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Energy Northwest and Bonneville Power Administration Advance Plan to Expand Region's Nuclear Power

PORTLAND, OR – Energy Northwest and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) are taking a significant step toward strengthening the Pacific Northwest's supply of affordable, reliable and secure energy. On May 20, BPA approved implementation of an Extended Power Uprate (EPU) project that increases the output of Columbia Generating Station, which is the region's third largest generating resource and only operating nuclear energy plant. The EPU is an approximately \$700 million project that will increase the station's electrical output by 162 megawatts by 2031.

Following 18 months of in-depth analysis, BPA's approval allows the project to move into its next phase. Over the next six years, Energy Northwest and BPA will collaborate on planning and implementation. Once completed, the additional 162 megawatts of firm capacity could power approximately 125,000 homes, strengthening the Pacific Northwest's energy portfolio.

"We applaud BPA for its decision to approve this project and for its strategic vision in advancing our region's future with additional, reliable capacity that nuclear energy can provide," said Bob Schuetz, Energy Northwest, CEO. "Their leadership in supporting this initiative underscores a commitment to affordable and carbon-free electricity for the Northwest region, including our public power member utilities and their customers."

"This is a great value for ratepayers in the Pacific Northwest," said BPA Administrator and CEO John Hairston. "Upgrading an existing resource to provide additional reliable energy will help BPA keep pace with its customers' growing electricity needs and keep rates low."

"President Trump and Secretary Wright have made it clear: expanding America's nuclear energy capacity will be essential for meeting growing demand for affordable, reliable and secure energy," said Department of Energy Acting Undersecretary for Infrastructure Michael Goff. "This project exemplifies the energy vision for America by unleashing new power generation for the people of the Pacific Northwest without raising costs."

Columbia Generating Station, a 1,207-megawatt nuclear energy facility near Richland, Washington, is owned and operated by Energy Northwest. The EPU will increase electrical output by upgrading and replacing equipment — including turbines, heat exchangers, and the generator — while maintaining high safety standards and improving reliability. Nuclear energy facilities have successfully implemented uprates since the 1970s to boost clean energy generation from existing plants.

The project will involve approximately 30 individual upgrades, primarily focused on increasing the size of pumps and motors. These enhancements coincide with biennial refueling outages, creating new job opportunities for skilled workers.

Additionally, 24 megawatts of energy-efficiency upgrades will be incorporated during the next three refueling outages in 2027, 2029 and 2031, bringing the total increase to 186 megawatts. This expanded capacity will be added to BPA's federal system power, serving consumer-owned utilities across six Northwest states.

The EPU project marks a significant milestone in the ongoing partnership between Energy Northwest and BPA, showcasing their shared commitment to advancing reliable energy solutions.

By increasing the capacity of Columbia Generating Station, they are enhancing the reliability of the region's power supply and contributing to a sustainable future. The combined efforts of both organizations will ensure that the Pacific Northwest continues to benefit from affordable and secure electricity, supporting the needs of regional customers.

About Energy Northwest

Energy Northwest is a Washington state public power joint operating agency and a premier provider of carbon-free electricity. Energy Northwest comprises 29 public power member utilities, serving more than 1.5 million customers, and provides its members and regional customers with safe, reliable, cost-effective, responsible power generation and innovative energy and business solutions. The agency owns and operates hydroelectric, solar, battery storage, wind and the Northwest's only nuclear power facility. Energy Northwest also actively supports transportation electrification and new generation projects to the benefit of public power. www.energy-northwest.com.

About BPA

The Bonneville Power Administration is a ratepayer funded federal power marketing administration that delivers reliable, low-cost hydropower produced in the Columbia River Basin as well as the output from the region's only nuclear plant to communities across the Northwest. BPA also owns and operates more than 15,000 circuit miles of high-voltage transmission lines. More information about these and other activities is available on our [Media Relations](#) page.

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