

WEEKLY DIGEST

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

Feds Told to Back Off N.W. Energy Dispute

A bipartisan group of Northwest lawmakers wants time to work out a regional solution to the trade-off between hydropower and wind energy without the involvement of federal regulators.

In a Jan. 24 letter, 18 senators and representatives said the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission might have overstepped its authority when it struck down a Bonneville Power Administration policy that balanced excess hydro and wind generation.

The group warned in a letter to Energy Secretary Steven Chu that a new plan is urgently needed because the same conditions that ignited the furor last year could reoccur when snowpack melting begins in a few weeks. BPA is part of the Energy Department.

The signatories, congressional representatives of both parties from Washington, Oregon and Idaho, were highly critical of FERC's Dec. 7 order that said BPA was unfairly treating wind generators by curbing some generation during a glut of hydro production as part of its "high wind, high water" environmental redispatch.

BPA defended the policy as essential to keeping a balanced load on the grid, while ensuring proper water flows to comply with laws governing endangered salmon populations in the region.

[▶ Complete Article](#)**NRECA's Updated Co-op Map on the Way**

Make room on your office bulletin board for NRECA's 2012 electric cooperative map.

NRECA members will soon get the latest version of "America's Electric Cooperative Network," the colorful map that displays service areas for all distribution systems and G&T cooperatives.

The association's Strategic Analysis Unit produces a new version of the map every few years "when there's enough changes," said Mike Ganley, the unit's director. "For accuracy's sake, that's when we update it."

At first glance, the 2012 map doesn't look too different from its earlier versions, first published in 1999 and then again in 2004.

But a closer look reveals "more Swiss cheese" within co-op country, said Louise Williams, who as senior geographic information systems associate, handles the painstaking logistics involved in updating the map.

On the 2012 map, no longer are co-op service areas solid blocks of color. "We received more electronic map files from co-ops this time, which provide a greater level of detail," Ganley said. "It shows more accurately where other utilities provide service in towns within co-op territories."

NRECA will send one large map and one small map at no cost to co-op members.

[▶ Complete Article](#)**NRECA Backs New Nuclear Waste Plan**

A federal panel's proposal to take politics out of the nation's approach to nuclear waste disposal has met with support from NRECA and five other energy trade associations. The groups said they agree with the panel's proposal to create a new federal corporation to run a high-level waste

*Continued on next page***Hill Panel OKs
Dodd-Frank Guidance**

The House Agriculture Committee has advanced several bills that address electric cooperatives' concerns with federal regulators' "overreach" in writing financial reform regulations. NRECA characterized the action as "a big victory" for co-ops.

The three bills, H.R. 2682, H.R. 3527, and H.R. 3336, would allow co-ops to continue using financial instruments, such as derivatives, without being subjected to potentially costly regulations. Derivatives help insulate customers from wholesale commodity price volatility.

The regulations are being written by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to meet the goals of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

While Congress clearly intended to exempt end-users such as electric co-ops from the regulations, NRECA has noted, the CFTC's proposals have not done so.

Accordingly, NRECA and member co-ops have presented their concerns on Capitol Hill. House Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas, R-Okla., characterized his panel's action as "the culmination of the committee's oversight efforts" on the CFTC's rulemakings.

While the next steps for the legislation are uncertain, supporters believe it is quite possible the bills may be considered on the House floor early this year.

[▶ Complete Article](#)**POPULAR STORIES ON ECT.COOP...****FERC approves first tidal power license for New York City****Minnesota co-op uses social media to promote energy efficiency to members****Virginia co-op's 'Big Heart' raises money for local charities****Feds debut interactive online map of renewable energy resources****Serious issues loom for co-ops, CEOs told at conference**

Nuclear Waste Plan *Continued*

program, as opposed to leaving it in the hands of Congress and the Energy Department.

The Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future also is on the right track by urging prompt construction of at least one interim storage facility and assuring that money in the federal Nuclear Waste Fund is used for its intended purpose, they said in a statement.

The commission, appointed by President Obama, recommended a "consent-based" approach to siting nuclear waste repositories, a sharp break from past congressional efforts to locate facilities in particular areas such as Yucca Mountain in Nevada.

Based on similar programs in Europe, that would include encouraging communities to volunteer to serve as sites, with flexible and substantial incentives.

The trade associations said they can get behind the creation of a new, independent corporation that would be charged with developing and managing a program for disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level nuclear waste.

 [Complete Article](#)

Co-op Conference Mobile App Debuts

INDIAN WELLS, Calif.—Going to an NRECA conference? There's an app for that—or there soon will be.

The association has partnered with the National Information Solutions Cooperative to develop smartphone apps for several of its annual events. The first debuted Jan. 23 at CEO Close-Up.

"The goal of this app is to put together a piece of software that gives you everything you need to know as you navigate your way through this conference," said Vern Dosch, NISC president and CEO.

Available for Apple and Android devices, the free app has several features, including a personal calendar. When a user clicks on a session or learning lab, it's added to the calendar, building a customized schedule.

Liked the presentation a speaker gave? Want the slides? No problem. "If the speaker has a handout—a PDF, a white paper, a Power Point—it can be accessed via the app. At the bottom left hand corner there's a handout," Dosch explained. Click on it and the presentation is yours.

NISC plans to develop apps for other NRECA events, including the annual meeting and Connect.

To download the app, search for "CEO Close-Up" in iTunes or the Android Market.

 [Complete Article](#)

Agricultural Waste Powers Deal for Farmers

Electric cooperatives in South Carolina will be reaping the benefits from new sources of renewable energy that could ultimately help improve both air and water quality across the Palmetto State.

Santee Cooper, the co-ops' largest power provider, has signed an agreement with a company that's committed to working with farmers who want to turn their agricultural waste into clean energy.

While poultry farmers will be the firm's initial focus, relatively small livestock operations could also be involved, said Julian Cothran, president and chief engineering officer of Alabama-based Green Energy Solutions.

Contracts with the farmers are expected to last 20 years or more. The company will lease a small amount of land on each farm for an anaerobic digester and other equipment. A 54-foot long tank will be used to ferment animal waste and other litter. Meanwhile, a 540-kilowatt generator, fueled from the produced methane gas, will move a constant stream of renewable energy to the grid.

"The farmer will get a share of the cash from the sale of the electricity," Cothran said, adding that the farmer will also keep the liquid fertilizer produced.

 [Complete Article](#)

Cape Wind Project Delayed for Years

The project billed as the nation's first offshore wind farm won't be spinning its turbines until at least 2015, grid officials say.

ISO New England, which administers the regional transmission system, declined to include Cape Wind in a capacity auction in a six-state region for 2015–16.

The grid operator said upgrades to a needed transmission project probably will not be completed in the next three years.

Additionally, ISO New England and its consultants said "... it is unlikely that the project will achieve Commercial Operation by the start of the 2015-2016 Capacity Commitment Period." The auction for that period starts in April 2012.

Cape Wind officials said they disagree with the finding, which was submitted as part of a filing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission earlier this month.

However, the \$2.6 billion project, which would put 130 turbines in Nantucket Sound off the Massachusetts coast, has had trouble getting traction since it was proposed a decade ago.

It faced a variety of permitting and environmental challenges, and a planned startup date of 2009 has long since passed.

 [Complete Article](#)



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