



**For Immediate Release**

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***H.R. 3144 “Just Makes Sense” for Northwest Ratepayers and Salmon***

*Public Power Leader Testifies in Support of Bipartisan Proposal to Let Hydrosystem Review Run Its Course*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, Beth Looney, President and CEO of Portland-based PNGC Power, testified in support of H.R. 3144 before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources/Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans.

Looney told subcommittee members that the bill is a “carefully balanced way” to protect Northwest salmon while managing the economic impacts. Looney also serves on the Board of Directors for Northwest RiverPartners, an alliance of farmers, utilities, ports and businesses.

Currently, 13 Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead species are listed under the Endangered Species Act. Driven by these listings, Bonneville Power Administration utility ratepayers—not U.S. taxpayers—fund the largest mitigation program for endangered species in the nation.

Looney told committee members that as BPA’s fourth-largest power customer, PNGC is concerned about BPA’s rate trajectory and its impact on PNGC’s 200,000 member homes, farms and businesses. BPA power rates have increased 30 percent in the last few years, which has been particularly difficult to absorb for customers in rural and underserved areas, Looney said. Fish and wildlife costs make up about a third of BPA’s total cost of power.

As Looney noted in her written testimony, BPA’s recent rate increases have been tied partly to uncertainty that is driven by ESA-related litigation. H.R. 3144 “effectively puts a time-out on this litigation” until a court-ordered review of federal hydrosystem operations is complete, she told the subcommittee on Thursday.

“In the meantime, it keeps in place current biological measures—vetted by the top federal scientists—that protect salmon in the Columbia and Snake rivers. When this work is complete, federal agencies will be positioned to adopt a new salmon plan based on the public, transparent NEPA process and the science it yields. This just makes sense.”

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***PNGC Power*** is a Portland-based electric generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative owned by 15 Northwest electric distribution cooperative utilities with service territory in seven western states.

***Northwest RiverPartners*** is an alliance of farmers, utilities, ports and businesses that promote the economic and environmental benefits of the Columbia and Snake Rivers and salmon recovery policies based on sound science.