

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 23, 2012John Dobken, Public Affairs, 509-377-8369
Angela Smith, Public Affairs, 509-377-4154

News Release 12-08

Page 1 of 2

Columbia Generating Station Receives 20-year License Extension

RICHLAND, Wash. – The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved Columbia Generating Station’s license for an additional 20 years – extending operation of the plant through 2043.

Commission officials and Energy Northwest CEO Mark Reddemann attended the small signing ceremony in Washington, D.C. Tuesday afternoon.

Energy Northwest, owner and operator of Columbia, submitted the license renewal application to the NRC in January 2010. The decision from the NRC comes after a lengthy and thorough review process, requiring Columbia to demonstrate it meets technical, safety and environmental requirements through the additional 20 years of operation.

"If it were not for your continued commitment to safety and integrity, re-licensing would not have been achievable," said U.S. Rep. Doc Hastings, in a message to employees. "I will continue to do everything I can to support your current operations and to encourage the further development of nuclear energy in our state."

The Northwest’s only commercially-operated nuclear energy facility provides nearly 10 percent of all power generated in Washington state.

"I was very impressed to learn Columbia Generating Station produced over 7,000 gigawatt-hours of electricity in 2011," said U.S. Sen. Patty Murray also in a message to Energy Northwest employees. "And what’s even more impressive is the steadfast commitment of Energy Northwest management and workers to safety and the environment."

Governor Chris Gregoire will attend a local license renewal announcement ceremony Thursday morning at Columbia Generating Station.

"With the future of the plant now secured, we can recommit ourselves to making it one of the best run and top-performing nuclear power plants in the country," Gregoire said. "We owe no less to the citizens of our state."

“Nuclear power has its place in the current and future production of electrical power for our nation,” Gregoire said. “I know that it can provide reliable and affordable baseload power over the very long term. It can produce that power without greenhouse gas emissions. That is why I endorsed the re-licensing of our plant. It is a cornerstone of power production in the Pacific Northwest.”

Background on License Renewal

Energy Northwest began pursuing license renewal for Columbia in 2007. The formal application, more than 2,200 pages, was submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in January 2010. Since then, the Energy Northwest team has been working with the NRC to gather information relating to safety and potential environmental aspects of operating an additional 20 years. Based on their thorough independent reviews and inspections, the NRC concluded license renewal should be granted. The NRC process involved multiple on-site visits, as well as opportunities for public input.

About Energy Northwest

Energy Northwest develops, owns and operates a diverse mix of electricity generating resources, including hydro, solar and wind projects – and the Northwest’s only nuclear power plant. These projects provide enough reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible energy to power more than a million homes each year, and that carbon-free electricity is provided at the cost of generation. As a Washington state, not-for-profit joint operating agency, Energy Northwest comprises 28 public power member utilities from across the state serving more than 1.5 million ratepayers. The agency continually explores new generation projects to meet its members’ needs.

Energy Northwest – www.energy-northwest.com.



###