



November 1, 2011

Sent via Email: mnugent@iso.idaho.gov

Comments on the 2012 Idaho Energy Plan/Idaho Strategic Energy Alliance
Legislative Interim Energy, Environment, & Technology Committee
Co-Chair Sen. Curt McKenzie
Co-Chair Rep. George Eskridge

We commend the ISEA for their hard work and realistic assessments of the energy paradigm in Idaho.

The overview and resulting information provided in the draft appears to take a true look at:

- Our Idaho energy use,
- Our sources of energy,
- Our ability to transmit the energy to and through our state,
- Potential policies and actions,
- The positives and negatives of the different types of generation potentially available to us, and
- Addresses energy research and workforce education.

To date Idaho has emerged as one of the most affordable energy cost states in the US. As an economic development organization, it is vitally important for the expansion and attraction of companies to have available, reliable, and affordable energy. This helps to provide growth in the economy and the ultimate creation of jobs.

We commend the energy utilities and providers for placing a priority on cost effective energy efficiency systems, equipment, and programs. Over the past years the number of programs offered, and the various types of incentives have consistently grown. We do hope that these conservation and efficiency measures continue to be enhanced and expanded.

We feel the plan allows for resource flexibility for the utility providers, and encourages the diversity needed to provide for future energy demands. As the energy landscape evolves, flexibility will be key as we face ever-changing political, regulatory, and operational realities. It would be best to adapt policies on a “continuous improvement” basis, than to institute and possibly reverse strict mandated regulations.

151 North Ridge, Suite A, Idaho Falls, ID 83402
PH: 208-522-2014/FX 208-522-3824/Toll Free 800-900-2014
www.growidahofalls.org

We realize setting arbitrary targets could conflict with the goals of maintaining Idaho's low-cost energy supply and ensuring access to affordable energy for all Idahoans. Additionally, targets may not provide sufficient flexibility for Idaho energy providers to react to rapid development of new energy technologies.

The plan emphasizes the importance of transmission in providing reliable power, and it recognizes transmission as a critical resource. This is vital since Idaho is an energy "import" state. We need reliable transmission to ensure our own economic security for industry, agriculture, and residents.

The plan retains energy siting as a local issue, and recommends continuing the support of state agency resources through Energy Facility Site Advisory Teams for generation siting. It encourages local jurisdictions to hear testimony about impact of facilities for citizens and businesses in neighboring jurisdictions, and largely defers to local land use planning. We think it essential that local and state economic development representatives participate fully in the siting process teams as well.

We commend the commission for including discussion on the Nuclear industry, and recognizing the value it has in our state. Not only is Nuclear energy and research, a multi-billion dollar industry in this state, but the plan had significant references to the resources we have in eastern Idaho, specifically: the Center for Advanced Energy Studies, the Idaho National Laboratory/DOE Lead Nuclear Lab, ESTEC/ISU, and Eastern Idaho Technical College.

We do believe that there are legitimate organizations that will explore the possibility of building a nuclear merchant power plant in our state in the future. Having a base load nuclear energy generation source in Idaho could significantly improve the balance of our energy import position. Meanwhile the indirect benefits that nuclear energy brings to our state in such areas as safety, research, education, development, demonstration, and security are enormous. We recommend keeping the entire language in the Nuclear section as written, and would welcome a longer discussion to further expand on the economic benefit the nuclear energy industry has brought to Idaho.

It should also be noted, that several special interest groups have pushed for more "diversity" in order to become voting members on the ISEA. However, such single-purpose groups may not have the actual ability to represent all direct/indirect energy consumers in Idaho. Therefore, this public comment opportunity may be the best and most accurate method to represent a diversity of views.

We value the contribution that all ISEA members have made in the examination of the original 2007 plan, and the updates and opportunities that are represented in this draft, which more accurately reflect Idaho's future needs and resources.

Thank you,

Steven Frei
President

Linda K. Martin, CEcD
CEO

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