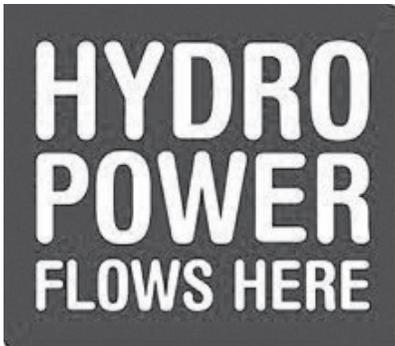


PUD Submits Comments on Columbia River EIS



Citing its important role in irrigation, navigation, recreation and energy production, the Grays Harbor PUD has submitted its comments on the Columbia River System Operations Environmental Impact Statement to the Bureau of Reclamation, Army Corps of Engineers and the Bonneville Power Administration. Authored by those three agencies at the end of February, the EIS supports the Lower Snake River

Dams and recommends additional water spill over the dams and increased mitigation efforts to assist salmon run recovery.

"This is an important moment in the history of the Columbia River, the energy industry and our state. It's a privilege to be able to tell the story of how the intersection of those three areas impacts our customers, our county and our utility," said General Manager Dave Ward.

In the comments submitted, the PUD states that "...the preferred alternative suggested in the draft EIS of increased spill and additional mitigation efforts designed to help (salmon) fry reach open waters is an acceptable method, but needs to be monitored closely to verify fry survival improvement and not create more harm."

While the increase of spill over the dams may mean an increase in energy costs for the utility, the PUD points out that the increase is far less than the billions of dollars which would be needed to remove existing hydroelectric dams and replace them with more expensive and less reliable energy sources, which was an alternative considered but not supported in the EIS. In the PUD comments, the utility urges continued support for resources that generate clean, reliable and affordable energy: "In Grays Harbor, many PUD customers are already struggling to get by with existing costs from the current infrastructure. To increase the burden by asking them to help foot the bill for new technologies that lack the affordability and reliability that have made hydropower the dominant power resource in the region for nearly a century is an expense many, quite literally, cannot afford."

The PUD comments also point out the irony in the fact that the elimination of hydropower facilities on the Lower Snake River would be in direct contrast to the Clean Energy Transformation Act passed in 2019 which supported the hydroelectric system.

Commission Meeting Dates

Meetings are held in the Nichols Building, 220 Myrtle Street, Hoquiam.

May 2020

Monday - May 4

Monday - May 18

June 2020

Monday - June 8

(rescheduled from June 1)

Monday - June 22

(rescheduled from June 15)

Regular business meetings are scheduled to begin at 4:30 pm. Public comment periods are included at the open and close of every meeting.

Commission meetings may be cancelled and special meetings may be scheduled. Please visit our website (www.ghpud.org) for updated information.

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Managers Message

by Dave Ward, General Manager

“Well, now I’ve seen it all.”

As we have all found in the last month, that saying can be both a blessing and a curse. Working at a utility you come to expect the occasional disruption to your normal workday but that usually comes in the form of a storm or major outage. Never has the Grays Harbor PUD had to reinvent how it serves its customers and interacts with itself in the way demanded by the COVID-19 response. But with every great challenge comes opportunity and in the midst of this crisis, our staff have pulled together and managed to continue our tradition of service.

I have to begin by thanking you all for your patience and cooperation. These have been trying times on so many levels, yet the majority of the interactions our staff have had with customers in the field and here at the PUD facility have been full of positivity and encouragement. That speaks to the character of our community and it makes the job we perform for you so much easier. We’re all in this together and that attitude has allowed the PUD the flexibility to adapt our service model with as few interruptions as possible. It is so appreciated.

For several years I have spoken about the team we have assembled here at the PUD with praise and admiration. The dedication and professionalism of these over 160 public servants is what allows the PUD to deliver services to our customers. In the era of COVID, those characteristics have allowed the utility to continue our services to you, our customers. In spite of the fact that we chose to close our public lobbies, our staff adapted their service model to continue face to face services through our drive thru window which was ideal for social distancing. Contact over the phone and via our website and mobile app continued without interruption. In addition, staff throughout the PUD adopted social distancing practices by moving to different offices and telecommuting. Our crews have continued to respond to outages and to maintain the utility system with the knowledge and skill that our customers have come to expect and our board has approved steps to assist customers struggling through this difficult time. I could not be prouder of the way our team has come together to continue our service to you. There is no group I would rather go through these trying times with.

As we move through the spring, we hear the term “the new normal.” We don’t know what that will be or what it will look like. But whatever that may be, your PUD will strive to continue to adapt to that new normal and continue the services we bring to our customers and continue our 80 year tradition of public utility services to our community.



ENERGY, an informational newsletter, is published monthly for families and businesses energized by Grays Harbor PUD.

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