

February 11, 2026

*Submitted via email to [communications@bpa.gov](mailto:communications@bpa.gov)*

**Re: Bonneville’s February 3, 2026, Public Involvement Policy Workshop**

Northwest Requirements Utilities (“NRU”) appreciates the opportunity to provide the following comments in response to BPA’s February 3 Public Involvement Policy Workshop, which kicked off the agency’s effort to update its [1986 Policy for Public Involvement](#) (“Policy”). NRU represents the interests of 57 Load-Following preference customers and one generation and transmission cooperative, comprising roughly 36% of BPA’s Tier 1 load.

As a preliminary matter, NRU would like to express our appreciation for Bonneville’s attention on this important issue. As we’d noted during the Workshop itself, as a general matter we agree that Bonneville has an impressive track record when it comes to providing opportunities for public process and engagement, as appropriate. That said, NRU submits that ensuring clarity and, equally critically, accountability when it comes to what agency matters or decisions require “public process” will be beneficial going forward.

At the conclusion of the Workshop, Bonneville staff asked two questions: “What is missing from updates you would like to discuss?”, and do customers have “Any concerns with proposed areas of review?”

NRU has no concerns with the proposed areas of review. However, with respect to the first question, NRU would appreciate additional public discourse surrounding the Policy’s background. To that end, we maintain that it’s important to recognize that the original policy arose from the statutory requirements of the Northwest Power Act (“NWPA”) itself. Specifically, section 4(g)(1) of the NWPA provides, “[t]o insure widespread public involvement in the formulation of regional power policies, the Council and Administrator shall maintain comprehensive programs to—(A) inform the Pacific Northwest public of major regional power issues, (B) obtain public views concerning major regional power issues, and (C) secure advice and consultation from the Administrator’s customers and others.” Section 4(g)(2) provides that in establishing these comprehensive public involvement programs, the Administrator must consult with its customers.

Moving on, previous to the 1986 version, BPA operated under its “Procedure for Public Participation in Marketing Policy Formulation.” [46 FR 26368](#). Later, BPA restyled the document as the “Procedure for Public Participation in Major Regional Power Policy” (“Procedure”). This precursor to the Policy noted that since the passage of the NWPA, “BPA has greatly enlarged its public participation activities” and explained that the Procedure would “make[] clear the policies for which this procedure would be required.” In March 1986, BPA initiated the process of revising the Procedure and establishing the Policy that is in place today. [51 FR 8624](#). BPA explained the reason for this update:

Prior BPA’s proposal included expanding the definition of major regional power policy to include “generic agreements, contracts, or other instruments between BPA and its customer’s which, while not policies, nevertheless establish major regional power policy” as designated by the Administrator. The proposal also included an entirely new section establishing flexible public process for certain “Other BPA Actions.”

From our perspective, the background here is essential to understand the purpose of the Policy itself, i.e., not just compliance with the NWPA, but also to ensure opportunities for customer input and public comment. For example, in the future Bonneville may be asked to commit to operational or financial obligations without first allowing for sufficient public engagement or input. This was the case with the December 14, 2023 Memorandum of Understanding, and ultimately what led both NRU and PPC to challenge Bonneville’s decision in the Ninth Circuit. It is NRU’s hope that a properly updated Policy will provide Bonneville staff and the Administrator with a framework to transparently weigh the legal requirements of similar processes in the future against the general policy goal of robust public involvement, and that the revised and updated Policy for Public Involvement will provide clarity as they seek to strike this delicate balance.

Thank you once again for your consideration of these comments. We look forward to working with you throughout the remainder of this public process.

Sincerely,

Matthew A. Schroettig  
Vice President, Policy and Legal Affairs