

## *Notes to Co-op Nation*

November 1, 2013

TO: NRECA Board of Directors  
Distribution CEOs  
Statewide Managers  
G&T Managers

FROM: Jo Ann Emerson

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### ***Safety Leadership Summit Highlights the Role of Safety Leaders in Co-op Success***

I proudly joined CEOs, safety professionals and other leaders from across Co-op Nation to kick off the Safety Leadership Summit in San Antonio this week. It's important to focus on the steps we all can follow to make safety a daily routine. Our safety leaders play a key role in Co-op Nation's success story by helping to keep their co-ops safe places to work, and NRECA shares their commitment to that goal. See more in [ECT](#).

### ***Co-op Nation Voices Message at Denver Listening Session and Capitol Hill Coal Rally***

Co-op Nation did it again! The Colorado, Wyoming and North Dakota co-ops did a great job in getting our "All-of-the-Above" message heard at the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Denver listening session on upcoming carbon regulations of existing coal and gas power plants. Many of the 100 speakers opposed EPA's plan – outnumbering the other side 2-1. Co-ops urged EPA to think about the economic impacts of the agency's plans on consumers and abandon its "All-But-One" approach that will raise electricity costs. After the listening sessions, co-ops joined with other energy industry groups for an "Enough Already!" rally at the Colorado Capitol Building.

NRECA employees were also out sporting Action.coop T-shirts at a Capitol Hill rally, joining with the voices of thousands of coal industry and mining workers urging EPA to back off its anti-coal agenda and withdraw its proposed and upcoming carbon regulations for power plants.

On another front, NRECA and several G&T co-ops participated in a forum on carbon regulation for existing power plants. EPA asked Resources For the Future to hold the forum. Co-ops were specifically invited and explained the unique circumstances of small rural utilities that limit their flexibility to modify or replace the generation fleet in a short time to lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### ***'All-of-the-Above' Campaign Update – Use All Opportunities Share Our Message***

A big thank you to Rick Nelson, Custer Public Power District Manager in Nebraska, for featuring our [Action.coop](#) message on the co-op's [podcast](#) show! He invited NRECA's Senior Environmental Issues Director John Novak to talk about how Nebraska consumers would be impacted by EPA's power plant carbon regulations. Radio and podcasts are great ways to highlight why Co-op Nation opposes EPA's plan and urge your leaders and member-consumers to send EPA a loud and clear message. You can find resources in the Grassroots [Toolkit](#) to help

reach our collective goal of sending 1 million messages to EPA by the 2014 Annual Meeting. See attached state message counts.

### ***Pension Flexibility Legislation Clears Committee on Unanimous Vote***

I'm excited to see our pension flexibility legislation (S. 1302) is ready to move to the Senate floor after unanimously passing the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. The bill eliminates the Deficit Reduction Contribution for NRECA's Retirement Security (RS) Plan, and makes our Pension Protection Act exemption permanent. Without this bipartisan legislation, our RS Plan could see dramatic cost increases, more volatility in employer minimum contributions, and restriction or elimination of current benefits. The bill has 39 Democratic and Republican cosponsors (list attached) and you can help by urging your senators to get onboard now.

### ***Judge Tells EPA to Get Moving on Coal Ash Rulemaking***

A federal judge gave EPA 60 days to propose a draft schedule for completing a final coal ash rule. With back-and-forth from parties in the case, we probably won't see a final schedule before next February and a final rule until late 2014. Negotiating a schedule will likely give the agency more time than the six months environmentalists requested. Since industry sided with EPA in this case, we're hopeful the agency will ask us for input on its initial proposed schedule. EPA says it needs time to coordinate the coal ash rule with its recent proposed rule for power plant wastewaters, and NRECA agrees the two rules must work together.

### ***DOE Action on BPA Oversight Raises Concerns on Local Control***

We're very concerned that electric co-ops could be hurt by the Department of Energy (DOE) taking direct control of Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA) human resources and legal departments. That action follows an Inspector General October report on problems with BPA's hiring practices. Our fear is that DOE staff could use the situation to further strip away regional control of BPA, a cornerstone of the Pacific Northwest electric co-ops' economic well-being. We'll fight any bureaucratic power grab to centralize Power Marketing Administration (PMA) control, just like we continue to push back against the 2012 Chu memo that outlined broad new plans for the four PMAs.

I appreciate House Natural Resources Chairman Hasting's (R-WA) letter to Energy Secretary Moniz seeking more information about DOE's decisions that led to the Chu memo. The Northwest congressional delegation's efforts are helping ensure that DOE policies stick to the PMAs' lawful purpose.

### ***Farm Bill Provision to Block Pesticide Permit Rule Gets a Lift***

We saw progress on one of our farm bill (H.R. 2642) provisions that would block an EPA regulation requiring pesticide applicators to get a Clean Water Act permit on top of the USDA permit that's been required for many years. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act (H.R. 935) that contains the same language as our farm bill provision. This action helps the provision in the farm bill conference committee.

**Attached:** Co-op messages to EPA by state, pension flexibility bill cosponsors list.