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BPA: Energy Picture improving in short term; Reliability still an issue

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Bonneville Power Administration
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PORTLAND, Ore. – Cooler temperatures and power plants returning to service will dramatically reduce power shortages and sky-high wholesale prices, say senior officials at the Bonneville Power Administration.

Although high temperatures and plant outages in the Northwest nearly maxed-out the region's ability to keep up with the demand for electricity this week, BPA's power managers say conditions are improving. Power plants are returning to service; temperatures are cooling, and prices already are beginning to drop.

"We have made it through the short-term problem," said Judi Johansen, BPA administrator. "Although the summer could present some challenges for the West Coast, I'm reasonably confident the Northwest will be able avert emergencies."

"Supplies are tight and prices are still high, but we believe we have adequate supplies to meet regional loads, provided nothing unexpected happens," Johansen said. "This is the state of the power systems throughout the West Coast. Power supplies are having difficulty keeping up with demand, and our transmission systems are stressed too."

Johansen also added, "Our experience this summer underscores that the reliability problem is real. We believe there's a need for a regional dialogue on the reliability situation, both for the upcoming winter when demand for power in the Northwest is highest and for the long term."

The Clinton administration has repeatedly called on Congress to enact comprehensive electricity restructuring legislation to enhance the reliability of the nation's electric grid.

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