

Washington Renewable Energy Standard: Progress Made and Remaining Opportunities

The Renewable Northwest Project (RNP) initiated an analysis in 2008 to estimate progress made towards achievement of the Washington Renewable Energy Standard (RES) benchmarks. The news is good: many of Washington's utilities are well on their way to meeting or exceeding the first RES. For most utilities, meeting subsequent RES benchmarks will require securing additional renewable energy. Washington utilities are estimated to have over 500 average megawatts (MWa) of renewables to-date for RES compliance. The following summarizes RNP's primary findings in greater detail.ⁱ

Washington

In 2006, Washington established its Clean Energy Standard by passage of a ballot initiative, Initiative 937. The Renewable Energy Standard (RES) applies to electric utilities that serve more than 25,000 customers; this currently encompasses 17 of Washington's 62 utilities that collectively provide power to meet about 84% of Washington's electricity usage. The RES targets for these eligible utilities is as follows:

- 3% by 2012
- 9% by 2016
- 15% for 2020 and beyond.

Washington's I-937 also requires the 17 utilities meet all cost-effective energy efficiency, and the analysis below factors that requirement into the projected load for each utility.

Thirteen of seventeen utilities are anticipated to meet or exceed the 3% by 2012 target, with Washington utilities having made over 500 MWa of renewable energy acquisitions. Three utilities already meet the 2016 target and one utility is forecast to have surplus renewable energy for 2020. The amount of additional renewable energy needed for 2020 RES compliance is estimated at just over 1,000 MWa.

Washington							
Utility	2008 Estimated Annual Load (MWa)	Annual Growth Rate*	Renewables Acquired (MWa)	Renewables Compliance Shortfall / (Surplus) (MWa)			
				3% by 2012	9% by 2016	15% by 2020	
				Avista	729	2.0%	
Benton	202	1.5%	7	0	13	27	
Chelan	184	1.9%	101	(94)	(83)	#	
Clallam	74	1.0%	3	(0)	8	14	
Clark	536	1.5%	20	(4)	31	68	
Cowlitz	574	0.5%	32	(14)	24	63	
Grant	392	1.2%	9	3	29	57	
Grays Harbor	126	1 - 2%	14	(10)	(1)	8	
Inland	103	1.5%	3	1	8	15	
Lewis	99	1.5%	0.4	3	9	16	
Mason	78	1.5%	1	2	7	13	
PacifiCorp WA	543	1.3%	42	(22)	11	51	
PenLight	63	1.5%	6	(4)	(0)	4	
PSE	2,479	2.0%	143	(67)	91	262	
SCL	1,164	0.4%	47	(12)	58	135	
SnoPUD	782	2.0%	40	(11)	41	97	
Tacoma	597	0.6%	18	(0)	35	79	
TOTAL RENEWABLES ACQUIRED TO-DATE:			524 MWa				
ADDITIONAL RENEWABLES NEEDED FOR 2020 COMPLIANCE:						1,011 MWa	
<i>NOTE: Renewables here encompasses any eligible resources as defined by a state's RES, which in Washington may include biomass, biodiesel, gas from sewage treatment facilities, geothermal, landfill gas, solar, water, wave, ocean, or tidal, and wind. For utilities with only a portion of their service territory in Washington, assumptions were made about resource allocation based on consultation with utility staff.</i>							
<i>* Annual growth rates taken from utility sources whenever possible; in all other cases, annual growth rate assumed to be 1.5% for smaller PUDs (<200 MWa annual load) or 1.2% for large PUDs (>200 MWa annual load) (assumed values derived from the 2007 BPA White Book, PNW Loads and Resource Study; here applies to Grant, Inland, Lewis, Mason, & PenLight)</i>							
<i># This designates a projected surplus. We do not have information on the utilities' plans for projected surpluses, so a specific value is not stated for the final compliance year.</i>							

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References

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ⁱ RNP gathered data about utilities' renewable energy acquisitions (existing or planned), load, and load growth forecasts, all drawn largely from public sources such as integrated resource plans, utility websites, press releases, the Energy Information Administration, and the Bonneville Power Administration. This data was used to calculate renewable energy needs for RES compliance and then compared with known acquisitions. RNP provided each utility studied with a copy of the draft results for their review and feedback. RNP updated its analysis based on utility input received. Utility involvement, however, does not represent endorsement of RNP's analysis and some utilities chose not to respond with any feedback. Further, RNP recognizes that utility plans change and evolve over time, so this analysis is a snapshot in time based on the best available data and only an estimate of what may come to pass.