

# ACCESS

T B L M A R K E T I N G B I - M O N T H L Y

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*Lancaster Substation: TBL built a completely new substation that splits the Bell-Noxon No. 2 line to integrate the new Rathdrum II generation plant into the Northwest grid.*

## Lancaster Sub completed in record time

Working to keep pace with a fast-track power plant, Transmission Business Line crews completed a northern Idaho substation in record time. The need to integrate the new generator into the Northwest power system by July 1, 2001 challenged TBL

crews to build the substation and connect it to nearby transmission lines several months faster than normal.

Working long hours, TBL construction and **continued on page 3**



# Acting Administrator decides on long-term DC Intertie future

As a result of three months of public meetings and comments, Bonneville Power Administration Acting Administrator Steve Wright, in conjunction with the Transmission Business Line, decided it would be in the best interests of the region and the West Coast to modernize the Direct Current Intertie that runs between Celilo, Ore. near the Columbia River and Sylmar, just north of Los Angeles, Calif.

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“ALONG WITH BPA’S SOUTHERN PARTNERS IN THE DC INTERTIE, OUR INTENT IS TO RESPOND IN A RESPONSIBLE WAY TO THE ONGOING WEST COAST POWER AND TRANSMISSION CRISIS BY ENSURING THE AVAILABILITY OF LONG-TERM RELIABILITY OF THE DC INTERTIE.”

STEVE WRIGHT

BPA ACTING ADMINISTRATOR

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Wright’s decision is to maintain the DC Intertie at its current capacity of 3,100 megawatts long-term and to fund the work out of BPA’s capital budget. Work at BPA’s Celilo converter station will include installing new controls and replacing the aging mercury arc valves with modern roll-in thyristors. On the same timeline — Aug. 2001 to Nov. 2003 — the DC Intertie southern partners, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and Southern California Edison, will install compatible controls and do an extensive modernization at their Sylmar converter station.

“Along with BPA’s southern partners in the DC Intertie, our intent is to respond in a responsible way to the ongoing West Coast power and transmission crisis by ensuring the availability of long-term reliability of the DC Intertie,” said Wright. “The DC Intertie is one of two critical interties

that interconnect the Pacific Northwest and Pacific Southwest.”

The two alternatives the Administrator considered were to maintain the existing mercury arc valves for their remaining life and keep the DC Intertie at 3,100 MW. The chosen alternative was to maintain the DC Intertie at 3,100 MW but make the investment right away in the roll-in thyristors to ensure its long-term reliability. After public comment, a third alternative to de-rate the DC Intertie to 1,100 MW (by removing the mercury arc valves in 2003) was taken off the table for consideration.

That alternative was seen as too extreme as it would have cost the TBL significant lost transmission revenues and would have reduced the transfer capability between the regions to too great an extent. During past Arctic Expresses the Northwest has had to import more than 2,000 MW from California during the winter. And during this latest crisis in California, that state often needed to import thousands of megawatts from other regions to meet its peak loads. These Interties make that possible.

“The question that was before us was do we invest in the new roll-in thyristors now and maintain the DC Intertie capacity at 3,100 MW for the long term?” said Kip Moxness, TBL Account Executive. “Or, do we simply maintain the mercury arc valves and find we have a major investment or a de-rate decision before us in as little as 5 years, plus less reliability and higher operation and maintenance costs year after year? Based on the choices we had, the Administrator’s decision was absolutely the correct one for our customers.”

One of the consequences of this decision is the immediate rescinding of the Aug. 23, 2000 Open Access Same Time Information System notice, which stated the DC Intertie would not be marketed long-term

beyond 1,100 MW until BPA made its decision on the DC Intertie public process. Once this OASIS notice is

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“THAT IS GOOD NEWS TO UTILITIES, INDEPENDENT POWER PRODUCERS AND MARKETERS WHO USE THE INTERTIE TO PURCHASE AND SELL POWER PRODUCTS, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE AC INTERTIE IS FULL ON A LONG TERM BASIS.”

KIP MOXNESS

TBL ACCOUNT EXEC.

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rescinded, BPA will sell its available long-term firm transmission capacity for five years (2001-2006) until the modernization project is complete. After that, BPA will again sell firm transmission capacity for time periods of more than five years.

“That is good news to utilities, independent power producers and marketers who use the Intertie to purchase and sell power products, especially since the AC Intertie is full on a long term basis,” Moxness said.

LADWP and SCE must replace much of their Sylmar converter station at the southern end of the DC Intertie due to a fire and two earthquakes. They also asked BPA to commit to a 3,100 MW DC Intertie capacity long-term. Since they share the same Intertie, if either station is de-rated, the other is also de-rated. The southern partners asked for a decision from BPA by the end of Jan. 2001.

Comments from three public meetings in Portland, Ore. (Oct. 17, Nov. 7 and Dec. 1), as well as written comments from customers and potential users of the line, recognized the societal value of the DC Intertie, especially at a time when there already is a shortage of intertie capacity. Even without considering reliability, a

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## Lancaster Sub completed in record time

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line crews built Lancaster Substation to service the 250-megawatt (265 MW peaking) output of Avista/Cogentrix's combined-cycle natural gas combustion turbine at Rathdrum in northeast Idaho. They connected it to TBL's existing Noxon-Bell 230 kilovolt line, all between April and Dec. 20, 2000. This month the substation began to provide station voltage to the Rathdrum plant, which is still under construction.

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**"RATHDRUM WILL HELP MEET THE NORTHWEST'S CRITICAL POWER NEEDS."**

**BOB KING**  
**TBL ACCOUNT MANAGER**

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"Rathdrum will help meet the Northwest's critical power needs," said Bob King, TBL account executive. "Our challenge with this and other proposed power plant projects is to continue to keep the grid built to handle new generation and growing Northwest loads."

Pointing to power system emergencies this winter, King said the Rathdrum power plant is sorely needed and, while not built in time to ease this year's power emergencies, it will definitely help next year when emergencies could be just as severe. In addition to Rathdrum, a PacifiCorp combustion turbine near Klamath Falls, Ore. will also be put into service this year, providing even more power to meet West Coast power demand.

King credited project manager Johnny Luiz and TBL crews in finishing the project in the tight timeframe.

"A project like this would typically take two months longer," said Jerry Downing, the onsite project foreman who oversaw construction of the substation. "But this one has been on a fast track because the developer wants

its power to go to market quickly...and the Northwest needs that power."

Over the past two years, developers of fifteen potential generating projects

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**"THIS ONE HAS BEEN ON A FAST TRACK BECAUSE THE DEVELOPER WANTS ITS POWER TO GO TO MARKET QUICKLY...AND THE NORTHWEST NEEDS THAT POWER."**

**JERRY DOWNING**  
**PROJECT FOREMAN**

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totaling nearly 9,000 megawatts of power have approached the TBL for assurance that if they build, transmission will be available. It is unlikely all of those power plants will be built. Still, most are proposed for placement where gas and electric transmission corridors cross, but they need facilities to integrate their power output into the Northwest transmission system.

When Avista first approached TBL in Feb. 1999, King said the transmission organization was worried about the viability of this project because it was within the West of Hatwai cut-plane, a bottleneck where energy flow from east to west is sometimes constrained. However, an Avista-funded system impact study showing that the generator could be connected to TBL's existing 230-kV line, also showed that its placement would not significantly affect the cutplane.

"The study indicated that if placed where Avista proposed to site the plant, the energy could push through the cutplane without significant impacts to the constrained path," King said. "A little further east and we could not have done it. As it is, this project will provide additional revenue so we can build needed reinforcements on that cutplane."

A transmission crew finished the job by Dec. 20, breaking the existing Bell-Noxon line and looping it through the Lancaster Substation. One of the more interesting features of the substation is the grounding mat Downing's crew installed beneath the facility. That

took five miles of copper cable to get the right amount of protection from faults for personnel and equipment.

While TBL built the facility, Avista will own the substation and reimburse TBL for its cost. Cogentrix is building the power plant for Avista.

## Acting Administrator decides on long-term DC Intertie future

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conservative estimate of societal values could exceed \$20 million over 20 years.

In addition, many of the new generators coming on line over the next several years will need the DC Intertie to sell their product. While long term capacity is not currently available on the alternating current intertie, that capacity is still available on the DC Intertie.

Because of the lower costs associated with installing roll-in thyristors and the ability of BPA to cover those costs under its capital budget, the Acting Administrator decided against the idea of a subscription, or an auction, designed to sell enough additional Point-to-Point long-term service over the DC Intertie to offset the project's costs. BPA expects to see increased revenues from marketing long-term its available transmission capacity.

Although replacing the mercury arc valves with new roll-in thyristors will cost BPA \$5.3 million more than maintaining current equipment, it is the only alternative that retains the line's 3,100 MW transmission capacity on a long-term basis. It also provides much improved reliability and gives the West coast the transfer capability it needs to continue to address serious energy shortages. The decision has also allowed the TBL to give the southern partners the unambiguous commitment to maintain the 3,100 MW they sought.

More information, including BPA's response to public comments, is available on TBL's website at <http://www.transmission.bpa.gov/tblib/dcintertie>.

# TBL moves ahead on Puget Sound Constraint Management plan

In preparing for potential transmission constraints in the heavily-loaded Puget Sound area, the Transmission Business Line is putting a transmission management package into effect that would allow it to reliably operate the transmission system for loads when outages or other events occur. The centerpiece of the package includes a curtailment plan that calls for pro rata cuts of firm transmission service in the Puget Sound area when system conditions require.

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“THIS SURPRISING PREDICTION OF RISING DEMAND INCREASES THE PROBABILITY THAT ALL TRANSMISSION NEEDS OF THE AREA CANNOT BE MET UNDER ADVERSE SYSTEM CONDITIONS.”

CLIFF PERIGO  
TBL ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

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Load growth from the Seattle, Wash. metropolitan area to Vancouver, British Columbia is putting a strain on the transmission system in that area. Seattle-area utilities have recently increased their load forecasts over the next few years by as much as 650 MW, mostly from new Internet service providers. Some of this new load is expected to be served this year.

“This is an area that has already experienced forced outages and curtailments,” said Cliff Perigo, TBL Account Executive. “This surprising prediction of rising demand increases the probability that all transmission needs of the area cannot be met under adverse system conditions.”

TBL and other Puget Sound utilities have made significant transmission investments and completed other reinforcement measures, but more is required to mitigate potential problems



*Freezing fog and the resulting ice build-up destroyed several transmission structures along the John Day-Hanford 500 kV line in early December 2000.*

during outage conditions. Additional reinforcement activities, redispatch schemes, establishing a South of Bothell cutplane and relaxing

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THE PRIMARY LEG OF THIS YEAR'S PACKAGE IS TO IMPLEMENT PRO RATA SCHEDULE CUTS FOR PUGET SOUND AREA TRANSMISSION CUSTOMERS SERVED BY TBL WHEN THERE IS A SYSTEM PROBLEM THAT REQUIRES A CURTAILMENT.

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reliability criteria — all of which have been discussed with Northwest parties — are options still being considered. However, they cannot be implemented within a useful timeframe.

The primary leg of this package is to implement pro rata schedule cuts in the Puget Sound area when there is a system problem that requires a

curtailment. In the past, the Bonneville Power Administration curtailed service to British Columbia to manage transmission constraints in Puget Sound. However, the Canadian-U.S. treaty entitlement return arrangements requires BPA to treat entitlement return to British Columbia with the same priority as other firm schedules to the Puget Sound area.

According to Don Matheson of the TBL, the transmission agency's tariff directs it to make pro rata cuts when system conditions demand. That includes cuts for power headed across the border for entitlement return as well as power scheduled to Puget Sound.

“When there is a system problem, we'll take what used to be cut only at the Canadian border and distribute that amount pro rata to transmission

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## RTO West moves into second stage

The initial regional transmission organization filing by RTO West filing utilities with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission late last year was only the beginning of a process that now turns its energy to working out the details of the RTO West proposal.

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**“FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO CONTINUE TO WATCH AND INFLUENCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF RTO WEST, CONTENT GROUPS ARE PROBABLY THE BEST PLACE NOW TO BE INVOLVED. THESE ARE THE GROUPS THAT WILL WORK OUT MOST OF THE DETAILS OF THE STAGE 2 FILING.”**

**PEGGY OLDS**

**TBL'S RTO PROJECT MGR.**

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A public meeting Jan. 12 launched the process for working out the details in time to meet the next filing date with FERC, now expected in July. Because of the complex nature of the Stage 2 filing documents, most of the process from this point will rely on the work of content groups, which will continue to report their findings to the Regional Representatives Group. Content groups will begin meeting publicly in early February.

“For those who want to continue to watch and influence the development of RTO West, content groups are probably the best place now to be involved,” said Peggy Olds, TBL’s RTO project manager. “These are the groups that will work out most of the details of the Stage 2 filing.”

Entities with a stake in how transmission access and costs will be implemented in the coming years should get involved, Olds added.

Guided by Stage 1 decisions and the Stage 2 work plan, content groups will develop specific products and attempt to work towards a consensus

on remaining issues. As in Stage 1, unresolved issues will go to the RRG to attempt consensus there. Issues the RRG cannot decide will go to the filing utilities for a final decision.

Products still needing development are an RTO tariff with pricing, the congestion management scheme, a billing and settlement system, a scheduling system, ways to monitor the market and a host of agreements between RTO West and transmission owners. Those include such agreements as the allocation of firm transmission rights, suspension of contracts between transmission owners, paying agent, generation integration, security coordinator, scheduling coordinator and liability. If Canadian utilities decide to participate, additional agreements will add to the product list.

“Other products will certainly arise as the region works through all the issues and requirements of the Stage 2 filing,” Olds said.

RTO West filing utilities first filed with FERC in October 2000. On Dec. 1, filing utilities submitted two supplemental filings with FERC. Six of the utilities submitted a filing that amended the initial filing by clarifying certain portions and incorporating comments. Those utilities are the Bonneville Power Administration, Avista, PacifiCorp, Puget Sound Energy, Montana Power Company and Idaho Power Company.

The remaining filing utilities — Sierra Pacific Power, Nevada Power and Portland General Electric — submitted a nearly identical filing, with a notable exception. They asked FERC to require filing utilities to analyze export fees as part of the RTO West pricing proposal.

Since the Stage 1 filing, about 90 parties from all over the region have submitted to FERC comments, interventions or protests regarding the

filing. RTO West filed answers to those comments Dec. 5.

“This is not a surprise, nor are the questions raised new to the filing

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**“RTO WEST IS A BIG, NEW UNDERTAKING AND THERE ARE A LOT OF DETAILS YET TO BE WORKED OUT. IN FACT, THE FILING UTILITIES ARE USING THE COMMENTS TO FRAME THE CONCEPTS FOR THEIR STAGE 2 AGREEMENTS.”**

**PEGGY OLDS**

**TBL'S RTO PROJECT MGR.**

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utilities,” Olds said. “RTO West is a big, new undertaking and there are a lot of details yet to be worked out. In fact, the filing utilities are using the comments to frame the concepts for their Stage 2 agreements.”

The process is public and ongoing. The best way to keep up and to view the filing documents is to log onto the Internet and point your browser to [www.rto west.org](http://www.rto west.org).

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*Send your letters and comments to your account executive or to “Access: Letters to the Editor,” Bonneville Power Administration, Transmission Business Line – Attn: Linda Hunziker TMP-Dittz, P.O. Box 491, Vancouver WA 98666; e-mail: [llhunziker@bpa.gov](mailto:llhunziker@bpa.gov)*

## Late year power crunch averted

A winter power emergency plan pulled together in early December was put to the test in real time mid-month when cold weather settled over the Northwest. Even before regional officials could run two scheduled tests of the plan, the real winter event came along, sending the region into its first power emergency.

An Emergency Response Team established by the plan issued a level 2 emergency beginning Dec. 8 as temperatures dipped below freezing and it ended the emergency Dec. 12 without having to force utilities to shed loads.

By all accounts, the Northwest plan's elements and the regional response displayed the readiness needed to ward off December's power emergency. With a goal of avoiding a power emergency, the plan's early warning allowed the region to begin regional coordination and communicate with policy makers and the public before the emergency reached a stage where drastic actions would have to be taken, said Vickie VanZandt, Transmission Business Line vice president of operations and planning.

"This was more valuable than any table top experience. It had real shortages and high prices," VanZandt said. "Two things that helped us get through it was that the messages of the four Northwest governors appealing to constituents to conserve energy were all consistent and the voluntary load response from people was sizable."

At the same time, the California Independent System Operator declared a stage 2 emergency as available power supplies in that state dipped below power demand. California historically sends power north in the winter when Northwest electricity demand peaks and California demand is at its lowest, just as power flows south during California's summer peaks. This year, however, California power producers could not keep up with local demand,

let alone send power north to soften Northwest power emergencies.

One of the differences between Northwest and California emergency plans is that California's is set to cope with emergencies as they happen, while the Northwest approach is to issue warnings that give the region enough lead time to avoid a real-time emergency.

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**"THIS WAS MORE VALUABLE THAN ANY TABLE TOP EXPERIENCE. IT HAD REAL SHORTAGES AND HIGH PRICES."**

**VICKIE VANZANDT**

**TBL VICE PRESIDENT**

**OPERATIONS AND PLANNING**

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Depending on how cold it gets, the plan calls for the Northwest to shut down non-firm exports of electricity out of the region, voluntarily cut back electricity use in homes and businesses, shut down some government offices, import as much electricity as is available on the market, operate the hydro system to maximize generation (with curtailment of salmon recovery operations only in a declared federal system emergency) and make sure as much transmission capacity as possible is available by postponing maintenance and having repair crews on alert to shorten any unplanned outages. Otherwise the Northwest could come dangerously close to greater demand for power than it has power to deliver.

A debriefing of the Alert 2 event in December found that the region's response to such an emergency could be improved to keep future cold spells from driving the region into a real North American Electric Reliability Council emergency in which load shedding would be required. One of the issues is the difficulty of establishing an accurate three-day forecast, which is the early warning required if the region

is to avert a real NERC alert.

Phil Mesa, reliability coordinator for Bonneville Power Administration's Power Business Line, said the early warning expands what can be done, such as repositioning water in the system to provide river flow where it can best be used by generators and to defer maintenance at dams. However, since utility deregulation, it has become more difficult to gather enough information to know what the power system's situation will be three days down the line.

"Utilities, including Bonneville, are no longer vertically-integrated," Mesa said. "We need to know the situation to respond to potential problems, but there isn't a single entity anymore that has the whole picture."

When the Emergency Response Team met ahead of the predicted cold spell to assess Northwest electricity demand and the region's ability to meet that demand, it discovered that utilities with control area responsibility were reluctant to provide that information for fear of driving up market prices. This was particularly true for those that were short of supply.

"For this to work best, we need a three-day forecast. That's not just for weather, it has to include power and demand, too," VanZandt said. "This situation, if it were to occur again, could prevent the region from taking many of the actions necessary to avoid a real NERC alert condition. That would mean the region would have to deal with load shedding in real time, rather than planning ahead."

BPA also needs a true assessment that there is a significant problem before it can modify river operations. The move from a one-day to a three-day forecast helps. If that happened in real time, the region would have lost the ability to take that preventative action, Mesa said.

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## TBL moves ahead on Puget Sound Constraint Management plan

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customers in the Puget Sound area,” Matheson said.

To ensure the curtailment plan’s pro rata schedule cuts don’t result in unexpected load loss or blackouts, the TBL will need input from transmission customers in the area as to how they will respond to curtailment directives, said Perigo. One option is to meet the curtailed amount of energy with demand side management measures. Transmission customers could choose to drop some interruptible loads or loads with back-up energy. Another alternative would be to buy power for redispatch from generators located close to loads in Puget Sound.

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“WHEN THERE IS A SYSTEM PROBLEM THIS WINTER, WE’LL TAKE WHAT USED TO BE CUT ONLY AT THE CANADIAN BORDER AND DISTRIBUTE THAT AMOUNT PRO RATA TO ALL TRANSMISSION CUSTOMERS IN THE PUGET SOUND AREA.”

DON MATHESON  
TBL STAFF

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Last winter BPA was in a curtailment condition about 4 percent of the time. However, this winter that expected percentage has dropped to below 2 percent due to completed transmission reinforcements. That’s only about 34 hours and is typically caused by forced outages. The average size of a reduction in each occurrence is expected to be about 400 MW. Also, TBL has deferred planned maintenance to non-critical periods to reduce the chance of an

unexpected outage creating a curtailment situation.

Over the past two years, Puget Sound utilities have completed a number of reinforcement projects aimed at shoring up the area’s transmission system. TBL, Puget Sound Energy and Seattle City Light have all completed work on lines and in substations to increase transmission capacity and strengthen weak links. TBL alone spent \$16.5 million in fiscal years 1999-2000 in system reinforcements.

However, according to Perigo, there still is much work to be done to remove the strain from Puget Sound area transmission lines. TBL, utilities, marketers, independent power producers and other interested parties have met four times over the past two years to discuss the best ways to shore up the transmission system north of Seattle and to ensure all parties’ loads can be served under less than ideal conditions. At a Nov. 2, 2000 meeting in Vancouver, B.C., TBL representatives described the agency’s preferred reinforcement activities, while BC Hydro representatives described improvements in Canada for the east side interconnection between the two countries.

Puget Sound utilities are now reviewing TBL’s preferred reinforcement options for fiscal years 2001 and 2002. The review is scheduled for completion in February. Those options include, among others, work at several substations, including Sno-King, Maple Valley and Sammamish, as well as bolstering the Bothell-Sammamish 230-kV line and building a Kangley-Echo Lake 500 kV line.

TBL is developing the capability for pro rata curtailments as quickly as is feasible. A number of issues have yet to be resolved and the procedure needs to be tested.

## Late year power crunch averted

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“We recognized that we needed to provide a safe environment for the parties to give us accurate information on their upcoming condition,” Mesa said. “Since the December emergency, we’ve established a safe depository for that information.”

Utilities can now send demand and power availability information to a single place (the Northwest Power Pool), where it is aggregated. Those who put the information together are under confidentiality agreements not to reveal the data.

“The only information shared with the world is the total numbers,” Mesa said. “If you have that information, then you have the picture for the region.”

The three-stage warning follows NERC’s criteria for severity, which demands non-voluntary actions if the power system reaches a critical stage.

**Alert 1** — With all available resources running, required operating reserves are inadequate.

**Alert 2** — Firm loads can only be met after taking extraordinary actions (public appeals to reduce demand, reducing interruptible load, deviating from the biological opinion to make hydro resources available).

**Alert 3** — Firm load shedding imminent or in progress.

California continues to have problems meeting demand and was in a perpetual state of stage 2 emergency until late December. Once the Northwest emergency passed, U.S. Energy Secretary Bill Richardson extended an order to BPA and the Western Area Power Authority to help by selling surplus power to California. Consequently, as much as 1,750 MW of BPA power flowed south during afternoon hours on a 2 for 1 exchange. Part of that power came back during non-peak hours, allowing the region to store valuable water behind dams.

## TBL eases application fees

The application processing fee for long-term service will be waived to help customers transition to the Transmission Business Line's new Open Access Transmission Tariff. The waiver applies on a one-time basis only for each customer and will be retroactive for those who have already made such a transaction.

TBL's existing Open Access Transmission Tariff requires transmission customers to pay a \$2,500 non-refundable processing fee to handle contracts for long-term firm Point-to-Point transmission service and Network Integration service. However, the proposed tariff approved by customers for the two-year period Oct. 1, 2001 to Sept. 30, 2003 does not include such a fee, yet customers who are now

signing contracts and asking for firm service during that period are having to pay the application fee under the existing rules.

"This one-time waiver addresses the differences between the two Open Access Transmission Tariffs and provides some relief from paying the application fees required by the existing tariff," said Fran Gebhardt, TBL's Contracts Issues Manager. "The fact that it's retroactive is only fair. It will provide relief to those customers who have already signed contracts and made their applications for long-term service."

Retroactive fees will be credited to customers' bills on applications for service that begins on or after Oct. 1, 2001 or where existing service was

amended to extend beyond Sept. 30, 2001. If a customer does not have a bill to credit, the one-time waiver would be given as a refund.

Gebhardt added that a number of customers have multiple contracts and applications, but that a reimbursement or waiver of all application fees would not be financially feasible for the TBL.

"The one-time waiver will help customers transition to the new tariff," Gebhardt said. "It will relieve the financial burden on smaller customers while also helping to some degree larger customers."

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