Report Shows Customers Voluntarily Purchasing Over One Billion kWh Hours Of Renewable Energy In the Pacific Northwest

January 10, 2008 – The amount of “green power” being purchased by utility customers in the Northwest is now over one billion kilowatt-hours (kWh), according to a new report released today by the Renewable Northwest Project (RNP). Entitled “Powerful Choices VII”, the report summarizes the retail green power programs that are allowing customers to voluntarily invest directly in a clean energy future.

Throughout the Northwest, in markets both urban and rural, thirty-nine Northwest utilities are offering customers a choice of an environmentally preferred power source – wind power, solar power, landfill gas power, or low-impact hydropower. Participation in these programs continued to increase in 2006 with overall participation in Northwest green power programs growing by more than 19% between 2005 and 2006.

Voluntary retail green power purchases help to push the market for the construction of new renewable energy projects forward. The one billion kilowatt-hours of green power purchased in 2006 is the equivalent of the annual output from a large 340 megawatt wind farm, or enough energy to power more than 83,300 homes for an entire year. This is over 42 times the retail green power sold in voluntary programs reported in the first Powerful Choices report in 2000.

“The continued increase in the number of green power program customers in the Northwest demonstrates a strong and consistently growing demand for environmentally-friendly power sources, and a greater awareness of the benefits of renewables,” said Rachel Shimshak, director of RNP, a regional renewable energy advocacy organization. “Along with utility investments in renewables, customers are using their ‘Powerful Choices’ to help create a clean energy future,” she added.

Since the last report, the number of customers buying green power has made significant strides. An additional 19,240 customers have signed up for green power, bringing the northwest total to over 120,000 residential and commercial customers. Increased general awareness of the benefits of buying green power and more sophisticated marketing techniques have contributed to higher sales and customer participation.
The report, in its seventh year, also includes:

- Relevant green power legislation in the Northwest
- Changes in green power programs since the last Powerful Choices report
- Discussion of recent trends in NW green power programs
- Brief recommendations on customer participation in green power programs
- Summary charts of 2006 participation rates and kWh sales
- Snapshot summaries of each NW green power program
- Contact information
- Additional sources of information

In response to the new developments in retail green power, Ms. Shimshak went on to say: “Increased development of the Northwest’s home-grown renewable power resource will help to insulate Northwest customers from future electricity price volatility. In addition, rising concern over the impacts of conventional power generation on our climate, our environment, and our health is prompting a surge of interest in clean, climate-neutral, renewable power.”

The Powerful Choices report from this year and previous years can be found on the RNP web site at www.RNP.org.

*The Renewable Northwest Project is a regional nonprofit advocacy organization promoting responsible development of wind, solar and geothermal resources in the Pacific Northwest.*

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