



**Department of Energy**  
Bonneville Power Administration  
P.O. Box 491  
Vancouver, Washington 98666-0491

TRANSMISSION SERVICES

April 14, 2021

In reply refer to: TO-DITT-2

Dear BPA transmission customers and interested parties:

I am writing to invite you to participate in an upcoming informational meeting to discuss a public safety power shutoff (PSPS) process that the Bonneville Power Administration is developing to protect the safety of communities near our transmission lines.

### **Background**

In May 2020, BPA Transmission Services released its first comprehensive Wildfire Mitigation Plan. The plan proved timely and served us well as we managed the consequences of unprecedented wildfires in Oregon and Washington last September.

While the Wildfire Mitigation Plan briefly mentions the concept of preemptively taking transmission lines out of service to mitigate wildfire, a practice commonly referred to as a public safety power shutoff, the plan did not have a documented PSPS process. During the wildfires in September, we did take one line out of service preemptively in cooperation with a customer that had already turned off distribution assets connected to that line to mitigate the effects of high winds.

### **Preparing for 2021 and beyond**

As we reviewed the lessons learned from the 2020 wildfires and gathered information from peer transmission operators across the West, BPA decided it should consider adding PSPS to our fire prevention measures. We have surveyed our transmission system to identify transmission lines at the highest risk of being taken out of service for a PSPS, with a focus on the lower-voltage system. While we will complete that list before the 2021 wildfire season, we must caution that none of the transmission lines we operate is exempt from PSPS consideration.

We have also worked with our meteorology staff to create triggers for implementation of a PSPS. If National Weather Service red flag conditions exist for winds higher than 60 miles per hour, we will assess the BPA transmission lines in the red flag area. If BPA determines it should implement a PSPS, we plan to use our standard de-energization procedures and communicate with customers until BPA is able to safely put the line back into service.

It is important to note that a PSPS is a measure of last resort. BPA continues to have a strong preemptive program, including its best-in-class vegetation management program and proactive asset maintenance that considers wildfire risk.

To help customers better understand our proposed PSPS procedure and ensure we are aware of any concerns, we are hosting a customer meeting on Tuesday, April 27, at 1:30 p.m. We intend to post meeting materials and a Webex meeting link on Tuesday, April 20, to help you prepare for the session.

I look forward to working with you to make PSPS implementation a success. If you have questions or concerns before the meeting, please contact your Transmission AE.

Sincerely,

Michelle Cathcart  
Vice President, BPA Transmission System Operations