How to keep the Northwest's lights on, jobs growing, goods moving and salmon swimming in the era of climate change

The Northwest is justly proud of its clean-energy tradition and innovation. But we can do better, and the accelerating climate crisis tells us we must. We can power our region without burning coal, we can save endangered salmon and we can reinvigorate our economy by building a true clean-energy future.

A new report from the NW Energy Coalition, *Bright Future*, shows it can be done. The paper explains how, with federal and regional leadership, the Northwest electric power system can:

- Meet future energy demands
- Restore wild salmon to our rivers and ocean
- Help the transportation sector slash its global-warming emissions
- Reduce its own carbon emissions at least 15% by 2020 and 80% or more by 2050
- Create thousands of family-wage, clean-energy jobs and build vibrant local and regional economies

*Bright Future* finds that this challenge really is an opportunity to produce new, sustainable jobs, decrease pollution, boost local economies and protect Columbia and Snake river salmon. And it finds virtually no difference — about two-thirds of a cent per kilowatt-hour — in the cost of energy to consumers of taking the clean-energy path, a tiny price to pay for enormous economic and natural-world benefits.
Lighting the way

Some changes in the near-term are needed to achieve this brighter future:

**Cap global-warming emissions.** President Obama and the U.S. Congress should quickly set carbon emission limits consistent with scientists’ recommendations and establish mechanisms to meet them, along with incentives and penalties. But the Northwest must not wait for national action. The region can adopt *Bright Future’s* carbon-reduction and clean-energy targets and start working toward them, right now.

**Regional leadership from BPA.** The Obama administration should direct BPA to set a regional annual energy efficiency and combined heat and power (CHP) and new renewable energy needed to meet new electric demand between now and 2050 — all costing no more than natural gas-generated power (10 cents per kilowatt-hour in today’s dollars).

**A strong regional plan.** The Northwest’s official power planning agency, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, is developing its 6th Northwest Power and Conservation Plan, forecasting power needs for the next 20 years and prescribing the resources used to meet them. The Council plan should call for enough energy efficiency and renewable energy to meet all demand growth and wean the region from coal power.

**Extension of state renewable energy standards.** The renewable portfolio standards now in place in three Northwest states expire by 2025 or earlier. The federal government or the states (including Idaho) must extend an ambitious standard beyond 2025. The pace of renewables development must continue so we can close the door on coal power.

**Prohibit new coal plant construction and the extension of the lives of existing ones.** Only by rejecting coal-fueled power can we reach our greenhouse-gas reduction goals. This can be accomplished through federal action or strong emissions performance standards adopted by individual states.

Working together, we can create this *Bright Future* for ourselves and our children. We can keep the lights on, the goods moving, the good jobs growing, the rivers running and salmon swimming in the Pacific Northwest.

The complete *Bright Future* report can be found at www.lightintheriver.org/brightfuture