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FERC APPLAUDS RTO WEST'S STAGE 2 FILING

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) today unanimously approved most aspects of a plan for development of a Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) in the West.

"The RTO West Filing Utilities are encouraged by FERC's response to the RTO West Stage 2 Filing," said Bud Krogh, RTO West spokesperson. "We are pleased that the Commission indicated that the RTO West proposal, with certain modifications and additional details, will not only satisfy FERC's requirements for an RTO, but can serve as a basic framework for the development of a western market."

"It is important that the commissioners acknowledged the regional stakeholders' contributions through the RTO West collaborative process and the need for regional flexibility in the creation of an RTO. We plan to further develop the RTO West proposal through a collaborative process with Northwest stakeholders, consultations with state regulators and the Northwest Congressional Delegation, and through technical conferences with the Commission."

The Commission is expected to release its full order on the RTO West filing shortly. "We look forward to reviewing the order to fully understand the Commission's ruling and determine our next steps," Krogh added.

The Filing Utilities submitted the Stage 2 filing to FERC on March 29, 2002 asking FERC to determine that the RTO West proposal satisfies FERC's minimum characteristics and functions for the formation of an RTO.

The RTO West Filing Utilities include Avista Corporation, Bonneville Power Administration, British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, Idaho Power Company, Nevada Power Company, NorthWestern Energy (formerly The Montana Power Company), PacifiCorp, Portland General Electric Company, Puget Sound Energy, and Sierra Pacific Power Company.

RTO West, an independent non-profit corporation, will have its own board and management independent of energy market participants. RTO West will effectively consolidate regional operations into a single control area, providing access to all the region's transmission facilities. The RTO will operate all transmission facilities needed for bulk power transfers, and will control the majority of approximately 60,000 miles of transmission lines owned by the participating entities.