

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Bonneville Power Administration

Finding of No Significant Impact
Approaches for Acquiring Energy
Savings in Commercial Sector Buildings

AGENCY: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), DOE

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for BPA's Alternative
Approaches for Acquiring Energy Savings in Commercial Sector
Buildings.

SUMMARY: BPA proposes to encourage utilities and others to design and offer regional conservation resources to acquire savings in the commercial sector through the following three approaches:

Targeted Acquisition Program - Utilities and other entities design and operate programs to acquire energy savings from commercial buildings and non-process portions of industrial facilities. Utilities may offer incentives to their customers to encourage installation of energy conservation measures (ECMs) and BPA will then purchase the verified energy savings that result from the program.

Billing Credits - Utilities will be compensated for the difference between the cost of the additional commercial sector conservation resource developed and the cost of BPA's firm resources, if the customer's net load requirements on BPA are reduced.

Competitive Acquisitions - A wide range of sponsors may compete to provide commercial sector conservation resources that are currently not reached through other BPA programs.

The purpose of this proposal is to meet the increasing demand for additional power to serve rapidly growing loads in the region. BPA must maintain the ability to match these load demands with available resources. The surplus energy available in the region has been nearly depleted. The regional power system is now at load/resource balance, and an energy deficit could occur in the future if demand for electricity continues to grow and energy conservation is not aggressively pursued. The commercial building sector is the fastest growing sector in the region in terms of energy consumption and accounts for approximately 25 percent of BPA's firm load. There is a regionwide consensus that an accelerated program of acquiring conservation resources in the commercial sector is necessary.

The No Action alternative would be inconsistent with the Northwest Power Act which stipulates that Bonneville meet its obligation to serve load, first and foremost, by acquiring cost-effective energy savings. The additional commercial sector megawatt savings known to be available in the region would probably not be captured. Thus, losing a conservation resource that has been identified as having little or no environmental impacts (EA, page 3).

Supplementary Information:

An environmental assessment (EA) on BPA's proposal was prepared which evaluated the environmental effects associated with indoor air quality from changes to the heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems; different types of lighting; disposal of fluorescent light ballasts possibly containing polychlorinated biphenyls; asbestos disturbance; use of area formaldehyde foam insulation; use of toxic transfer fluids; development of subsurface resources for heating or cooling; and historic sites. BPA has considered these potential environmental impacts associated with installation of currently known ECMs in new and existing commercial buildings in numerous environmental review documents in the past. These environmental documents are referenced in the EA.

As a result, BPA has developed specific program requirements to provide for proper installation of measures or avoidance of the potential effects described above.

- * All program participants are required to comply with established environmental requirements (EA, page 3).
- * The American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) Standard 62-89 has been adopted by BPA as the required ventilation standard to improve indoor air quality in commercial buildings. In addition, IAQ information is provided to occupants of apartments where ECMs affecting ventilation are installed (EA, pages 3-4).

- * Specific guidelines for installing HPS lighting indoors is provided to program participants (EA, pages 4-5).
- * BPA routinely provides building owners with information developed by EPA regarding disposal of fluorescent light ballasts containing PCBs. They are also required to follow all Federal, state, and local regulations governing disposal. In addition, BPA is continuing to work closely with EPA and BPA customers to implement a consistent ballast disposal policy for the entire region. (EA, page 5).
- * BPA will not fund removal and disposal of asbestos material (EA, pages 5-6).
- * The use of area formaldehyde foam insulation is not permitted in either new construction or in existing building retrofits (EA, page 6).
- * The use of toxic transfer fluids is not permitted in any ECM (EA, page 6).
- * All commercial buildings over 45 years old will be reviewed in accordance with BPA's Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement (PMOA) with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Offices (EA, page 7).
- * Building owners are required to comply with all Federal, state, and local building and safety codes and environmental regulations.
- * Projects that involve subsurface resources are to be reviewed by Bonneville on a case-by-case basis and must comply with Federal, state, and local regulations governing subsurface resources.


By adhering to the requirements outlined in this EA, no aspect of the three alternative approaches for acquiring energy savings in the commercial sector will have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment.

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY: Copies of the Approaches for Acquiring Energy Savings in Commercial Sector Buildings EA, April 1991, and this FONSI can be requested from the Environmental Coordinator for Energy Resources at the address shown below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Charles Alton, Environmental Coordinator for Energy Resources, Bonneville Power Administration, P.O. Box 3621 - RM, Portland, Oregon 97208; telephone 503-230-5878.

DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required and the Department is issuing this FONSI.

Issued in Washington, DC, on Sept 25, 1991



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