



# United States Senate

NEWS RELEASE

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## **Northwest Senators Fighting Proposal to Change Region's Electric Rates**

### *Senators United in Opposition to Administration's BPA Proposal*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In a letter today to Administration Budget writers, eight Northwest Senators expressed their steadfast opposition to provisions in the FY 2008 budget proposal that would increase electricity rates in the Pacific Northwest by an estimated 5.5 to 11 percent.

Senators wrote: “It is disturbing that the OMB has included this proposal again after it was explicitly rejected by the Congress last year... OMB’s proposal would increase regional electricity rates by an estimated 5.5 to 11 percent. It would also set a dangerous precedent of unwarranted, administrative micromanagement on decisions that must be achieved through Northwest consensus.”

Senator Gordon Smith said, “We’ve rejected these proposals before and we will again. Any threat to Northwest electricity rates is a nonstarter. Affordable electricity is important to the family budget and it helps spur the region’s economy.”

Senator Larry Craig said, “Last year we exhausted ourselves discussing this same proposal, this year we’ll save our breath and simply respond ‘NO.’ OMB uses BPA for their budget gimmicks nearly every year, but no matter how big the ‘ring’ gets, we will continue to reject their proposals.”

Senator Mike Crapo said, “I’m glad to see the NW delegation continue to hold the line on this issue. Across party lines, we can all agree that increasing power rates for our constituents is unacceptable.”

Senator Ron Wyden said, “The federal government cannot use the BPA as its own personal slush fund whenever it feels the need for some extra pocket change. BPA already keeps its end of the deal by paying its debts on time, and in many cases, early.”

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Senator Patty Murray said, "Year after year, the Administration has proved itself out of touch with the needs of the Pacific Northwest by attempting to increase the cost of heating our homes and providing electricity to our businesses. Our region does not want to see this budget balanced on the back of our ratepayers, and the Northwest delegation will once again work to beat back this shortsighted proposal."

Senator Maria Cantwell said, "With every single Pacific Northwest senator united in opposition to the president's tired-out rate hike plan, this bad idea will once again go nowhere in Congress. Instead of futile attempts to push through ill-advised proposals, we need to move forward on a new energy policy that preserves our region's decades-old system of affordable hydropower while investing in the clean sources of home-grown fuel needed to put us on the path to energy independence."

The letter was sent to Office of Management and Budget Director Rob Portman and signed by U.S. Senators Gordon Smith (R-OR); Maria Cantwell (D-WA); Patty Murray (D-WA); Mike Crapo (R-ID); Jon Tester (D-MT); Ron Wyden (D-OR); Larry Craig (R-ID); and Max Baucus (D-MT). The full text of the letter is available at <http://craig.senate.gov/releases/pr021207a.cfm>.