

HOT WIRE

Regulation, technical and policy issues for Oregon Co-ops

March 2009

EPA Releases Draft Mandatory GHG Emissions Reporting Rule

The US EPA released a draft rule for mandatory greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reporting that will apply to 13,000 companies with emissions greater than 25,000 metric tons of CO₂e per year. The new requirements would apply to suppliers of fossil fuel and industrial chemicals, manufacturers of motor vehicles and engines, and electric generators. The first annual emissions report would be due to EPA in 2011 for the calendar year 2010.

Court Invalidates EPA's Particulate Standard In February, a federal Circuit Court of Appeals sided with Oregon and 18 states and cities in a challenge of EPA's fine particulate air pollution standard. As a result, EPA will have to reconsider and reissue its standard to reflect current state-of-the-science. Oregon's Attorney General joined the suit in response to EPA's rejection of recommendations from its own Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee to adopt more stringent standards. The EPA cited the lack of a reasonable explanation for rejecting them as the basis of its decision.

PUC Advocates for Increased Safety Near Overhead Lines In a recent meeting with electric utilities and state agencies, the PUC presented survey results that show that construction under or near overhead lines occurs about two times a year in Oregon. Violations of this standard seem to occur either when a developer tries to develop a lot to the maximum extent possible in urban in-fill areas or when homeowners remodel and do not get a permit. The PUC suggested holding a series of meetings around Oregon to educate building officials, builders and the design community about building within 10 feet of this safety corridor.

PUC Hearing on the Economy The PUC lent a sympathetic ear to utilities (PGE, PacifiCorp, NWN) at a March 3 hearing on the tightening of the credit markets and the ability to obtain credit to finance renewable energy and transmission projects to meet RPS targets.

PUC Pleased With Utility Progress Jerry Murray, OPUC, applauded co-op efforts in completing activities associated with the new arc flash protection requirements of the 2007 National Electric Safety Code for Arc Flash (AF) protection. The PUC had planned to hold a public hearing on the subject in March, but may scale back the planned testimony by utilities because of the great headway that utilities are making in implementing AF protections.

Important Dates

April (TBD) PUC hearing on utility compliance with 2007 NESC Arc Flash Protection.

April 14-15 Oregon Joint Use Association spring training event at the Portland Airport Sheraton Hotel.

June 18-19 DEQ's Environmental Quality Commission may adopt the 2008 Oregon Regional Haze Plan.

Other Issues

Renewable Portfolio Standard The PUC is refining six rules -- incremental costs, implementation plans, alternative compliance payment, compliance reports and standards, annual revenue requirement forecasts -- in the implementation of RPS as it applies to IOUs and energy service suppliers. After a public hearing in May, the PUC plans to adopt the rules.

List of Priority Pollutants In February, DEQ released a list of 175 persistent pollutants that have a documented effect on human health, wildlife and aquatic life.

Contact Lisa Logie, ORECA, 503-585-9988
or llogie@oreca.org