

## **Issue Brief** **February 2008**

# **WPUDA opposes dedicated transmission for renewable energy**

**T**he Washington PUD Association opposes legislative initiatives that would encourage the building of transmission lines to be used primarily for the delivery of renewable energy,

WPUDA has long supported development of renewable energy resources. We also understand that developers of renewable resources, including our members, often face challenges connecting to the grid to get their energy to the load centers.

But focusing resources on developing transmission devoted primarily to renewable energy could hamper development of needed transmission facilities in general. Instead, we support incentives to increase transmission capacity for all sources of energy.

In addition, a primary impediment to building additional transmission is the siting of the lines.

To that end, we supported provisions in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 that established federal “back-stop” siting authority for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

However, even with enhanced federal authority, siting transmission lines can be difficult. Therefore, the benefits of any proposed transmission line should be as broad as possible.

A federal mandate placing priority on building transmission for renewable energy resources would also disrupt efforts to improve integrated transmission planning in the Northwest through ColumbiaGrid and other cooperative processes.

In addition, we are concerned with proposals to make federal power marketing administrations (such



as Bonneville Power Administration) responsible for building transmission for renewable energy projects that, presumably, a utility or private company has elected not to build for economic reasons.

Expanding the mission of the PMAs could have severe financial impacts on federal power customers.

Instead, we encourage Congress to conduct oversight hearings and work with the appropriate federal agencies involved to understand the situation and identify solutions to siting, financing, constructing, maintaining and enhancing the reliability of the transmission grid for both renewable and conventional energy.

WPUDA believes that a regional approach to transmission planning and development such as ColumbiaGrid is far preferable to federal mandates and changes in policy that may have unintended consequences.