

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2026

The Honorable Chris Wright
Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Wright:

As you are aware, the undersigned members of Congress from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Nevada, wish to participate in the selection of the next administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration. Involvement in this process is important because BPA's system provides about 32% of the Northwest's power and 75% of the Northwest's high voltage transmission. This electrical power footprint makes BPA an essential part of everyday life for about 5 million citizens, many of whom we represent.

We were pleased to see that the position of Administrator of the BPA has now been posted on the USAJOBS website. This approach assures that the process of identifying the best applicant will be open, careful, inclusive, and not predetermined.

We have reached out to co-ops, public utility districts (PUDs), investor-owned utilities (IOUs), independent power producers (IPPs), engineering, procurement, and construction firms (EPCs), former BPA administrators, and others to gather input regarding the attributes of the next Administrator. What follows is a combination of that input. Here is what we want to see in the next Administrator:

1. An understanding and strong support of the continued existence of the BPA as an institution designed to deliver cost-based, preference hydropower to the millions of citizens living in the geographic area from which that hydropower is generated.
2. High level leadership and management experience
3. Strong political acumen with experience in communication.
4. A background in the utility industry with an understanding of high voltage transmission.
5. A disrupter. A risk taker. The common thread in interviews with the groups noted above is that the Agency has become inflexible and intransigent. Some blame this on a legal department that can never say yes because it can never find a perfectly risk-free path forward, others on an undue emphasis on marketing rather than transmission. What is clear is that the new administrator faces the challenge of effecting change in a long seated bureaucracy so that things will actually get done- so that transmission is actually built. BPA currently has no mindset to build and no sense of the urgency of the moment.
6. The ability to recognize the need for new ideas and new approaches to long standing problems facing the agency:
 - A. Transmission: Must act much more quickly. Why isn't "self-build" allowed? Why do projects take years and years to move forward? Why isn't the "queue" problem being addressed (it's becoming a speculation opportunity, not a means of moving real projects forward)?
 - B. Fish: A reset. Perhaps a new focus on the jeopardy standard. But a new approach. What has been happening is not working for power generation or, at least as far as ongoing litigation is concerned, for the fish.

- C. Generation: Much better and deeper involvement in power generation. The constant recurrence of “outages” (shutdowns of energy generation at the dams) is unacceptable. This will require a new approach to dealing with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Corp of Engineers.
7. Someone who understands the need to apply “benchmarks” to the BPA’s performance. Where does it stand with regard to generation, transmission, queues, construction, planning, legal analysis, environment, marketing, etc, as compared to its peers?
 8. Someone who understands the relationship of the BPA to Canada and to the USA-Canadian Columbia River Treaty.
 9. Someone who understands the intricacies, political bias, and importance of the Northwest Power Act and the challenge presented by the Residential Exchange Program.

Thank you for encouraging our involvement in this important process. We are sure that the Senate will weigh in also, and we are reaching out to Senators Risch and Crapo, Sheehy and Daines.

If you are interested in further elaboration on any of these points, please contact any of us.

Sincerely,



Cliff Bentz
Member of Congress



Mark E. Amodi
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress



Troy Downing
Member of Congress



Michael Baumgartner
Member of Congress



Russ Fulcher
Member of Congress



Michael K. Simpson
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