



BPA turns up the heat on renewables

Bonneville Power Administration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MONDAY, April 15, 1996

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. - The Bonneville Power Administration reached an agreement recently with the Calpine Corporation and Trans-Pacific Geothermal Corporation to move forward with an environmental analysis of the Glass Mountain geothermal project in northern California. The agreement allows work to begin on an Environmental Impact Statement for the project. The EIS covers the power plant, transmission line and related power purchase agreements. The Bureau of Land Management will be the lead agency on the project with the U.S. Forest Service, Siskiyou County and BPA as cooperating agencies.

"This agreement shows the Department of Energy's interest in renewable energy development in the Pacific Northwest," said DOE Deputy Secretary Charles B. Curtis. "BPA's approach to developing and marketing green power products reflects the Department's desire to encourage long-term investments that will benefit future generations in the region."

BPA is in various stages of developing several renewable energy resources. At the same time, the availability of low-cost natural gas and a surplus of electric energy on the west coast makes it difficult for renewables to compete cost-effectively in today's energy market. While the EIS is in progress, BPA will continue its green power marketing efforts. BPA believes the long-term economics of renewable resources like geothermal and wind may be attractive in the future.

"This agreement signals BPA's dedication to pursue renewable energy development, even in a highly competitive electricity industry environment," said BPA Administrator Randy Hardy. "This agreement also shows our ability to balance short-term cost management that will help us succeed in the market now, with the long-term regional goals that will benefit the Northwest in the future."

Located about 50 miles south of Klamath Falls, the Glass Mountain Known Geothermal Area is considered one of the largest undeveloped renewable resources in the United States with potential for over 500 megawatts of energy. The Calpine partnership has proposed construction of a 49-megawatt geothermal generation project that would require construction of a 24-mile transmission line to connect it to the main transmission grid. Work on the EIS will begin this month. The project is expected to be completed in 1999.

In addition to the agreement on Glass Mountain, other renewable projects are progressing. The environmental review is nearly completed for the Foote Creek Rim Wind Project in Wyoming and the CARES Columbia Wind Farm No. 1 in Washington. The environmental review of the Newberry Geothermal Project, located in the Deschutes National Forest on the west flank of Newberry Volcano, has been completed, and a Site Certificate has been issued by the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council. Exploratory drilling began in early 1995 and two exploratory and two production wells have been drilled.

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