



Federal agencies gear up hydro system to meet demand

[Click here for other BPA news releases](#)

Bonneville Power Administration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, December 8, 2000

PR 88 00

CONTACTS: [Ed Mosey](#), BPA (503) 230-5131

PORTLAND, Ore. – Due to an impending power shortage, federal agencies will increase generation at nearly all of the federal dams. This may cause some projects to operate outside the limits of the biological opinion under the Endangered Species Act as additional water is released for generation from upstream reservoirs, the Bonneville Power Administration said today.

The announcement came following a call by the Regional Emergency Response Team and Northwest governors for conservation of electricity when arctic air invades the Northwest beginning this weekend. The team comprises Northwest utilities, the Northwest Power Planning Council and representatives of the four Northwest states.

BPA officials said that this step must be taken in order to ensure that heavy demand for electricity can be met in the region through next week. Forecasters are predicting freezing temperatures on both sides of the Cascades. BPA supplies about 40 percent of the region's electricity, most of it generated at dams in the Columbia River Basin.

"Utilities in the region have assessed their generating inventories and determined that the region is clearly short of energy and in an emergency status," Delwiche said. "The BPA and other utilities must take extraordinary steps immediately to avoid potentially severe shortages next week."

Water is stored in reservoirs behind upstream dams and released in the spring to assist downstream migration of juvenile salmon. BPA manages the storage to ensure that enough water is available to both meet electrical generating requirements and flows for salmon. BPA has the authority to exceed guidelines of the biological opinion under emergency conditions.

"It is very important that everyone – residential and commercial consumers and industries – do what they can to cut back on their use of electricity during this cold snap," said Greg Delwiche, BPA's vice president for generation supply. "Every kilowatt hour saved now means less need to draw water from the reservoirs."

###
