

BPA NEWS

PR 05-20

BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, June 4, 2020
CONTACT: Doug Johnson, 503-713-7658
or 503-230-5131

Hay Harvest + Wildfire Season = Sticky Situation for utilities

Utilities seek public's help reporting hay hung up in power line components

Portland, Ore. – Throughout Oregon, hay and grass seed are big business. It can also be a big problem when remnants of the harvest are carried by wind into power lines. It's simple: hay or grass caught in the components of a power line that become damp can spark a fire.

To avoid this potentially catastrophic situation, the Bonneville Power Administration and to public utilities it serves throughout the Northwest are asking for your help. If you see hay or grass hung up in power lines, call your local utility and report it.

"Fires started by grass or hay are a big concern, but they are not the only concern," said Mike Miller, BPA Transmission Services vice president of Field Services. "Hay and grass can also cause lines to trip out of service and interrupt the flow of electricity to local residents and businesses. Both potential outcomes are public safety concerns."

During hay season, lightweight hay can be picked up by wind and blown 100 feet or more. If hay collects on power lines and then becomes wet from rain or dew it can cause lines to spark and light a fire.

In recent years, fires that started with hay on lines have sometimes resulted in large, widespread outages and costly damage to utility equipment and customer property.

With multiple utilities owning power lines that stretch across the Northwest, BPA and its customers recommend that you call your local utility to report hay or grass hung up in the lines. That way the utilities can work together to pinpoint the location of the line and the utility that owns it to quickly respond before disaster can strike.

BPA has also published a comprehensive wildfire mitigation plan you can view at the [link](#).



About BPA

The Bonneville Power Administration, headquartered in Portland, Oregon, is a nonprofit federal power marketer that sells wholesale, carbon-free hydropower from 31 federal dams in the Columbia River Basin. It also markets the output of the region's only nuclear plant. BPA delivers this power to more than 140 Northwest electric utilities, serving millions of consumers and businesses in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, western Montana and parts of California, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming. BPA also owns and operates more than 15,000 circuit miles of high-voltage power lines and 261 substations, and provides transmission service to more than 300 customers. In all, BPA provides nearly a third of the power generated in the Northwest. To mitigate the impacts of the federal dams, BPA implements a fish and wildlife program that includes working with its partners to make the federal dams safer for fish passage. It also pursues cost-effective energy savings and operational solutions that help maintain safe, affordable, reliable electric power for the Northwest. www.bpa.gov

###