

2010 Benton REA/WRECA Legislative Positions

- I Good Samaritan Law Regarding Fire Suppression**

The Benton REA supports legislation which requires any qualified entity or fire department to actively attempt to extinguish a fire regardless of jurisdictional boundaries, and that provides state coverage regarding potential liability associated with suppression efforts in areas not covered by the entity or fire departments liability insurance.
- II Resist Mandatory Green Resource Participation**

The Association will evaluate, and where applicable and cost effective will incorporate renewable resources, but will continue to oppose mandatory participation in renewable resources.
- III Resist Mandatory Conservation Levels**

The Association will continue to offer cost effective conservation programs but will oppose mandatory levels of conservation activity or spending levels.
- IV Resist any legislative efforts to implement or increase utility taxes**

Benton REA will continue to provide reliable and affordable electricity to its membership and as part of these efforts will resist any effort to give local or county government's new legislative authority to tax utility services or the state to increase the state utility tax.
- V Resist or Reduce Regulations that Inhibit Employee Productivity or Complicate Labor Relations**

Benton REA prides itself with regard to service reliability and efficiency, and will work with WRECA and other utilities to resist or reduce state regulations that place undue regulation, requirements, or oversight on employees and their work functions that ultimately reduce productivity, increase costs of performance, or complicate labor relations.
- VI Ensure there are Options to meet Future Generation Needs Reliably and Cost Effectively**

Benton REA supports legislation to ensure electric energy demands will be met through development of new base load generation (all types) within the state. In addition, we oppose cap and trade proposals, and will seeking exemptions if necessary to protect Benton REA members from these requirements. Benton REA supports the carbon tax approach in the event there is legislation dealing with climate change.

VII Climate Change Legislation

- Benton REA urges legislators to re-evaluate the climate change debate to ensure that science still supports global warming. There appears to be a growing concern that previous “science” is now being revisited with the potential determination that the earth is cooling not warming. Given the magnitude of state and federal program spending that is anticipated to address global warming, we must make sure that science supports further actions to reduce global warming before billions of dollars are committed to this end.

VIII Cap-and-Trade Program for Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- Since climate change is a global issue with no single solution, Benton REA opposes greenhouse gas cap-and-trade programs because we believe they should be addressed at a national level.
- Benton REA opposes any proposal for a Washington State greenhouse gas cap-and-trade program because:
 - The regulatory requirements would be overly burdensome to Benton REA members and the costs of the regulatory requirements would be disproportionate for small utilities such as Benton REA.
 - The regulatory requirements would be complicated and the cost of compliance would far exceed any benefits.
 - The compliance costs to the economy would put Washington’s businesses at a disadvantage when compared to competitors from outside the state of Washington.

IX Revisions to Washington’s Renewable Portfolio Standards

- Benton REA supports changes to Washington’s RPS that:
 - Expand the geographic eligibility for new renewable resources to WECC
 - Expand hydropower definition to include all hydropower
 - Allow for an alternative compliance payment options.
 - Allow renewable energy credit banking.
 - Integrate the conservation standard into the renewable resource standard resulting in the need for only a single standard.
 - Eliminate all state subsidies to renewable projects whose output is sold outside of the state.
- Benton REA opposes changes to Washington’s RPS that:
 - Increase the mandated percentages of renewables in a utilities resource portfolio
 - Make compliance with conservation standards more complex and costly
 - Reduce the current 25,000 customer threshold for mandatory participation.

X Vegetation Management

- Benton REA supports changes to state law concerning vegetation management that:
 - Provide greater flexibility and easier access to utility facilities located on state-owned lands
 - Provide greater flexibility in managing vegetation outside the utilities' property or easements
 - Cap the damages assessed against utilities for vegetation management activities
 - Cap the damages assessed against utilities for service interruptions caused by vegetation interference or damage to utility facilities
 - Cap the damages assessed against utilities for fire suppression costs
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XI Crane Operator Certification

- Through WRECA, Benton REA supports changes to state law concerning crane operator certification that extends the exemption for utility workers to include all work done with utility equipment by utility workers while in the course of their work for the utility.

XII Emissions Performance Standard

- Through WRECA, Benton REA supports changes to the state law concerning the Emissions Performance Standard for electric utilities that exempt all contracts with the Bonneville Power Administration.