

# NW Energy Coalition

## 3- to 5-Year Strategic Plan

*Adopted by the NW Energy Coalition Executive Board, July 17, 2008*

### Overview

Over the next five years, the NW Energy Coalition will continue to fight for a clean and affordable energy future, basing its efforts and initiatives around its four “pillars”: energy efficiency, properly sited renewable energy, consumer/low-income advocacy and restoration of Columbia Basin fish and wildlife affected by the regional hydropower system.

Since the last strategic plan, the threat of human-caused global warming has moved to the forefront of public and political concern. This development presents myriad challenges and opportunities to the Coalition, its members and all advocates of clean and affordable energy. The Coalition must incorporate those opportunities into its overall mission in the most productive and efficient manner. We must expand our overarching goals of meeting all load growth and replacing the power from the four lower Snake River dams with clean renewables and energy efficiency to include actually shutting down and replacing the power of coal plants that serve this region.

The Coalition has a special role to play – a role for which it is uniquely qualified – in bridging the rifts created in the course of combating climate change. Global warming can intensify the pressures that drive apart people of good will. Those crafting climate policies, such as cap-and-trade/auction schemes, are highly susceptible to wedge politics that pit consumers against environmental progress, investor-owned against publicly owned utilities, or renewables development against salmon survival.

As the embodiment of bringing and keeping diverse groups together in the cause of clean and affordable energy, the Coalition must *be the message*. It must stand vigilant against the fraying of our fragile-yet-fundamental alliance, underlining the “we” who collectively strive for common solutions and empowering those who now shoulder the burdens of decisions made on high.

Beyond and in furtherance of that special assignment, the Coalition Board has determined that the most appropriate response in the current period is to make energy efficiency its mission of missions, recognizing that energy efficiency is the surest, cheapest way to cut global-warming emissions, reduce consumer costs, and leave the least impact on wild places and living things.

Shorter-term work plans will flow from this general strategic plan. Our major overall goals for the entire 5-year period are to:

1. Firmly establish energy efficiency as the No. 1 strategy for combating global warming and the bedrock foundation of our clean-energy future.
2. Meet all regional load growth and replace expiring power contracts with energy efficiency, augmented by new renewable energy.
3. Begin the shutdown of coal plants now serving the region and replacement of their power with new renewable energy.
4. Prevent construction or major renovation of any coal-fueled plant in the region that does not capture and permanently sequester at least 90% of its carbon dioxide emissions beginning on the first day of power production.
5. Challenge the re-emergence of nuclear power as a solution to global warming.
6. Help make effective restoration of endangered salmon and steelhead in the Columbia Basin via removal of the four lower Snake River dams inevitable.
7. Protect and defend the interests of consumers (particularly low-income), labor, disadvantaged communities and people of color in climate-change policy decisions.

## **I. Energy Efficiency**

### **A. General**

- Securing all of the region's cost-effective energy efficiency will be the Coalition's top priority for the next five years.

### **B. Scope of Coalition Efforts**

- End-use (consumer) energy efficiency is the top priority, offering the greatest potential savings and providing immediate bill savings for ratepayers.
- Efforts on the utility side of the meter -- distribution, transmission, generation efficiency -- and efforts to improve overall system-wide efficiency through smart grid approaches and efficiencies are also important.
- Advocacy and educational efforts will focus not just on technological opportunities but also on savings from operational and behavioral changes.

### **C. Overall Goals**

- Establish energy efficiency and conservation as the region's No. 1 greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategy.
- Promote maximum energy efficiency delivery to meet all load growth; use energy efficiency and clean renewable energy to replace the power from the four lower Snake River dams and existing coal plants.
- Remove financial barriers to utility investment in cost-effective energy efficiency through consumer-friendly decoupling mechanisms or other means.
- Increase the effectiveness of state energy codes in new construction.
- Expand the market for advanced buildings (at least 20% beyond code).
- Identify the sectors (e.g., built environment, transportation, agriculture, industry) where the deepest energy cuts can be made in the short and long terms, along with cost-effective strategies, rebates, new technological approaches, needed R&D, financing options.

- Advocate for the smart grid and vehicle electrification to optimize system-wide efficiency.
- Go beyond electric and gas utility-driven efficiency programs to secure efficiency commitments at the state, city and key energy consumer levels. Encourage the use of sophisticated and creative marketing techniques to effectively promote efficiency programs.
- Overcome rental property owners' economic disincentive to spend money on making their rentals more energy efficient.

#### **D. Regional Venues/Priorities**

- Assure the efficiency goals in the NW Power and Conservation Council's 5th Northwest Power and Conservation Plan are achieved and surpassed.
- Secure aggressive and comprehensive efficiency goals in the upcoming 6th Power and Conservation Plan, in part through adoption of Model Conservation standards, and through incorporation of carbon costs that reflect the true value of carbon reductions.
- Add operations-based energy efficiencies as a resource in the 6<sup>th</sup> Power Plan and encourage utilities to acquire those savings.
- Secure and expand Bonneville Power Administration's energy efficiency commitments for the post-2011 period.
- Push for funding of workforce education and training in energy efficiency through unions, community colleges and universities, with special emphasis on including people from minority, low-income and disadvantaged communities.

#### **E. State-by-State and Utility Priorities**

- Establish state incentives to local government to enforce energy codes and secure utility funding of energy code enforcement.
- Promote state incentives for advanced buildings (at least 20% beyond energy code) in Idaho, Montana and Washington. Target key barriers to construction of high-efficiency buildings and do strategic outreach to senior executives of entities that use large amounts of energy.
- Promote smart grid with strategies beyond price signals for residential and small commercial (direct load control, smart appliances), and by advocating incorporation of plug-in electric vehicles into the grid.
- Maintain the leading utilities' demand-side management and IRP programs while targeting lagging utilities to ramp up their investments.

#### **F. First Steps**

- Highlight the region's energy efficiency potential by creating a summary of existing studies. This demand-side resource survey would address opportunities for end-use efficiency, combined heat and power (CHP), demand response, load management and smart grid technologies, as well as higher-cost efficiency measures and/or emerging technologies.
- Produce a white paper on market barriers to greater acquisition of energy efficiency and the specific solutions to those barriers.

## **II. Renewable Energy**

### **A. General**

- Promote aggressive, environmentally sound development of a widening array of large- and small-scale renewable power resources to cut greenhouse gas emissions and protect consumers through reduced or eliminated fuel costs.

### **B. Scope of Coalition Efforts**

- Strongly support the Renewable Northwest Project's goals for achieving and expanding the region's potential for renewable energy development, while not duplicating RNP's efforts or those of other Coalition members and partners and renewables developers themselves.
- Encourage and support utilities in promoting renewable distributed generation – solar access codes, net metering, renewable research and development, preferential tariffs, etc.

### **C. Overall Goals**

- Promote maximum energy efficiency delivery to meet all load growth, plus a little more; demonstrate the availability of energy efficiency and clean renewable energy to replace the power from the four lower Snake River dams and existing coal plants; in real time simultaneously develop renewables and energy efficiency to accomplish both goals.
- Improve our understanding (including impacts on the natural environment) of emerging renewable power production technologies such as wave/tidal and offshore wind and for storage of intermittently produced power.
- Distinguish between and consider different promotional approaches to low-carbon renewables (such as wind and solar, e.g.) and higher-carbon renewables (such as biopower).
- Remove barriers to accelerated development of renewables, such as lack of transmission, unreasonable integrations costs, regulation/shaping constraints, land use restrictions, unreasonable siting concerns, inadequate or short-term federal and state incentives, etc.
- Work to ensure that all states and counties have appropriate energy facility siting laws in place to guarantee the best possible development.
- Insist that the economic burden of renewable-energy projects not fall disproportionately on lower-income households and that all households share the benefits of the projects regardless of their ability to financially contribute.

### **D. Venues/Priorities**

- Assure that the NW Power and Conservation Council's 6<sup>th</sup> Northwest Power and Conservation Plan continues to emphasize renewable energy as the primary new (and replacement) generation source.
- Engage in development of the larger utilities' integrated resource plans to assure proper evaluation and inclusion of renewables in those plans.

- Engage as necessary with BPA, state legislatures, state utility commissions and individual utilities to support policies, incentives and programs to facilitate renewables development.
- Work to implement, defend and improve the renewable portfolio and other clean-energy standards enacted in Northwest states.

### **III. Fish & Wildlife**

#### **A. General**

- Advocate the restoration of healthy populations of native fish and wildlife in the Pacific Northwest, in particular the Columbia River Basin salmon and steelhead severely impacted by the region's hydroelectric system.
- Promote removal of the four lower Snake River dams as the most effective way to restore Columbia Basin salmon -- an icon embraced by people throughout the region and a cultural bond between the states, provinces and tribes of the Northwest – and other fish and wildlife endangered by the hydroelectric system to healthy, harvestable levels.

#### **B. Scope of Coalition Efforts**

- Support Save Our *wild* Salmon coalition efforts to restore threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead populations by providing energy expertise, advocacy, outreach and communications assistance.
- Address the erroneous claims that effective mitigation efforts – especially removal of the four lower Snake dams – impair the Federal Columbia River Power System's ability to integrate intermittent renewable power sources such as wind and/or undermine global emissions-reduction goals.
- Maintain current roles and levels of involvement in the salmon-restoration campaign.

#### **C. Overall Goals**

- Ensure that BPA provides sufficient revenue to fund all effective fish and wildlife costs.
- Achieve a federal Biological Opinion that addresses and mitigates the major causes of fish mortality through the Columbia-Snake hydrosystem.
- Assure adoption of a federal plan to: remove the four lower Snake River dams; replace their power with energy efficiency and/or new renewable energy; and make irrigators, transporters, utilities, workers and other beneficiaries of the current system whole.

#### **D. Venues/Priorities**

- Continue as plaintiff in the Biological Opinion litigation now in federal court, aimed at forcing federal agencies to produce a restoration plan that meet the requirements of the Endangered Species Act.
- Conduct outreach to the region's utilities, urging them to develop plans for dealing with the likely removal of the four lower Snake River dams and moving them toward actual negotiations on the issue.

- Advocate within the Western Climate Initiative for climate-change strategies that do not sacrifice other environmental protections and goals, such as Columbia Basin salmon restoration
- Advance the understanding of the relationships among salmon restoration, the power system, clean-energy development and climate change by participating the *Light in the River* series of white papers and producing our own analytical documents.

## **IV. Consumer, Low-Income & Labor**

### **A. General**

- Support and, when necessary, directly represent the interests of energy consumers, especially low-income, disadvantaged communities and people of color, and labor in energy policy decision-making.
- Advocate for priority inclusion of residents of the poorest communities in pollution mitigation, job creation and community development efforts since those communities have shouldered much of the environmental, health and economic burdens of a carbon-based economy.

### **B. Scope of Coalition Efforts**

- As the only regional coalition committed to both clean energy and consumer/low-income protection, continue to advocate for consumer interests in a variety of forums, including utility ratemaking, BPA and utility funding of weatherization and services particularly benefiting low-income consumers, the Western Climate Initiative and other climate-policy venues.
- Remind member and partner groups to consider the interests of and impacts on low-income, and other consumers, disadvantaged communities, communities of color and labor in energy policy decisions and advocacy.
- As industries take steps to reduce carbon emissions, workers in many traditional industries will face major changes, including possible dislocation. We will advocate “just transitions” so workers do not suffer economic hardship as a result of addressing the climate crisis and other environmental challenges.
- Support up-front capital investments to reduce emissions, including retooling/reinvestment programs that would help drive the transition to energy efficient technologies in existing plants, thus avoiding job loss and economic hardship.
- Stress that energy efficiency investments create not just “green” jobs but additional jobs of all kinds because efficiency savings leave businesses more money to invest.
- Focus on environmental justice concerns in communities heavily impacted by air pollution (environmental “hot spots”), including fossil fuel-based power plants, ports, incinerators, landfills, oil refineries and diesel bus stations where residents bear significant environmental, health and economic impacts.
- Support only those carbon-trading schemes and other means of addressing greenhouse gas emissions that directly and significantly reduce emissions and neither cause nor exacerbate the pollution burden of poor communities.

- Work with representatives of labor, low-income and communities of color to promote energy efficiency, weatherization and renewable energy job development that produces family-wage jobs and pathways out of poverty.

### **C. Overall Goals**

- Promote industry-wide standards for weatherization and energy efficiency measures for low-income housing.
- Provide additional assistance to low-income renters.
- Assure that low-income households benefit from smart metering and other smart technologies, rather than falling victim to the remote service cut-offs and other detrimental practices enabled by the new technologies.
- Increase utility commitment to bill assistance programs, especially Idaho and other states where utilities are averse to such programs.
- Seek statewide funding of low-income energy programs so all taxpayers pay for and can benefit from them – not just customers of particular utilities.

### **D. Venues/Priorities**

- Defend low-income consumer interests in utility rate cases; in particular, oppose higher per-customer (fixed) charges.
- Push for increased weatherization and other low-income energy assistance program funding from BPA and individual utilities.
- Push for funding of workforce education and training – including technical education and training -- in energy efficiency and residential weatherization, with special emphasis on recruiting members of minority, low-income and disadvantaged communities.
- Advocate within the Western Climate Initiative and in individual states' climate action processes for cap-and-trade/auction policies that benefit low-income consumers, communities of color and working people.
- Find ways to overcome property owners' economic disincentive to spend money on making their rentals more energy efficient.
- Further cement our relationships with the labor movement through participation in the Apollo Alliance, various blue-green alliances and other venues.

## **V. Outreach and Communications**

### **A. Outreach**

- Expand Coalition membership and strengthen our relationships with utilities and environmental, business, labor and consumer/low-income groups committed to promoting clean-energy alternatives.
- Use the common ground created by the climate-change movement as an opportunity to reach out to non-traditional allies in public health, education, transportation and other arenas.
- Mobilize members and allies to engage in state and regional policy venues and key campaigns to help achieve our strategic goals.
- Increase member participation by enhancing outreach staff relationships with member organizations and by developing constituency caucuses.

- Bring members together at successfully organized caucus and board meetings to educate participants, further policy goals and make strategic connections. Conduct a survey of Board members on potential format changes.
- Improve and update the Coalition website, membership lists and materials. Develop the policy section of the Web site to be more relevant and user-friendly.
- Encourage state and provincial caucuses to develop their own strategic plans, create shorter-term action plans and policy/outreach goals and identify ways caucus members can work collaboratively to achieve those goals.
- Explore the use of video and Web technology to increase the accessibility of our conference speakers and panelists.

### **B. Board Leadership**

- Develop leadership skills and deepen the involvement of current and potential members of the Coalition's full Board and Executive Board.
- Help caucus leaders build strong relationship with their caucus members and take ownership of the caucus projects and goals.
- Continually identify potential new Executive Board leaders, develop their potential and manage a dynamic succession plan.
- Reconsider the utility of face-to-face Executive Board meetings between conferences.

### **C. Communications**

- Explore use of new communication/information technologies to connect with members, allies, the press and the public to increase efficiency of information dissemination and reduce the carbon footprint of those efforts.
- Work toward merger of Outreach and Communications pods to create more efficiency and flexibility.
- As public concern about global warming intensifies, seize on the abundant opportunities to inform the media that investing in clean energy – especially energy efficiency – is the surest, cheapest means of reducing climate emissions.
- Focus opinion pieces, press releases and media contacts not just on climate change but on all of our core issues, including low-income/consumer protection in energy decisions and restoration of fish and wildlife harmed by the Northwest energy system, especially how that goal is coincident with advocacy of greenhouse-gas reductions.
- Expand the climate change discussion to incorporate local air pollution issues (criteria pollutants) and toxic contamination.

## **VI. Coalition resources**

### **A. Issue allocation**

- Core mission, especially energy efficiency, is first priority, followed by direct climate change work (developing regulatory schemes such as cap-and-trade or carbon taxes), and then opposition to particular power plants (especially those presenting precedent-setting issues).
- Focus on core issues on which Coalition staff have particular expertise; don't duplicate allies' efforts.



- As one part of the larger energy efficiency campaign, see that the energy efficiency goals in the Council's Power Plan are incorporated into Model Conservation Standards as a minimum.
- Bring efficiency advocacy and low-income issues to climate forums such as WCI (less emphasis).

#### **B. Geographic allocation**

- Coalition staff resources should go first of all to regional efforts, such as 6th Power Plan, BPA, and SOS and RNP partnership responsibilities. Climate change venues such as the WCI have lesser priority due to duplication of efforts and some diversion from core missions.
- Provide regional context and expert analyses of complex issues to support state allies' efforts.
- In conjunction with appropriate regional allies, help state groups with rate cases, legislation, rulemaking and siting issues, especially in Washington and Idaho since member groups are taking the lead in Oregon and Montana and because Washington has the half the region's population and power use.
- Work with British Columbia allies on regional cap-and-trade issues and energy efficiency.
- Devote relatively few resources to federal legislative work.

#### **C. Funding**

- Seek to diversify grant-funding sources.
- Build and maintain sources of funding through major donor development.
- Raise organizational dues and re-assess for-profit membership dues levels.
- Utilize online fundraising tools and e-mail campaigns to increase donations.

#### **D. Staffing/staff development**

- Set appropriate staffing numbers and levels of expertise to accomplish the goals of the strategic plan.
- Consider establishment of short-term satellite offices in states outside of Washington, as needed for capacity building, as part of specific campaigns or to further limited, clearly identified goals.
- Develop a realistic succession plan for the Coalition executive director and pod directors.