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**PSC COMMENTS ON NORTHWEST POWER & CONSERVATION
COUNCIL DRAFT POWER PLAN**

The state Public Service Commission has filed comments with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council concerning the Council's draft Fifth Northwest Power Plan. The draft plan proposes a blueprint for an adequate, low-cost and low-risk energy future in the wake of the West Coast energy crisis of 2000/2001. The PSC's comments follow up on a briefing it received on the Council's approach to analyzing risk in power supply and demand forecasting and planning.

The Commission commented on several important regional power supply issues that were of particular interest to the Council, including its analysis of the trade-offs between power costs and risks related to market behavior. The Commission's comments were generally supportive of the Council's proposals regarding regional conservation, improving price structures and consumer demand response, risks related to climate change policies, maintaining adequate resources to meet demand, and improving the operation of the regional transmission system.

According to PSC Chairman Bob Rowe, "The Council's effort preparing the plan is valuable to the entire region. The plan's initial work on risk analysis and transmission are especially important for Montana, along with the plan's emphasis on substantial energy efficiency and wind resources, along with future thermal resources."

Comments of the PSC to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council on its Draft Fifth Power Plan are posted on the PSC's website at psc.state.mt.us/eDocs/.

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