

Update

What's Happening With the Sixth Power Plan

April 2009

Things are falling into place with the Sixth Power Plan, although there will be a delay in getting the first draft out for review. Originally scheduled for May, the draft is now set for release in June. In the meantime, the Council members and staff will continue to wrestle with the issues, including what “a vision” for the plan should look like.

- **The Vision Thing** - Vision was atop the agenda at a work session on the Plan last week, and John Prescott ably represented PNUCC members in describing where utilities are headed with their resource plans – conservation, renewables, and natural gas. He stressed that the Power Plan has to be realistic in terms of what is achievable and what it is going to cost. John provided a valuable “voice of experience” counterpoint to ideas presented by others at the Council meeting. At their May 8th meeting, the PNUCC Board will be discussing how to develop and communicate the collective utility vision for the Northwest energy future.
- **An Updated Forecast** – I was heartened to see that PNUCC’s ongoing conversation with the Council had an effect on the demand forecast. Council staff adjusted their assumptions based on our comments and other new data, including the impacts of the recession for 2009-2011. Overall, the Council’s forecast of energy and peak loads is now very similar to PNUCC’s *Northwest Regional Forecast*. The two are tracking pretty consistently and the variations are small.
- **Doubling Conservation Targets** – Conservation targets continue to climb in the Council’s analysis. A major adjustment of late is in consumer electronics, where staff has added another 900 MWa of potential. The latest numbers are up in every sector over the last Power Plan for an achievable total of 6,000 MWa that is cost-effective. I expect their draft Plan will call for the region to acquire 1,200-1,500 MWa of conservation during the next 5 years. Our challenge is to assess if this is a realistic target, since it represents twice the amount acquired by utilities during the past five years. Seems like a very aggressive target to me.
- **Cost of Reducing Carbon** - The Council continues to ponder how to treat climate change policy. While their staff recognizes that carbon-reduction policies are in a state of flux, it’s unlikely the Plan will state a position on where the target should be. As we have strongly suggested, we’ll probably see

scenarios for what it would take and what it would cost to get to various levels of carbon stabilization or reduction.

Stayed tuned!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dick". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Dick Adams, Executive Director

PNUCC

503.294.1268 phone

dick@pnucc.org