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January 8, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Tom Eckman/Charles Grist

SUBJECT: Discuss a strategy to gather data and develop updated profiles of consumers' electricity uses

At its December meeting, the Power Committee directed staff to propose an approach to build regional support for an effort to update data on electric consumers' end use load profiles. Such data is an essential input to various utility functions, including resource planning (energy and capacity), demand response and electric rate design. The Council also needs this data to develop estimates of regional conservation resource potentials. However, the existing data is several decades old and needs to be updated to reflect consumers' current patterns for using electricity.

The Regional Technical Forum (RTF) has developed a business case for updating end-use data for the Northwest region¹. The business case details both the need for and benefits of research to update the region's end use load profile data. However, it does not identify who could or should take the lead in moving such research forward.

The primary barrier to launching a project to update end use load profile data is that there is no single entity charged with the task. Further, the benefits of the results will accrue to various parties. As a result, a collaborative approach will be needed to define, fund and oversee the data development effort.

Staff recommends that the Council convene and chair a forum to focus regional attention on the need to update end use load profile data. The initial meeting of the forum will gauge the level of regional interest in implementing a collaborative effort to refresh the region's end use data.

¹ See: Building the Business Case Implementing a Comprehensive Pacific Northwest Electric End-Use Data Development Project Executive Summary. Available at: <http://www.nwcouncil.org/energy/rtf/subcommittees/enduseload/RTF%20Executive%20Summary%2030%20SEP%202012%20v04-1.docx>

The meeting will also address what level of effort is cost-effective, and discuss alternatives for funding and implementing the work.

For example, NEEA may be well-positioned to coordinate the data development activities. In addition, it may be possible to pool the region's efforts with other regions, including California and British Columbia.

Since the region's utilities are primary users of end use load profile data, staff also recommends that the Council ask PNUCC and Bonneville to be co-sponsors of the forum. If PNUCC and/or Bonneville agree to co-sponsor the forum, a member of the Council's Power Committee would serve as co-chair of the forum along with representatives from those organizations.

Invitees to the forum will include senior executive level utility staff with broad management responsibilities. In addition to having budget decision making authority, senior managers are more likely to understand the full range of utility functions that require end use load data as critical inputs. Senior regulatory commission staff and commissioners should also be invited to participate in the forum to ensure that they are aware of the need for and value of such research.

The staff will provide a draft meeting agenda at the Power Committee meeting. Staff will also update the Council on discussions with PNUCC regarding their interest to participate in this endeavor.

If the Council agrees to convene a forum of regional stakeholders, staff will work with PNUCC, Bonneville and others to organize the event.