November 17, 2008 – The number of utility customers purchasing “green power” in the Northwest is now nearly 150,000, according to a new report released today by the Renewable Northwest Project (RNP). Entitled “Powerful Choices VIII”, 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 2007, with overall participation in Northwest green power programs growing by 23.5% between 2006 and 2007.

Voluntary retail green power purchases help to push the market for the construction of new renewable energy projects forward. Since the last report released in 2007, Northwest green power customers purchased over 1.3 billion kilowatt-hours of green power – the equivalent of the annual output from a large 450 megawatt wind farm, or enough energy to power more than 111,000 homes for an entire year. This is over 56 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. Over 24,000 additional customers have signed up for green power, bringing the Northwest total to 148,563 residential and commercial customers. Increased general awareness of the benefits of buying green power and more innovative outreach approaches have contributed to higher sales and customer participation.

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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 Northwest green power programs
• Brief recommendations on customer participation in Northwest green power programs
• Summary charts of 2007 participation rates and kWh sales
• Snapshot summaries of each Northwest 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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