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Press Release
For Immediate Release

ColumbiaGrid Draft OASIS Agreement Out for Comment

PORTLAND—ColumbiaGrid has taken a major step toward a new agreement that will ease customer access to transmission services. On September 19, the ColumbiaGrid Board of Directors finalized a draft agreement, known as the Open Access Same-Time Information System (OASIS) Functional Agreement, which will help connect transmission customers with transmission providers. The Board released the draft and will take comment through November 7.

Once signed, the OASIS agreement establishes a program under which ColumbiaGrid will operate an internet site - or portal - for customers seeking access to transmission service. Customers will be able to use the portal to find and request service from any of the transmission owners and operators that choose to be part of the agreement.

OASIS is a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) requirement dating back over a decade. It was designed to standardize and simplify open access to the electricity transmission system.

Individual transmission providers who choose to participate in the ColumbiaGrid agreement will continue to retain their own OASIS sites. But a common portal operated by ColumbiaGrid will allow customers to come to a single web page for one-stop shopping across multiple transmission systems.

“While all transmission providers regulated by FERC are required to have an OASIS, the ColumbiaGrid agreement will provide a single access point for all of its parties,” according to Ed Sienkiewicz, chairman of the ColumbiaGrid Board of Directors. “A common OASIS portal is a powerful tool for buyers and sellers of transmission,” he said. “It is a significant step and a new direction for ColumbiaGrid,” Sienkiewicz added.

ColumbiaGrid will schedule public workshops in October to explain the draft agreement. Details on date, time and location will be posted on the ColumbiaGrid website at www.columbiagrid.org.

Once comment closes, the potential parties to the agreement and others will have an opportunity to consider the comments and determine whether to make changes to the draft. The ColumbiaGrid board and the members will next decide whether to offer the agreement for signatures. The offer is expected to take place at the board's November meeting, with the agreement to become effective early next year.

In addition to establishing an OASIS, the draft agreement commits ColumbiaGrid to work with other parties to develop a common method for determining the amount of transmission capacity available at any given time on parties' systems. A common methodology for available transmission capacity (ATC) is intended to increase the efficient use of the system.

ColumbiaGrid will also work with others who sign the agreement to develop "common queuing." These are procedures for responding to requests for transmission service and interconnections. Once common queuing is available, transmission customers will be able to view standardized versions of ATC across the grid and put themselves in a queue for transmission across multiple transmission providers' systems by making a single request.

For further information, contact Jon Kaake at (503) 943-4931 or send an email to info@columbiagrid.org.

For a copy of the draft agreement, visit us at www.columbiagrid.org and look for the document labeled www.columbiagrid.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/09/public-review-draft-of-oasis-functional-agreement-91907.pdf.

ColumbiaGrid, a non-profit membership Washington corporation, was formed in 2006 to improve the operational efficiency, reliability, and planned expansion of the Northwest transmission grid. The current members of ColumbiaGrid are Avista Corp., Bonneville Power Administration, Chelan County PUD, Grant County PUD, Puget Sound Energy, Seattle City Light and Tacoma Power. Snohomish County PUD has signed ColumbiaGrid's functional agreements. All Northwest control area operators are welcome to join ColumbiaGrid or to sign and participate in the organization's functional agreements without becoming a member.

