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# FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20426

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 3, 2007  
Docket No. ER07-523-000

### COMMISSION ACCEPTS COLUMBIAGRID'S AGREEMENT ON TRANSMISSION PLANNING IN PACIFIC NORTHWEST

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission today accepted ColumbiaGrid's proposal to coordinate transmission planning and expansion in the Pacific Northwest.

"The United States does not have a national transmission grid, we have a series of regional grids. We need a major increase in transmission investment to assure reliability and support competitive power markets. This order should strengthen regional grid planning in the Pacific Northwest, an area that has a long history of regional cooperation," Chairman Joseph T. Kelliher said.

ColumbiaGrid, a non-profit corporation formed in March 2006, filed the proposed Planning Agreement on behalf of Washington State-based Avista Corp. and Puget Sound Energy Inc. In addition to Avista and Puget, ColumbiaGrid's members include: the Bonneville Power Administration; Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County, Washington; Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington; the Public Utility District No. 1 of Snohomish County, Washington; Seattle City Light; and Tacoma Power.

The Commission stated its support of the members' effort to coordinate planning on a regional basis and to implement a single planning process for both public utility and non-public utility transmission providers.

"The increased coordination and transparency contemplated by the Planning Agreement have the potential to improve reliability, operational efficiency, and expansion of the transmission grid," the Commission said.

Under the Planning Agreement, ColumbiaGrid will provide a number of services, including performing annual assessments of members' transmission system in accordance with Western Electric Coordinating Council and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation requirements, drafting and approving Biennial Transmission Plans, convening study teams to assess requests for transmission service affecting multiple

transmission systems, and coordinating planning of multi-system projects.

The Commission rejected claims that the Planning Agreement would allow public utilities to opt-out of its open access transmission tariff (OATT) obligations. “Nothing in the Planning Agreement changes the requirements of the *pro forma* OATT regarding reservation or processing of transmission service requests, participation in the interconnection study process, the Commission’s interconnection rules, nor eliminates a customer’s right to transmission or interconnection service,” the Commission said.

The Commission noted that ColumbiaGrid will not operate as a Regional Transmission Organization nor will it own, operate or control jurisdictional facilities.

The Commission also noted that issues related to the coordination of planning efforts among ColumbiaGrid members, Northern Tier Transmission Group participants and others will be raised in the staff technical conference required by Order No. 890 in the context of the regional planning requirements.

The agreement is effective April 4, 2007.

R-07-22