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Angela Walz, Public Affairs, 509-377-4010
John Dobken, Public Affairs, 509-377-8369

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Energy Northwest Testimony Supports Creation of Nuclear Energy Task Force

RICHLAND, Wash. – Dale Atkinson, Energy Northwest vice president, Employee Development & Corporate Services, provided testimony today before the Washington House Technology & Economic Development Committee in Olympia supporting Substitute Senate Bill 5991. The proposed bill, which passed the Washington Senate last week, would establish a nuclear energy task force to examine replacing fossil fuel combustion with nuclear energy.

“All credible analyses of carbon reduction issues – by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Energy Information Administration and independent international institutions like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the International Energy Agency – have demonstrated unequivocally that the United States and the world cannot achieve meaningful reductions in carbon emissions without preservation of our existing nuclear energy assets and construction of new plants,” Atkinson said in remarks submitted to the committee.

Columbia Generating Station, the Northwest’s only commercial nuclear energy facility, will mark 30 years of operation in December. In 2013 the facility generated 8.4 million MWh of electricity – a record for a refueling year, which occurs every two years – and in 2012 Columbia generated 9.3 million MWh, a record for a non-refueling year.

Last year, Energy Northwest joined a teaming arrangement with NuScale Power and Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS) as part of the Western Initiative for Nuclear Project collaboration to promote a commercial, small modular reactor project in the western U.S. Energy Northwest holds first right of offer to operate the project. By doing so, Energy Northwest – a Richland-based agency – will become one of the first industry experts for small modular reactor operation.

In addition to Energy Northwest’s support for the bill, letters of support were also submitted to the committee by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union No. 77, the Nuclear Energy Institute and the Eastern Washington Section of the American Nuclear Society.

EXCERPTS OF TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5991
FEBRUARY 20, 2014
DALE K. ATKINSON
VICE PRESIDENT, EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT & CORPORATE SERVICES
ENERGY NORTHWEST

I am pleased to appear today to testify in support of Substitute Senate Bill 5991, which provides the framework for studying nuclear energy as a replacement for electricity generated from the combustion of fossil fuels. As policymakers seek to reshape how energy is used in our economy over the long term, nuclear energy can – and according to all credible experts, must – play a major role in any serious strategy to reduce carbon emissions. This legislation will provide an opportunity for the legislature, public power entities and Washingtonians to come together and explore the value of and the lifecycle analysis for nuclear energy.

I am here today representing Energy Northwest, a state, not-for-profit joint operating agency headquartered in Richland, Wash. Energy Northwest owns and operates Nine Canyon Wind Project, Packwood Lake Hydroelectric Project, White Bluffs Solar Station, and Columbia Generating Station – the Northwest’s only nuclear energy facility. 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 directly to the Bonneville Power Administration.

Energy Northwest comprises 27 public power member utilities from across the state, serving more than 1.5 million ratepayers. The agency continually explores new generation projects and services to meet member needs. In that regard, Energy Northwest is teaming with NuScale Power to commercialize NuScale’s small modular reactor via the Western Initiative for Nuclear collaboration, which recognizes the important carbon-free power contributions that SMRs can provide the western energy mix. Energy Northwest has the first right of offer to operate the SMR, which may set the stage for contributions of this emerging technology to the Washington state energy mix. Energy Northwest stands ready to assist the nuclear energy task force and provide information about the SMR technology initiative.

All credible analyses of carbon reduction issues – by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Energy Information Administration and independent international institutions like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the International Energy Agency – have demonstrated unequivocally that the United States and the world cannot achieve meaningful reductions in carbon emissions without preservation of our existing nuclear energy assets and

construction of new plants. In Washington State, Columbia provides 1,170 Megawatts of firm capacity – equal to about 10 percent of the power generated in Washington. Columbia is recognized as a BPA Tier 1 energy resource, which means that the facility's cost of power is provided to BPA customers at the preferred, or low-cost rate.

I am also very pleased to note that the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union No. 77 is supporting this legislation and that a letter of support from the International IBEW is in process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of Substitute Senate Bill 5991 and to share our perspective on nuclear energy's value to the Pacific Northwest. I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

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 27 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.

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