



News Release

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris

Representing Washington's 5th Congressional District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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McMorris Introduces Legislation to Require ESA Cost Transparency

(Washington, DC) -- Congresswoman Cathy McMorris (WA-05) today introduced the Endangered Species Compliance and Transparency Act of 2006. The bill requires Power Marketing Administrations, including the Bonneville Power Administration, to provide each wholesale firm customer a list of direct and indirect cost estimates associated with compliance under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

“Whether or not you agree with how the Endangered Species Act is being implemented is not the point of this legislation,” said McMorris. “This bill simply gives customers the right to know how much of the federal government’s ESA costs are being passed on to the electricity consumer, who can then decide whether or not these expenditures are being spent effectively.”

ESA costs related to endangered salmon have risen considerably over the last several years due to federal court-mandates and other compliance programs. In 2004, one mandated spill cost the federal government \$77 million in lost hydropower generation in the Pacific Northwest. Another spill this year helped make the Bonneville Power Administration the federal agency with the highest ESA compliance costs in the Nation. According to the BPA, last summer’s spill assisted between 25 to 300 adult salmon, meaning it cost rates payers between \$250,000 to \$3 million per fish. By law, the agency passes on all of these costs to its wholesale customers, who in turn forward the costs on to the retail electricity consumer.

Direct costs associated with compliance include study-related costs, capital, operations, maintenance, replacement costs and staffing costs. Indirect costs include forgone generation and replacement power costs.

Co-sponsors of the bill include Doc Hastings (WA-04), Norm Dicks (WA-06), Greg Walden (OR-02), Butch Otter (ID -01), and Mike Simpson (ID-02).

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