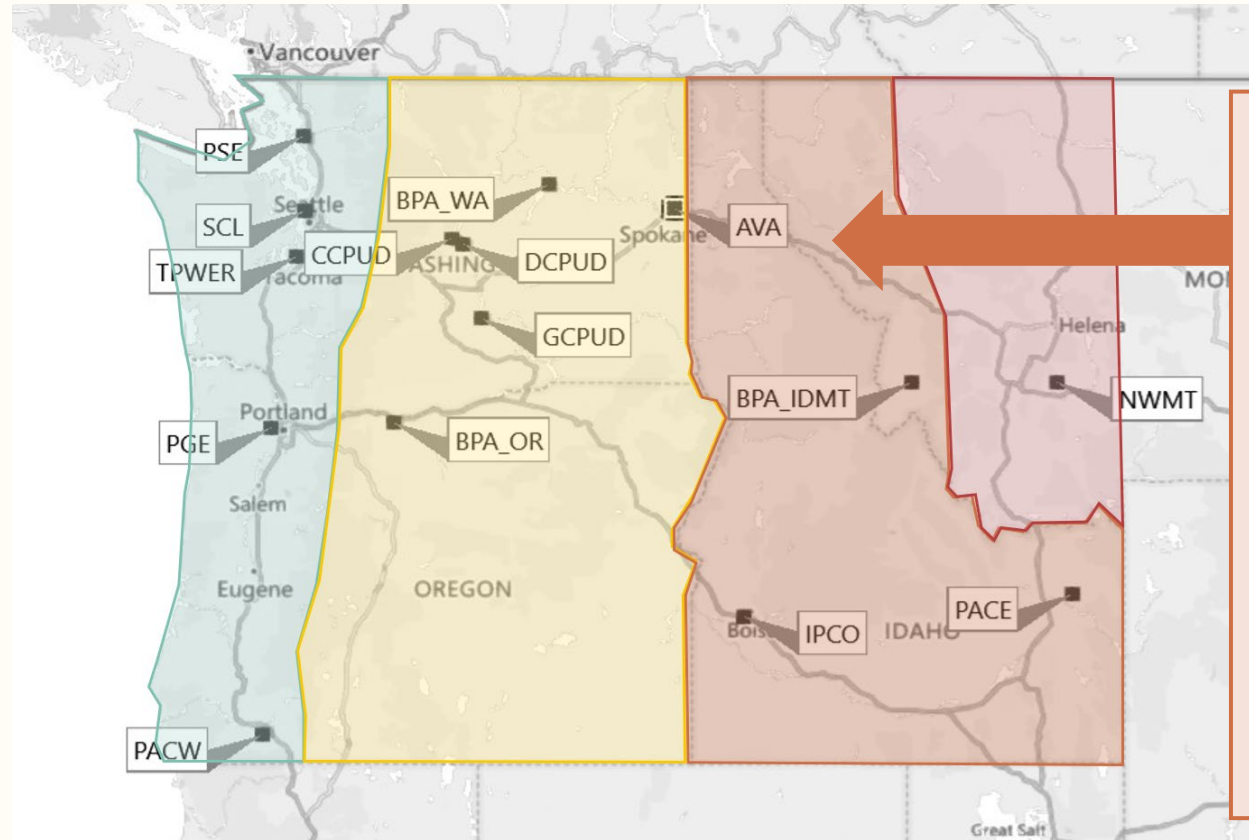
Locational Value of Conservation



Montana:

- Experiencing load growth, although overall amount is lower than other states
- More resources are available that can be developed closer to load
- Natural gas and wind resources are more economic in these locations

Locational Value of Conservation



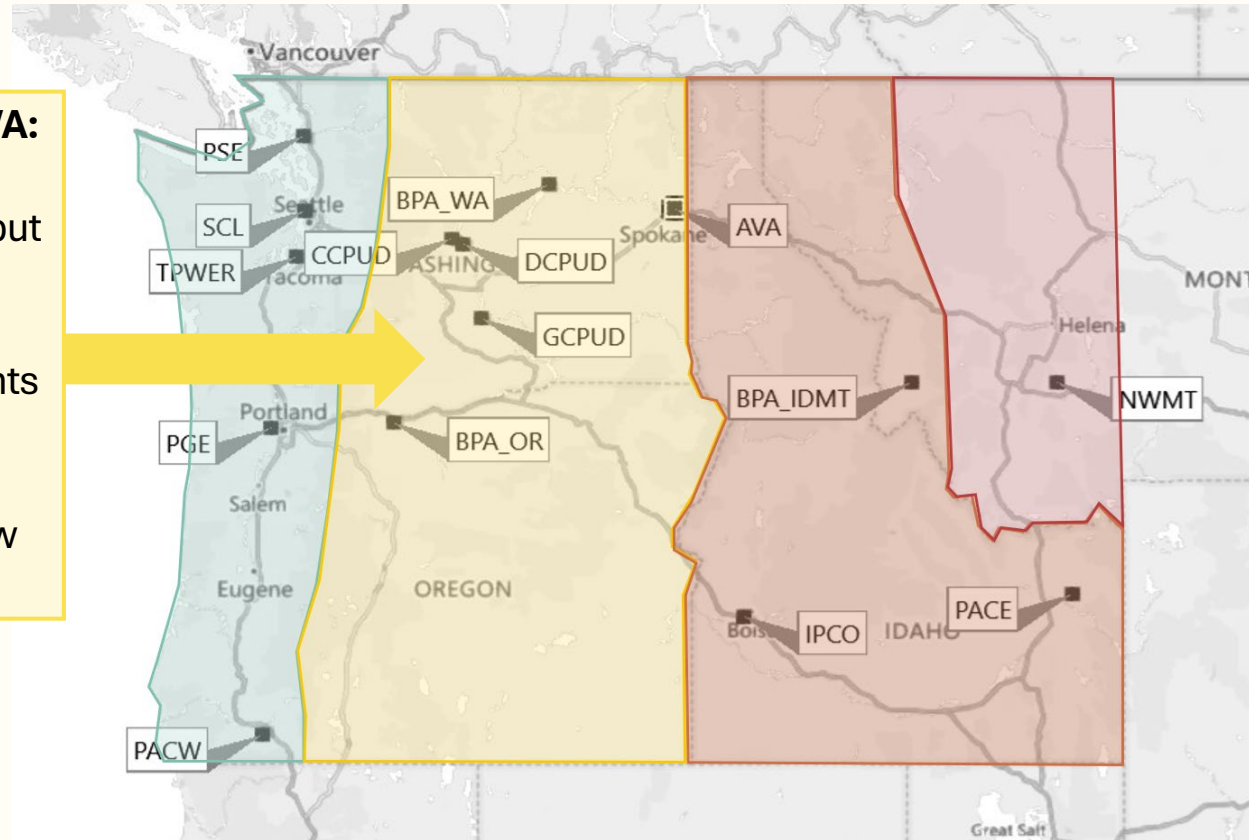
Idaho:

- Significant load growth, particularly in Idaho Power zone, driven by tech sector and growth in residential and commercial loads
- More resources are available that can be developed closer to load
- No policies driving down economics of natural gas
- Greater transmission connectivity to the broader WECC

Locational Value of Conservation

East of the Cascades in OR/WA:

- Load growth driven by tech loads; some electrification, but less than urban centers
- More resource options and fewer transmission constraints to bring resources to load
- Policies still limit and/or reduce the economics of new natural gas



Proposed Regional Resource Strategy

- For the draft Ninth Plan, the proposed “dual target” approach was included as part of the overall resource strategy attempting to balance the locational signal from the modeling with the implementation concerns raised by entities
- Council is interested in comments to help guide this trade-off for the final plan, and the additional analysis on the single target is intended to help inform these ongoing discussions

Resource	Amount
Conservation	1,060 aMW 860 aMW OR/WA (up to \$150/MWh) 200 aMW ID/MT (up to \$70/MWh)
Demand Response	590 MW
Voltage Regulation	220 MW
Renewables	9,000 MW
Storage	5,200 MW
Natural Gas	2,100 MW

Analysis of a Single Target

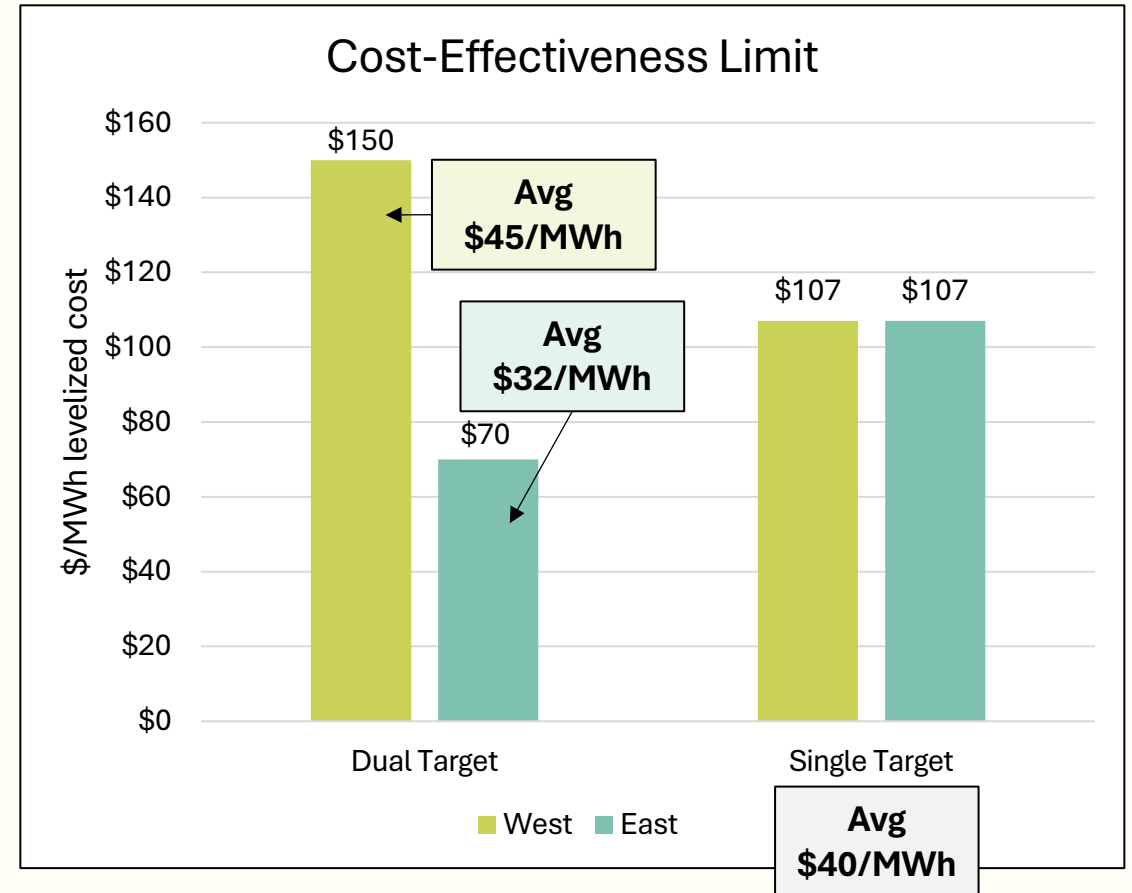
- Assuming the same overall strategy, but just a single target approach to conservation, staff analyzed what this change means for:
 - Cost and location of conservation
 - Portfolio costs
 - Resource adequacy
- Assessment did not try to speak to the specific implementation concerns raised by Bonneville and others
 - Staff is continuing to engage with entities on these topics to better understand potential risks of a dual target approach

Strategy tested in analysis:

Resource	Amount
Conservation	1,060 aMW (up to \$??/MWh)
Demand Response	590 MW
Voltage Regulation	220 MW
Renewables	9,000 MW
Storage	5,200 MW
Natural Gas	2,100 MW

Change in Cost of Conservation

- Under the dual target, the Council is proposing a higher level of cost-effectiveness for conservation on the West side of the region (OR/WA) as compared to the East (ID/MT)
- A single target establishes a single level of cost-effectiveness for the full region
- 1,060 aMW regionally represents an up to \$107/MWh levelized cost
 - Average of around \$40/MWh



Shift in Cost-Effective Conservation

- This change shifts some cost-effective conservation from West to East
 - For the Action Plan period, this represents ~40 aMW shift
 - Assuming same level of investment for the Plan horizon, this is a larger shift and overall reduction in conservation

Year	Approach	OR + WA	ID + MT	Total
2032	Dual Target	860	200	1,060
	Single Target	820	240	1,060
	Delta	- 40	+ 40	--
2046	Dual Target	3,530	690	4,220
	Single Target	3,260	850	4,110
	Delta	- 270	+ 160	- 110

Technical appendix provides a little more detail on the measures lost/gained between these approaches

Regional Portfolio Costs

- Staff analyzed how the regional portfolio costs change between the proposed resource strategy in the draft Plan and the single target strategy used in this analysis
- Change in costs is different for fixed and variable costs

Fixed Costs

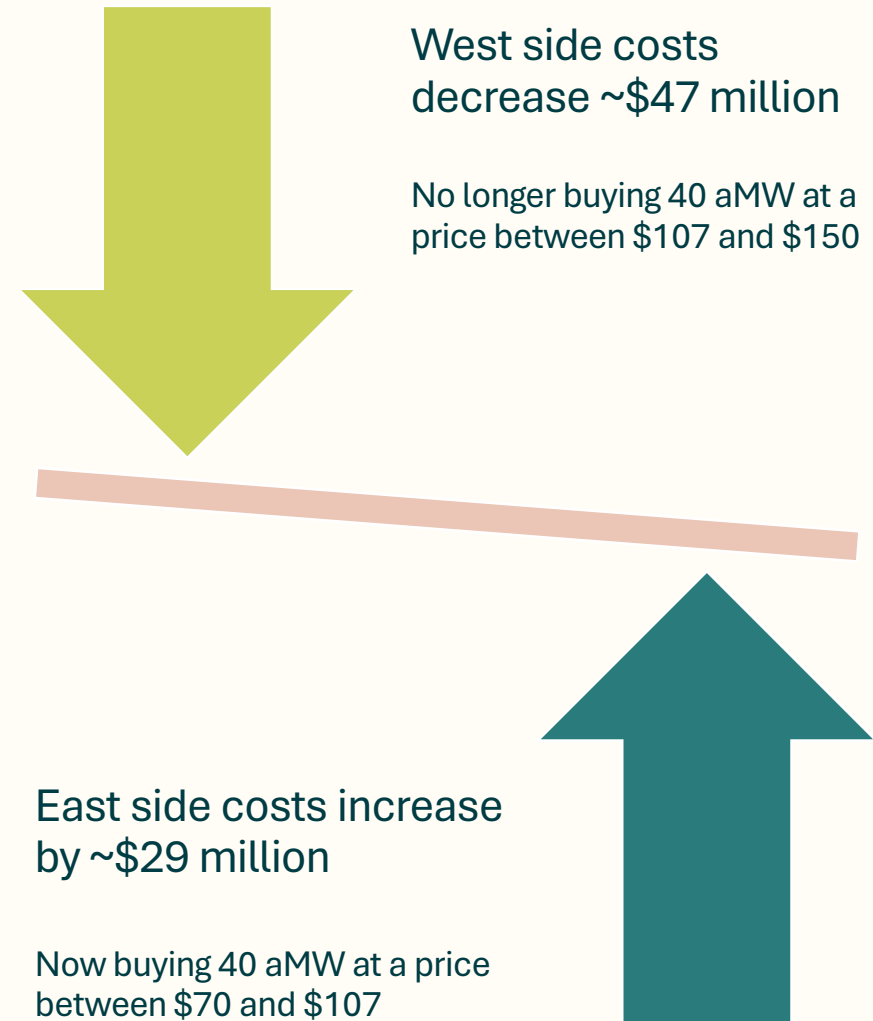
- Annual investment for acquiring resources, fixed O&M
- There is one set of fixed costs for any portfolio based on the resources that make up that portfolio

Variable Costs

- Annual production costs associated with fuel, variable O&M, transmission, policies, etc.
- Variable costs changed based on the operation of the portfolio (Ninth Plan calculates variable costs for each of the 10 futures)

Change in Fixed Costs

- The only difference between the single target portfolio analyzed and the portfolio included in the draft plan is the approach to conservation
- Shift in levelized costs results in an overall \$18 million decrease in 2032 fixed costs (~0.8% reduction for the portfolio)
- Note: there are cost shifts for other resources in the portfolio, but that is more challenging to determine in this analysis



Change in Variable Costs and Total Portfolio Costs

- Analysis captured how shift in conservation impacted the overall operations of the portfolio (across the futures), including resources beyond conservation
- Shifting 40 aMW of conservation from west to east resulted in a very slight increase in 2032 annual variable costs
 - Average increase across the futures was ~\$4 million
 - Increase was due a slight increase (on average) in natural gas use and related emissions costs
- Overall change in variable costs (and related natural gas usage) is within the range costs seen for any single portfolio across the 10 futures
- In total, a single target portfolio is on average \$14 million less for 2032
 - Less than 0.5% difference between the two portfolios

Regional Resource Adequacy

- Staff also assessed the single target portfolio for adequacy
- Results show that the single target portfolio (assuming all resource amounts stay the same) is not adequate

	Frequency			Extreme Deficits		
	Annual LOLEV (events)	Winter LOLEV (events)	Summer LOLEV (events)	VaR Duration (hr)	VaR Peak (MW)	VaR Energy (MWh)
Study/Criteria	0.2	0.1	0.1	8	1,200	9,600
Proposed Strategy (dual target)	0.068	0.053	0.006	1.8	582	1,452
Shift to single target	0.136	0.118	0.016	3	1,237	3,505

Adequacy Takeaways

- Moving to a single target for conservation would require other changes to the overall resource strategy to ensure adequacy
 - More of another resource (conservation, natural gas, or renewables) would be needed
 - Staff did not assess at this time for this draft plan, but this can and should be part of the discussions during public comment
- Proposed resource strategy is not a “gold plated” strategy
 - While adequate, the proposed resource strategy does not appear to be overbuilt
 - Staff would expect that an overbuilt (or overly adequate, gold plated) strategy would be able to absorb a 40 aMW shift in location of conservation

Where do we go from here?

- All this analysis is included in Technical Appendix Q, which will be made available with the main Power Plan document once the Council releases the Plan for public comment
- Based on level of engagement to date on this topic, staff anticipate that this will be a key area of focus during public comment
- Staff is committed to continuing conversations with Bonneville, its customers, and others regarding the proposed dual target, limitations of the approach, and alternatives

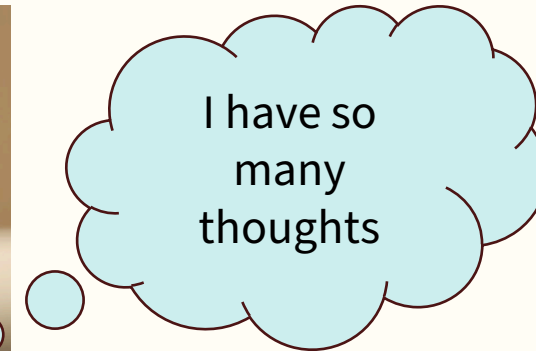
What Comes Next?

What Happens After Decision to Release the Draft?

- Final edits are made and the draft Plan is readied for publishing and release and public comment
 - Director Buzdygon has more on this process!
- Staff recommends closing public comment on October 16 (~65 days)
- Council can continue to talk with entities after close of comment to understand comments and work towards a final plan
 - Council will need to close the administrative record at some point before the final plan (assuming October 16 close of comment, staff recommends closing the record around November 20th)

	Recommendation		
	~65-day	~80-day	~90-day
Close public comment	Oct 16	Oct 28	Nov 13
Review comments	Nov	Nov-ish + Dec	Dec
Adopt final Plan	Dec or early 2026	Feb 2026	Feb 2026

And now some thoughts from John Shurts



Public Comment Period

- Similar elements to Fish & Wildlife Program public comment period
- Collect written comments through website portal, email
- Oral comments through public hearings held in all 4 states and via webinar
- Consultations with individual entities
- Personal discussions of members and staff, entered into the administrative record
- Potential 60-day comment period = Oct 16, 2026



Public hearings

- All 4 states + online options
- Schedule still tentative, announcement forthcoming with dates and times
- Possible locations:
 - WA: Seattle and Spokane
 - OR: Portland (Council meeting on Sept 9/10) and the Dalles
 - ID: Boise and Coeur d'Alene
 - MT: Missoula
- Hybrid options at some meetings + webinar



Communication channels

- Council will advertise public comment and hearings via:
 - Announcements at Council meetings
 - Spotlight newsletter
 - Additional MailChimp reminders
 - Social media
 - Press briefing
 - Media advisories to local outlets in advance of public hearings
- Help us get the word out!



**The 9th Northwest
Power Plan**

**Find more information and
submit public comments**

nwcouncil.org/ninthpowerplan

 Northwest **Power** and
Conservation Council

CONTACT

Enter your keywords

SEARCH

ABOUT

NEWS

FISH AND WILDLIFE

POWER PLANNING

MEETINGS

REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS



The 9th Northwest Regional Power Plan

The Council requests public comment on its draft Ninth Power Plan by October 16.

The Council is developing its next power plan. Throughout the process, we'll keep you informed on important milestones, the methods and analysis, and other work as it becomes available.

Estimated timeline (click for detail):

Modeling
inputs

Scenario
modeling

Draft
Plan

Public
Com-
ments

Final
Plan

How to comment

The Draft 9th Power Plan has been released for public comment through October 16, 2026, with public hearings to be scheduled in each of the four Northwest states in September and October.

SUBMIT A COMMENT

Announcement
on home page:
nwcouncil.org



Northwest **Power** and
Conservation Council

CONTACT

Enter your keywords

SEARCH

ABOUT

NEWS

FISH AND WILDLIFE

POWER PLANNING

MEETINGS

REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS



See next Council Meeting
August 11 - 12, 2026 in Seattle ›

See all meetings ›





Comment on the Draft 9th Power Plan by October 16, 2026.

Established to inform and
advance a regional vision for
power and fish & wildlife in
the Columbia Basin



Announcement
on Power
Planning landing
page



Northwest **Power** and
Conservation Council

CONTACT

Enter your keywords

SEARCH

ABOUT

NEWS

FISH AND WILDLIFE

POWER PLANNING

MEETINGS

REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

Power Planning



The 9th Northwest
Regional Power Plan

The Northwest Power Act requires the Council to develop a plan to ensure an adequate, efficient, economical, and reliable power supply for the region. Working with regional partners and the public, the Council evaluates energy resources and their costs, electricity demand, and new technologies to determine a resource strategy for the region. The Council publishes a power plan about every five years.

Comments are being accepted on the Draft 9th Plan through **October 16, 2026**.
See the [9th Plan page](#) for details.

2021 Power Plan

Resource Adequacy

Energy Efficiency

Submit a comment on the Draft Ninth Power Plan

Comments on the [Draft Ninth Power Plan](#) are being accepted through October 16, 2026.

If specific chapters are being commented on, please include chapter or page numbers where applicable.

Comments will be collected and published at the Ninth Plan page soon after the deadline for submission.

You can provide a comment as formatted text below, or upload a Word, PDF or Zip file.

After submitting your comment, you'll get an email confirmation that your comment was received, then we'll follow up when all comments are made publicly available.

Comment (or upload a file below)





The 9th Northwest Power Plan

Potential Decision