



BENTON RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

2022 Benton REA State Legislative Priorities

I. Utility Customers Arrearages Assistance

Allocate \$100,000 in funding to the department of Commerce to provide grants for public utilities to address customer arrearages in Washington state that resulted from the COVID-19 moratorium on disconnection of service for nonpayment. Also, any legislation that implement a disconnection moratorium for non-payment should include funding to assist utilities the resulting arrearages.

II. Energy Resource Adequacy – Avoiding Blackouts

Benton REA supports the development of safe and affordable generation, transmission and distribution resources to provide adequate capacity for our consumers' needs. Energy related policy must have no negative on reliability of the electric generation, transmission or distribution system. Both hydro and nuclear power are 100% carbon-free and each resource does not rely on intermittent natural elements (wind or solar) to produce power for the region and our energy policy must recognize and protect the value of both hydro and nuclear.

III. Support Columbia and Lower Snake River Dams

The Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) sets bold goals to decarbonize the electricity sector. Efforts to electrify transportation and decarbonize buildings put additional strain on the electric sector to meet the CETA goals and state policies while maintaining a reliable system. Electricity is an essential service. We have seen the life-threatening results in other states when the electric system does not have the capacity to meet demand during extreme weather conditions. We must preserve the operation of the Columbia and Lower Snake River Dams for critical carbon free, base load generation. Efforts to breach the Lower Snake River Dams are counterproductive to meet the state's goals and maintain a reliable system of an essential service.

IV. Red Mountain Transportation Improvements

The Red Mountain area is forecasted to see continued growth in the coming years. Recent analysis of current and future traffic has identified needed improvements to the SR 224 corridor and this proposal would add capacity and improve traffic operations on SR 224. These proposed improvements, along with the planned local investments, will provide the infrastructure needed to address future multimodal access and capacity needs. The City of West Richland recently contributed \$541,000 to increase the funding for the design, environmental permitting, and right-of-way work. Preserving the existing \$25 million in Connecting Washington funding is critical.