



NW Energy Coalition
for a clean and affordable energy future

TO ALL MEDIA

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Nancy Hirsh to succeed longtime NW Energy Coalition director Sara Patton

The NW Energy Coalition executive board is proud to announce that nationally admired energy policy authority Nancy Hirsh will succeed Sara Patton as Coalition executive director, effective in January.

Patton has directed the Coalition for 20 years, broadening the regional clean and affordable energy alliance to encompass more than 100 organizations of unparalleled diversity.

Hirsh has been Coalition policy director for 18 of those years. She's left her personal imprint on such critical accomplishments as increasingly energy efficiency-focused regional power plans, agreements to end coal-fired power generation in Washington and Oregon once and for all, and the region's landmark renewable energy and energy efficiency standard: Washington's I-937.

As Patton moves on to new adventures – she plans to teach energy policy and coalition-building – Hirsh takes the reins of a staff that includes the region's most respected energy policy analysts. No other Northwest public-interest group invests so much effort in the individual utility and state regulatory decision-making processes that often determine whether power needs will be met with clean and long-term cheaper resources or dirty and ultimately more expensive ones.

She also will be charged with melding the interests of Coalition members, who include environmental groups, clean energy businesses, investor-owned and public utilities, consumer and low-income advocates, and faith, labor and conservation organizations. That unique combination of policy expertise and broad inclusivity has defined and fueled the NW Energy Coalition for 33 years.

Coalition leaders conducted a year-long study of organizational needs in preparation for Patton's planned departure. Based on input from nearly 100 board members, staff, Coalition members, funders and stakeholders, the study identifies priority opportunities for the Coalition to pursue at this significant moment of transition. The executive board concluded that Hirsh would be the perfect leader to take the Coalition forward.

“Nancy totally fit the bill,” said Renewable Northwest chief counsel Megan Decker, who serves as Coalition vice chair and led the transition committee, “She’s got the vision, enthusiasm and credibility to leverage the Coalition’s great strengths and push the organization toward even greater gains for clean and affordable energy.”

Board chair Jeff Bissonette of Oregon’s Citizens’ Utility Board noted the size of the shoes that Hirsh will fill.

“Sara Patton has been the heart of the NW Energy Coalition for more than two decades,” he said. “She’s used her vast reserve of grace, savvy and courage to hold us all together and steadily progress toward the clean energy future.”

Hirsh acknowledged Patton’s incredible accomplishments and pledged her commitment to the Coalition’s traditions and its future.

“Sara has been a mentor for me and many other up-and-coming energy advocates in the Northwest,” Hirsh said. “I look forward to offering the same vision and support to the next generation of clean energy leaders.”

Patton commended the transition committee for its work and applauded Hirsh’s appointment. “I have been enormously blessed to have Nancy as policy director for all these years,” she said. “She fully understands the Coalition’s strengths, challenges and potential. I think Nancy is just going to be fantastic as executive director!”

For more information, contact:

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The **NW Energy Coalition**, the region’s foremost clean energy policy advocacy association, is a 33-year-old alliance of more than 100 environmental, labor, civic, consumer, faith and human service groups as well as progressive utilities and businesses in Oregon, Montana, Idaho, Washington state and British Columbia committed to meeting new power needs with energy efficiency and new, clean renewable energy.