

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 14, 2025

Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to you today with deep concern regarding the significant workforce reductions at the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) under your administration. The imminent departure of nearly 20% of BPA's workforce -- including linemen, engineers, and power dispatchers -- poses a direct and immediate threat to the reliability of the electrical grid that serves millions of American families and businesses in the Pacific Northwest. We do not believe there is an energy emergency, but your actions certainly appear to be creating one through these cuts that actively jeopardize the stability of our energy infrastructure, right now.

BPA plays a critical role in the Pacific Northwest's power grid, distributing hydropower from 31 federal dams through over 75% of the region's transmission infrastructure. Your administration's directives to simultaneously buy out workers and freeze hiring has resulted in the resignation of approximately 200 employees, the rescinding of 90 new job offers, and the looming layoff of up to 400 probationary employees. The weight of this destabilization will bear down on the entire region, most heavily in rural areas that rely on public utilities purchasing BPA power.

Employees on the ground are already warning that these actions will make it nearly impossible to strengthen and expand the grid as needed. Instead, BPA will be forced into "damage control" mode, struggling just to "keep the lights on." This is not speculation; it is the reality voiced by those who operate our energy infrastructure every day.

These cuts are not only reckless but also financially ludicrous. BPA is an entirely self-funded agency that does not rely on taxpayer dollars, meaning these workforce reductions do absolutely nothing to reduce the federal deficit. If the administration's goal is truly to ensure reliable, secure, and affordable energy, then why are you actively dismantling the most effective and self-sustaining power system in the country?

Mr. President, your administration must answer the following critical questions by February 28th, 2025:

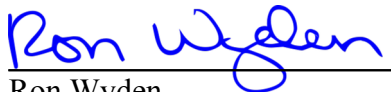
1. How do you justify cutting mission-critical personnel from BPA when its operations are self-funded and these cuts provide no savings to the federal budget?

2. Given that BPA manages 75% of the Northwest's grid, how do you plan to address the operational and safety risks posed by the loss of experienced linemen, engineers, and dispatchers?
3. With growing electricity demand due to population growth, extreme weather, and industrial expansion - particularly with the data centers that are driving the U.S. artificial intelligence boom - how does your administration intend to prevent grid failures caused by understaffing?
4. How do these actions align with your stated priority of strengthening America's energy infrastructure when the agencies responsible for maintaining and expanding that infrastructure are being gutted?
5. What specific steps will your administration take to mitigate the risks posed by this drastic workforce reduction, especially for the rural communities and public utilities reliant on BPA power?
6. Will you commit to immediately lifting the hiring freeze on mission-critical positions within BPA to prevent further destabilization of the Northwest grid?
7. What is the role of the newly created Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) in overseeing BPA staffing decisions, and what qualifications does its leadership have in managing complex energy infrastructure?

Mr. President, the energy security of the Pacific Northwest -- and the rural communities that depend on BPA's services -- cannot be treated as an afterthought. The decisions your administration has made in haste will have lasting consequences for millions of Americans. We urge you to reconsider these damaging cuts before we face an energy crisis of your making.

We look forward to your prompt response addressing these pressing concerns.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator