

November 19, 2008

The Honorable Ron Wyden
230 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

Recently the leaders of twelve Pacific Northwest consumer-owned electric utility organizations wrote you to urge rapid investment in the upgrade of our energy infrastructure. Specifically, they urged you to support inclusion of additional borrowing authority for the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) in any federal economic stimulus package under consideration

Energy Action Northwest fully endorses the effort to increase BPA's borrowing authority. As the business and labor coalition for clean, affordable and reliable energy, Energy Action NW represents those hard hit by the economic crisis: employers and skilled workers in Oregon and Washington.

An immediate increase in BPA's borrowing authority is critical for the following reasons:

- 1) **Jobs** – The Oregon Employment Department announced this week that unemployment in the state has skyrocketed to 7.3 percent – well-above the national average of 6.5 percent. Oregon is getting hit hard. While unemployment in Washington is slightly lower, at 6.3 percent, unemployment is on the rise in both of our states. We must take concrete action now to alleviate the economic crisis.
- 2) **Bridge to a sustainable future:** Upgrading the transmission system is needed in order to link renewable energy sources such as wind and solar to the power grid. Our region is working hard to meet state and federal energy policy goals but we risk be hamstrung by an outdated and capacity-challenged electric grid.
- 3) **Being prepared:** The economic crisis is possibly one of the worst in our nation's history. Any additional pressure due to the failure of the electric system to meet peak loads would be unbearable. Manufacturers and consumers alike need to know that energy in the Pacific Northwest is reliable.
- 4) **An investment not a giveaway:** The BPA has a first-rate credit history of repaying the federal treasury. Amounts borrowed now to invest in our electric grid will be repaid in full with interest, so taxpayers will receive a solid return on today's investments.

With crisis comes opportunity and now is the time to invest in our energy infrastructure. Immediate investment in upgrading our power grid will pay multiple dividends through job creation and fulfillment of our goal for a clean, sustainable and reliable energy future.

The labor and business members of Energy Action NW strongly encourage you to work toward increased borrowing authority for BPA, and we offer our assistance to you and your Staff in any way we can. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity to invest in Oregon and Washington's energy infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ed Finklea, Executive Director

cc: Gov. Ted Kulongoski and Gov. Christine Gregoire