



## PRESS RELEASE

**June 28, 2024**  
**Vancouver, WA**

### **U.S. House Acts to Protect Millions of Northwest Ratepayers**

*U.S. House Committee Takes First Step to Cap Customer Costs, Keep Federal Commitments in “12/14 Agreement”*

**Vancouver, Washington**—June 28, 2024—Today, members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee for Energy and Water passed legislation which caps the costs on the use of additional Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) electric customer funds to support fish and wildlife recovery efforts associated with implementation of the “12/14 Agreement.” The initial success of this fiscal year 2025 appropriations measure is the result of a bipartisan broad cross section of Pacific Northwest House members responding to the increasing pressures on affordable electricity rates as uncertainty and risk to the electric grid continue to grow.

“We want to acknowledge and thank the bipartisan group of House members who are advocating to ensure that this commitment to millions of electric customers is kept,” said Clark Mather, executive director of Northwest RiverPartners. “It is critical to have certainty as pressure on affordable electricity rates continues to grow. In addition to the ‘12/14 Agreement,’ extreme weather conditions, including a cold snap over the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend in 2024, have already added tens of millions of dollars of costs to electric utility customers across the region.”

“We are extremely thankful for the Subcommittee’s inclusion of the \$300 million BPA cap. Our concerns about the ‘12/14 agreement’ are informed by a complete lack of transparency and public process that did not allow meaningful input from utilities and their customers during its development,” said Scott Simms, CEO and executive director of the Public Power Council. “This agreement concerningly lacks specifics on BPA’s funding exposure and language in the agreement could allow the US Government to impose additional costs on the region’s ratepayers without any public process or engagement by our region’s millions of citizens. The

Subcommittee clearly recognizes the huge open door to even more spending without this absolutely crucial \$300 million BPA cap.”

“We strongly support this legislation because it sends a strong message to BPA and this Administration that public power in this region is united and committed to containing the costs to consumers of the 12/14 Agreement,” said Zabyrn Towner, executive director of Northwest Requirements Utilities. “More generally, cooperatives, public utility districts, municipal utilities, and other publicly-owned, not for profit utilities are united in our strong opposition to any efforts to breach the federal dams that our electricity customers rely on for clean, reliable, and affordable power,” Towner continued.

In December of 2023, the USG and plaintiffs entered into the “12/14 Agreement”—a joint motion to stay federal litigation regarding Columbia River System Operations through 2028 with an option to extend the agreement for an additional five years. This agreement is important to the region because the operations of the Columbia River System are critical to millions of electric customers across seven states.

The “USG Commitments,” as incorporated in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the U.S. Government (USG) and “Six Sovereign” parties, include numerous investments in fish and wildlife restoration, habitat, infrastructure, studies, and energy development. While BPA’s obligations under the agreement are vague, the agreement commits to spend an additional \$300 million to support salmon and other native fish recovery efforts which will be passed onto electric customers. The \$300 million commitment is in addition to the billions of dollars BPA has previously spent and the hundreds of millions of dollars it will continue to spend annually on these efforts.

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## **About Northwest RiverPartners**

Northwest RiverPartners (NWRP) is a not-for-profit, member-driven organization. We represent not-for-profit, community-owned utilities across Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Nevada. We also proudly represent farmers, ports, and businesses across the region that support clean energy and low-carbon transportation.

NWRP is focused on raising awareness about how the Northwest's hydropower system betters communities and the natural environment, and we encourage science-based solutions that help hydropower and salmon coexist and thrive. [nriverpartners.org](http://nriverpartners.org)

### **About the Public Power Council**

The Public Power Council, established in 1966, is an association that represents over 100 consumer-owned electric utilities in the Pacific Northwest. PPC's mission is to preserve and protect the benefits of the Federal Columbia River Power System for consumer-owned utilities, and is a forum to identify, discuss and build consensus around energy and utility issues. For more information, please visit us on the web at

[www.ppcpdx.org](http://www.ppcpdx.org)

### **About NW Requirements Utilities**

Northwest Requirements Utilities is a non-profit trade association that represents the interests of 57 BPA Load Following and NT transmission utilities that rely on BPA for all or most of their wholesale power and transmission services. NRU members utilities are located in seven states served by BPA and typically serve the most rural areas of the northwest.

[www.nru-nw.com](http://www.nru-nw.com)