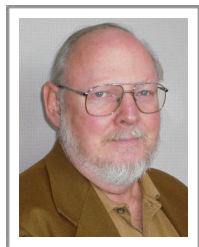


## From the President,



*Edward A. Schlotman*



## California's Renewables Goal Creates Blackout Risks

The Wall Street Journal, in an editorial, wrote that California's 33 percent by 2020 renewables standard reflects the state's strategy of "regulate first, think later," leaving California vulnerable to power shortages because wind and solar provide power erratically. The Journal wrote that although the California ISO [Independent System Operator] needs more peaking natural-gas-based power to offset renewables, "energy companies don't want to build new generators or refurbish older ones unless they're guaranteed a return on their investments—especially since peak plants are about 25% more expensive to operate and build than conventional turbines. Utilities also don't want to pay for back-up power they don't know they'll need."

The newspaper cited warnings by California's Little Hoover Commission of looming reliability risks, and predicted: "When these green-power outages occur, the politicians will blame the utilities. But this is an avoidable crisis caused entirely by politicians and green-energy lobbies who pretend they can defy the laws of energy supply and demand. Californians are going to pay for their wind and solar power indulgences." The Journal criticized California's cap-and-trade GHG [Green House Gases] emissions program and the requirement for 17 power plants along the coast to change their water intake systems or shut down in the next decade.

*Wall Street Journal, March 30.*

*Review by Thomas J. McCarthy*

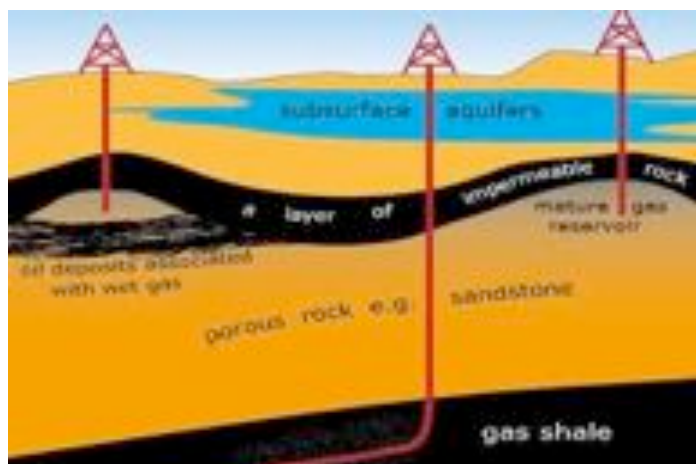
**Fracking.** What is it? In brief it is the smashing of underground rock. How? Why with chemicals and, surprise, water. How much? Why Millions of gallons. Read on.

"California's reputation for environmental protection may be jeopardized by the lure of a \$25 billion tax windfall that depends on how the state permits oil companies to take advantage of vast deposits lying two miles beneath its golden hills. The Monterey Shale formation running through the center of the state may hold 15.4 billion barrels of oil -- equivalent to five years of U.S. petroleum imports, according to a state report. Releasing it requires drillers to smash the rock by

forcing millions of gallons of water and chemicals underground, a technique known as fracking.

The Monterey Shale, running southeast of San Francisco at an average depth of 11,000 feet, extends over about 1,750 square miles and may hold 64 percent of the nation's estimated shale oil reserves, according to the federal Energy Information Administration. That is double the combined reserves of the Bakken Shale (NDBOOILP) in North Dakota and the Eagle Ford Shale in Texas, where energy companies are spending billions." (Bloomberg on line, March 16, 2013).

*(Continued on page 3)*



### INSIDE

From the President	1, 3
Position Paper	2, 3
New Board Members	4
Mystery History	5
<b>WATER:</b>	
Bay Delta Controversy Part III	6, 7
<b>POWER:</b>	
Others are Saying	1, 8-10
Book Review, The Wired Northwest, Paul W. Hirt	11

Water And Power Associates, Inc. POSITION PAPER

February 19, 2013

Board of Directors

- Edward A. Schlotman**  
President
- John W. Schumann**  
First Vice President
- Thomas J. McCarthy**  
Second Vice President
- David J. Oliphant**  
Secretary
- Carlos V. Solorza**  
Treasurer
- Dorothy M. Fuller**  
Newsletter Editor
- Jack Feldman**  
Web Master
  
- Robert Agopian**
- Timothy F. Brick**
- Chin L. Chang**
- Phyllis E. Currie**
- Robert J. DiPrimio**
- Steven P. Erie**
- Thomas Gackstetter**
- Gerald A. Gewe**
- Lawrence A. Kerrigan**
- Alice Lipscomb**
- Scott Munson**
- Kent W. Noyes**
- Pankaj Parekh**
- Philip Shiner**
- Roger D. Weisman**
- Robert Yoshimura**

Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District  
157 Short Street  
Bishop, CA 93514

Attention: Theodore D. Schade, Air Pollution Control Officer

Honorable District Board,

Los Angeles Water and Power Associates, Inc. is a non profit, independent, private organization incorporated in 1971 to inform and educate its members, public officials and the general public on critical water and energy issues affecting the citizens of Los Angeles, Southern California and the State of California. From time to time it takes positions on critical issues within its areas of concern.

At its annual meeting on February 9, 2013, the membership of the Los Angeles Water and Power Associates, Inc., adopted the enclosed position paper regarding the present lawsuit between the City of Los Angeles and the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District over mitigation of dust from the Owens Lake.

We respectfully request that the enclosed position paper be read into the public record at the public comment period of the hearing to be conducted by the Great Basin District at its meeting on Thursday, March 17 2013.

Respectfully  
David J. Oliphant  
Secretary

NOTE: We were advised that the position paper was provided to District Board members in their packet and also made part of the record.

## BACKGROUND

The City of Los Angeles (City) through the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) has filed a lawsuit in the United States District Court in which it seeks relief from certain orders of the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District (District). These orders attempt to extend the efforts of the City to eliminate dust emanating from the Owens Lake to areas that it has not, in the past, been required to address. In the lawsuit, the City alleges, among other things, that the District is attempting to require it to eliminate dust from areas surrounding Owens Lake that it does not own or control and that were not affected by its diversion of water from the Owens River between 1905 and 1913.

The lawsuit further alleges that the City has mitigated dust over an area of over forty-two square miles since 1998 at a cost of \$1.2 billion dollars, an amount equivalent to the total of two months of LADWP's customer's bills every year plus another 200 million dollars for dust mitigation projects currently in process over an additional 3.1 square miles. These dust mitigation projects consume 30 billion gallons of water every year (an amount that is more than is used by the City of San Francisco). This water must be replaced by purchased water that comes from the State Water Project at a higher cost not only in dollars but in environmental impacts.

The lawsuit further alleges that the District is attempting to order the City to mitigate the effects of dust emanating from areas of the Owens Lake basin that were not exposed by the City's diversion of the Owens River and are not owned or controlled by the City.

## LOS ANGELES WATER AND POWER ASSOCIATES, INC. Position Paper Owens Lake Dust Mitigation February 9, 2013

### POSITION

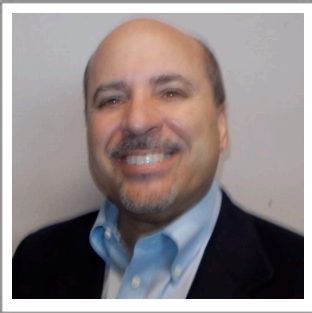
Los Angeles Water and Power Associates, Inc., supports the City's commitment to control dust that is emanating from Owens Lake as a result of the City's diversion of the Owens River and the development of a master plan to minimize the use of water on the dry lake area for dust control while still meeting environmental obligations. The Associates also supports the City's efforts to limit its obligation only to areas of the Owens Lake basin that are directly affected by the City's diversion of the Owens River as it existed when the diversion occurred and supports the City's efforts to require other owners of property in the basin to control the dust that emanates from their property.

## President's Message *(Continued from page 1)*

"Why", you ask? Well consider "While New York and others have moratoriums on fracking as potential pollution risks are assessed, California -- the fourth-largest oil-producing state -- is working on industry-backed standards that allow it. With fracking, the Monterey Shale may yield 2.8 million jobs and \$24.6 billion in state and local taxes by 2020, the University of Southern California said last week." (Bloomberg op cit).

Money and taxes are both nice, particularly if someone else pays the taxes (*Yes, I know. They are passed thru*). And we can always print more money, but water is something of a different matter, isn't it. Where does it come from? An unlimited supply? Sure it is! It is in fact a large but limited resource and sometimes smaller. What happens to the fracking for instance during time of drought? Think the oil producers will want to reduce or stop? You know the people will have to conserve. What about the Drillers? ※

## We Welcome New Board Members



*Robert J. DiPrimio*

Robert DiPrimio is a Vice President of San Gabriel Valley Water Company, a public water utility regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission. San Gabriel provides water utility service to over 480,000

people in two separate divisions operating in Los Angeles County and San Bernardino County. Since joining San Gabriel, Bob has been actively involved in the Company's regulatory matters before the Commission, water and energy programs and customer services.

Prior to joining San Gabriel in 2010, Bob was employed as President of the Valencia Water Company for 17 years. He served as a member of the Board of Directors of Castaic Lake Water Agency, a public agency delivering drinking water via the State Water Project to retail water purveyors in the Santa Clarita Valley. Bob was first elected to the board in 1987 and then served as an appointed member of the board from 1993 to 2010.

Bob began his career with the City of Los Angeles Department of Water Power in 1981 as a Civil Engineering Assistant in the Water System's Engineering Design Division. Bob was involved with various water system master planning studies, and in 1983 he joined the construction management team overseeing construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct Filtration Plant. In 1985, Bob transferred to the City's Bureau of Public Works to work at the Terminal Island Wastewater Treatment Plant as the Assistant Plant Manager. In 1988, Bob returned to LADWP joining the Water Quality Division managing a section responsible for maintaining water quality in the City's Aqueduct and water distribution system.

Bob has a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering from Drexel University and MBA from Pepperdine University. He is a registered Civil Engineer in the State of California and is a member of the American Waterworks Association, the Association of California Water Agencies and the American Society of Civil Engineers. Bob is married to Debra and has two grown children. Bob is active in his community and has served on the Board of Directors of the Santa Clarita Child and Family Center. ✱



*Phyllis E. Currie.*

Phyllis Currie joined Pasadena Water and Power as General Manager in April 2001. In this capacity she is responsible for providing electricity to the city of Pasadena, CA and water to residents of the city and portions of Altadena, an unincorporated area in Los Angeles County.

Under her leadership, the utility constructed two new electric generation units (90 megawatts) at the city-owned power plant in 2004, embarked on multi-year infrastructure improvement programs to upgrade the city's water and electrical distribution systems, and built a water treatment plant to clean up ground water contamination.

Phyllis previously held the position of Chief Financial Officer for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power from 1992 to 1999, where she managed the financial affairs of the utility and its financial interests in joint ventures and partnerships, such as the Southern California Public Power Authority and the Intermountain Power Project in Utah. During her 30-year career with the city of Los Angeles, she also served as Assistant City Administrative Officer overseeing development of the annual operating and capital budgets and as director of the Los Angeles rent control program.

In June 2012, Phyllis was installed as Chair of the American Public Power Association Board of Directors. In addition to APPA, she serves on the boards of the Southern California Public Power Authority and the California Municipal Utilities Association. She is also a member of the American Water Works Association, the Government Finance Officers Association, the American Association of Blacks in Energy and the National Forum of Black Public Administrators. Past professional affiliations include the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board, and the California Debt Advisory Commission. In 2012 she was awarded the Water And Power Associates, Inc. **Mulholland Public Service Award**

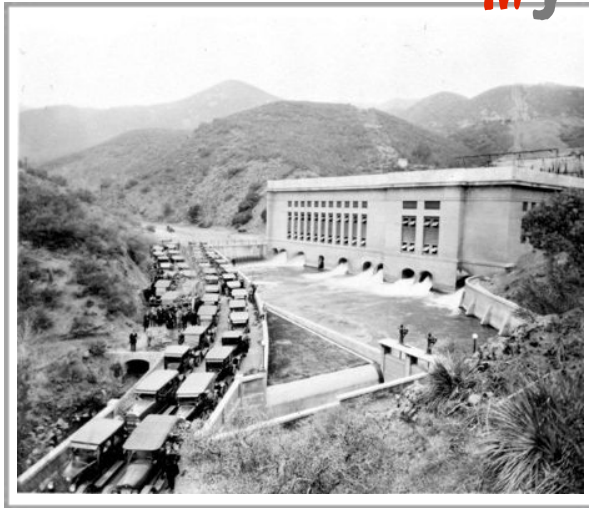
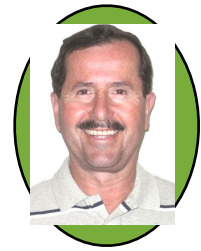
Her community affiliations include the board of directors of the Pasadena-Foothill YWCA; the board development committee of the Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles; and Pasadena Rotary

Phyllis earned a bachelor's degree in political science from UCLA and a master of business administration degree from UCLA's Anderson School of Business. She also completed the Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. ✱



# Mystery History

By Jack Feldman



**This photo shows the opening ceremony of one of DWP's (Bureau of Power and Light) earliest power plant.**

- a) Name the power plant?
- b) What year was it opened?

Answers can be found in the Museum Section - Electricity on the Aqueduct <http://waterandpower.org/museum/Electricity%20on%20the%20Aqueduct.html>



**This photo shows a 52-mule team hauling sections of the LA Aqueduct pipe.**

- a) What year did construction begin on the Los Angeles Aqueduct?
- b) What year was the Aqueduct completed?

Answers can be found in the Museum Section – Construction of the LA Aqueduct ([http://waterandpower.org/museum/Construction\\_of\\_the\\_LA\\_Aqueduct.html](http://waterandpower.org/museum/Construction_of_the_LA_Aqueduct.html))

- c) Who came up with the original idea for building the Los Angeles Aqueduct?

Answer can be found in the Museum Section – The Story of the Los Angeles Aqueduct [http://waterandpower.org/museum/The\\_Story\\_of\\_the\\_Los\\_Angeles\\_Aqueduct.html](http://waterandpower.org/museum/The_Story_of_the_Los_Angeles_Aqueduct.html)



*Chin Chang distributes our Newsletters electronically.*

Wish to receive your W&PA Newsletters by e-mail instead of (or in addition to) mailed hard-copies? If so, send a request with your name and e-mail address to [dormfull@att.net](mailto:dormfull@att.net).

Previous Newsletter editions are also available on our website at [www.waterandpower.org](http://www.waterandpower.org)

## MEMBERSHIP

If you have renewed your membership for 2013, **THANK YOU**.

If not, it is never too late. Annual membership is \$20.

If you are not yet a member, membership is open to **everyone**. Simply mail your name, address, telephone and e-mail numbers, and check made out to:

Water And Power Associates, Inc.  
10121 Groveland Ave.  
Whittier, CA 90603

Water and Power Associates, Inc. is a non profit, independent, private organization incorporated in 1971 to inform and educate its members, public officials and the general public on critical water and energy issues affecting the citizens of Los Angeles, of Southern California and of the State of California.

## The Bay Delta Controversy – Part III

By Robert Yoshimura

*The following is the third part of a series of articles regarding the Bay Delta Controversy. The first two articles were published in the October 2012 and January 2013 issues of this newsletter. Those articles explained the nature of the controversy, its consequences on the state's economy, the role that environmental regulations have had on the progress of the Bay Delta planning process, and some of the political reasons behind the controversy. Here we delve into the recent history of the process and its current status*



**The Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta is the most critical part of California's water conveyance system, and as the largest estuary on the west coast, is a vitally important ecosystem for hundreds of species of fish and wildlife.** A number of factors, including the operation of the **State Water Project (SWP)** and the federal **Central Valley Project (CVP)**, have caused an alarming decline in a number of such species. Among the most seriously affected is the Delta Smelt, which has come to be viewed as an indicator of the general ecological health of the Delta.

~ To solve these environmental problems while also restoring the reliability of water supply from the Delta, environmental agencies and organizations joined the state's water users in 2006 to initiate the **Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP)**. The BDCP process is the most recent of more than 40 years of planning activities undertaken in the Delta to resolve the water and environmental issues therein.

~ The BDCP is intended to be a conservation plan under the state's **Natural Communities Conservation Planning Act (NCCPA)** and a **Habitat Conservation Plan** under the federal **Endangered Species Act**. Both types of plans are required to enable permitting for activities such as the operation of water conveyance facilities including the SWP and CVP. Unlike previous efforts, the BDCP takes a multi-species approach to protection of endangered species to facilitate operating permits for water conveyance operations.

~ In 2009, a landmark piece of legislation known as the **Delta Reform Act** made it state policy to "*manage the Delta in support of the co-equal goals of water supply reliability and ecosystem restoration in a manner that acknowledges the evolving nature of the Delta as a place for people and communities*". Thus, the Delta Reform Act provides a formalized objective for the BDCP and prescribes an analysis and review process to assure that it achieves its goal.

~ As of the time of this writing, a preliminary draft of the BDCP was scheduled to be released in three stages

beginning on March 14, 2013, with public meetings to follow within one week of each submittal. *The preliminary draft will incorporate the project framework for the plan, consisting of two tunnels that will convey 9000 cubic feet per second of water from three intakes near Hood, CA (five miles south of Sacramento) to the starting point of the California Aqueduct and Central Valley Project at Tracy California.* By diverting water north of the Delta and conveying it underground, the natural flow patterns of the Delta will be restored and flow reversals that disrupt habitats in south Delta streams will cease. In combination with extensive habitat restoration efforts, the BDCP framework should improve both the ecological health of the Delta and water supply reliability for both the SWP and CVP.

~ A draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Study (EIR/EIS) will be circulated for review later this spring. Following the typically drawn-out process of public review and comment on both the plan and EIR/EIS, the final versions of the two documents are expected to be published by the end of the year. *(Continued on page 7)*

## The Bay Delta Controversy – Part III *(Continued from page 6)*

While recent events appear to signal an end to the decades-long controversy, short term problems remain that will seriously affect water supplies in the near future and new issues related to the planning process raised by environmentalists and northern politicians may again delay the completion of the plan. The SWP and CVP operate under **Incidental Take permits** issued by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The allowable “take” (the number of a given species that is allowed to be destroyed in the normal course of operations) is revised yearly based on fish counts conducted in the fall. Because of an alarming decline in the counts of certain species including the Delta Smelt, pumping restrictions were imposed on the SWP and CVP in early December of 2012 that reduced exports by a total of 728,000 acre feet from early December to the end of January 2013.

In early February 2013, regulators determined that the incidental take of Delta Smelt had reached 75 percent of the allowable number for the current year, and ordered a *further* reduction of pumping from the two water projects. The incidental take is determined by counting the number of Delta Smelt entrained in the fish screens of the two pumping stations on a monthly basis. In February, the cumulative count reached 232 fish, while the current allowable total take for the year is 305. The economic impact of those 232 fish will be huge. According to the **Farm Water Coalition**, the 728,000 acre-feet of lost water during the two months of reduced pumping equates to 12,386 lost farm jobs, \$873 million in the value of crops that could have been grown, and a total \$2.2 billion economic impact from lost farm production. In the next few months, the additional pumping reductions will greatly add to the losses incurred thus far. *(Note: the actual impact of the pumping cuts was less than the values shown because not all of the cuts were imposed on farmers. Some of the cuts were to domestic users in Southern California.)*



The 728,000 acre-foot reduction was imposed specifically to protect Delta Smelt. It's failure to do so underscores the need for the program outlined in the BDCP and emphasizes the urgency to expedite its completion. According to Mark Cowin, Director of the California Department of Water Resources, the curtailment of pumping described above would *not have been needed* if the BDCP facilities were in place. The BDCP facilities would have prevented the reverse flows that caused Delta Smelt to be drawn into the pump screens. If additional incentives are needed, a recent study by the Brattle Group predicted that the BDCP, if fully implemented, would result in 137,000 additional jobs over its 50-year implementation period.

Two new issues have popped up at the eleventh hour that threaten the schedule of the BDCP. A coalition of environmental organizations led by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) has presented a new alternative to the State Water Commission and Delta Stewardship Council, and has requested that it be included in the BDCP as a stand-alone alternative. The new alternative is known as the Portfolio Alternative and consists of a smaller intake and tunnel (reduced to 3000 cubic feet per second from 9000 cubic feet per second in the preferred alternative described in the BDCP)

combined with local projects including storage reservoirs and alternative supplies. The coalition contends that this alternative will provide a more reliable water supply at lower cost to the beneficiaries and with less impact on the environment. This alternative will require some time to analyze and incorporate into the plan.

A second issue is a request from six U.S. Congressmen to perform cost-benefit analyses on all alternatives (including the Portfolio Alternative) instead of limiting them to the preferred alternative and No Project. Not surprisingly, all six Congressmen are northern Californians who represent districts in the Bay-Delta region. This, too, will require additional time that may further delay the completion of the plan.

While the BDCP appears to be on the verge of completion, the two new issues and the state's response to those issues will have a major impact on both the nature and timing of the plan. While I am hopeful that we are close to the end of the planning process, I would not be surprised if either of these issues or new ones brought forth by the project's traditional opponents cause the plan to be delayed for many more years. As I have done for much of my life, I will continue to watch the progress of the Bay Delta planning efforts with great interest and report on them as appropriate in upcoming issues of this newsletter. 🙏





*Thomas J. McCarthy*

monitors publications and articles of national and international electric and power issues for the Associates' Board meetings and Newsletter.



*Wall Street Journal, March 5.*

## Los Angeles to stop using coal-fired power by 2025, mayor says

March 1, 2013

By [Dorothy Davis](#), Content Director

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has said the city will stop using coal-fired power within 12 years, reports Southern California Public Radio.

During an event sponsored by UCLA's Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, Villaraigosa revealed plans to sign an agreement that would end the use of what was once the city's most-used energy source by 2025.

"In a couple of weeks I will be signing agreements to get completely out of coal by 2025," Villaraigosa pledged.

Villaraigosa's ambitions go back to the start of his first term in 2009 when he set an initial goal of eliminating the use of coal-fired generation to power L.A. by 2020. However, issues with the city's utility such as the political battle over a carbon tax and energy rate increases have stalled the initiative's progress.

Further complicating the issue are the terms of the city's contracts with the coal-fired Navajo Generating Station in Arizona and Intermountain Power Plant in Utah,

which provide nearly 40 percent of L.A.'s power. Nevertheless, Villaraigosa was firm in his comments at the event on a plan to end the city's relationships with the two plants.

"We'll be out of Navajo, 2015. Intermountain looks like 2025," Villaraigosa said. "It will be a big deal."

Supporters of the initiative are saying the plan is viable, pointing to recent reports that the Navajo Generating Station is facing significant challenges to remain operational. New federal environmental regulations would increase operating costs at the plant by an estimated \$1 billion, which could force its closure in time to meet Villaraigosa's 2025 objective.

In addition, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) outlined in its 2012 Integrated Resource Plan it will consider selling its share in the Navajo Generating Station by 2015, four years ahead of its scheduled lease end date.

Concerning the Intermountain Power Plant, LADWP said the facility is considering a conversion to natural gas by July 2025. Yet, any future plans must also have the approval of California's 35 other

purchasers of the plant's power before moving ahead.

As of this release, neither the mayor's officer nor LADWP have made an official announcement on the planned phase-out.

**More information on [environmental regulations regarding coal-fired power](#) can be found at [PennEnergy's research area](#).**

### **Sempra Sells 625-MW Block of Mesquite Plant to Salt River Project**

Sempra U.S. Gas & Power said it has completed the sale of one 625-MW block of its 1,250-MW Mesquite natural-gas-based power plant to the Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District for \$371 million, Electric Light & Power reported. Under the terms of the sale, SRP acquired 100-percent ownership of one 625-MW power block and 50-percent undivided interest in plant facilities. Sempra retained ownership of the other 625-MW power block and 50-percent interest in plant facilities.

*[Electric Light & Power](#),  
Feb. 28.*



## California Renewables Push Could Create Grid Imbalance

At a meeting of California state regulators and energy companies, experts warned that the state could start having power reliability problems as soon as 2015 because of the sharp increase of wind and solar energy on the state's power grid, the Wall Street Journal reported. A concurrent reduction in traditional power plants that could balance renewables' intermittent output was expected in part because low electricity prices have made it financially unattractive to retrofit natural-gas-based generating units to comply with pending federal regulations under the Clean Water Act. Todd Strauss, senior director of Energy Policy, Planning and Analysis at Pacific Gas and Electric,

was quoted as saying: "We see the issue hitting as soon as 2013, 2014, 2015."

California Energy Commission Chairman Robert Weisenmiller indicated that the state would exceed the renewables target and "end up closer to 40 percent." California ISO CEO Steve Berberich was quoted as saying: "California has been well served by the procurement process since the [2000-2001 energy] crisis. The problem is we have a system now that needs flexibility, not capacity." California expects to have 44 percent more generating capacity than it needs next year, but, wrote the Wall Street Journal: "Surplus generating capacity doesn't

guarantee steady power flow. Even though California has a lot of plants, it doesn't have the right mix: Many of the solar and wind sources added in recent years have actually made the system more fragile, because they provide power intermittently."

State officials said they hoped to have a plan for addressing the problem in place by July. California PUC President Michael Peevey said action was clearly needed but he was not sure whether the market would require "small adjustments or a major overhaul." Electric utilities have called for immediate action to prevent rolling blackouts.

*Wall Street Journal, Feb. 27.*



## Gov. Brown Asks Other States to Help Advance Clean Energy Cause

In a speech at the National Governors Association conference, California Gov. Jerry Brown asked his colleagues to follow California's effort to "decarbonize the economy" by adopting renewables requirements and restricting GHG emissions, the Los Angeles Times reported. Brown told governors California "can't do it alone" on clean energy, and needs similar policies in other states, as well as China and India. Experts said if

California is not joined by other states, its relatively expensive power will put the state at a disadvantage to other states in attracting businesses to grow and move their operations. However, should other states support a trend of growing use of renewables and discouraging fossil-fuel-based power, California would benefit from clean energy economies of scale.

Shelly Sullivan, executive director

of the AB 32 Implementation Group, said, "The current system amounts to a tax to continue doing business in the state." Gov. Brown was also scheduled to travel to China for a week-long trade mission in April, with aides saying he will focus on climate change and potential partnerships between California and China on programs to cut GHG emissions.

*Los Angeles Times, March 4.*

## California's Imperial County Turns to Renewables for Growth

Imperial County in southeast California has hopes of turning around its depressed economy with solar, wind and geothermal power projects built to help meet California's 33-percent-by-2020 renewable requirement, the Los Angeles Times reported today. Imperial County Board of Supervisors Chairman Mike Kelley predicted that "renewable energy is going to give Imperial County a shot in the arm" and cut an unemployment rate that has ranged

from 25 percent to 33 percent for the last three years.

Tenaska Solar Ventures, which is building two solar projects in the county, was drawn in part by proximity to the Sunrise Powerlink transmission line, which came online in 2012. However, First Solar spokesman Alan Bernheimer said his company's project "does not provide substantial long-term employment." Imperial County's move into renewables has sparked opposition from farmers over the

loss of fertile land, as well as environmentalists and an Indian tribe. A lawsuit filed by the Quechan tribe of the Ft. Yuma Indian Reservation, against a wind farm that would be built on government land, stated: "To allow a project of such magnitude to be erected next to one of our sacred sites -- which helps form our identity as Quechan -- would be a desecration of our culture and way of life."

*Los Angeles Times, Feb. 27.*



## White House Names McCarthy to EPA; Moniz to Head DOE

President Obama today formally announced that Ernest Moniz will become his new Energy Secretary and that Gina McCarthy will head the Environmental Protection Agency. The announcements also tapped Sylvia Mathews Burwell as the new director of the White House Office of Management and Budget, the Washington Post reported this morning online. Politico reported that the selection of McCarthy to succeed Lisa Jackson as EPA Administrator represents an effort to select "an experienced regulator who has been at the forefront of the agency's fight to enact tough greenhouse gas regulations." The Post reported that Moniz, a physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who served in the Clinton administration, "lends Obama's Cabinet scientific heft and brings prior Washington experience. At MIT, he directed the school's Energy Initiative, where he oversaw reports on almost every aspect of

energy." Moniz will succeed Steven Chu.

National Public Radio reported: "The new EPA Administrator could be the biggest lightning rod, given that agency's high profile in administration efforts to combat climate change. While the president has said he would prefer to attack greenhouse gases through legislation, the odds of passing a bill appear slim. A comprehensive climate bill failed in 2010, even though Democrats still controlled both houses of Congress."

Politico reported that Senate Environment and Public Works Chairwoman Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., has lauded McCarthy as someone with "a unique record of accomplishment in addressing air pollution — including global warming pollution — at the state level in Massachusetts and Connecticut." Asked before the

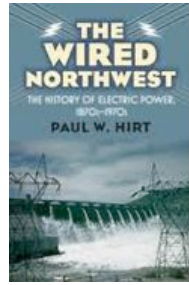
current confirmation about a formal announcement, Boxer said: "She'd be great. She is strong. She's knowledgeable. ... There would be no transition required, and I just like Gina because she's straight from the shoulder — good person."

Wrote NPR: "Like McCarthy, the president's pick for energy secretary is familiar to both the industry and Washington. Moniz served as undersecretary of the Energy Department during the Clinton administration. The White House points to his selection as evidence of Obama's commitment to an 'all-of-the-above' energy strategy. The initiative Moniz runs at MIT devotes much of its research to alternative forms of energy, including solar. But Moniz has also championed natural gas as a 'bridge fuel' to a future with less carbon pollution."

*National Public Radio, Politico, Washington Post, March 4.*



## Review



### THE WIRED NORTHWEST:

*The History of Electric Power, 1870s-1970s*, by Paul W. Hirt.

Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012. 461 pp. Tables, Figures, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Hardbound, \$49.95.

Ambitious in scope, deeply researched, and engagingly written, *The Wired Northwest* surveys the history of electrical power development in the Pacific Northwest, including the states of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, plus the Canadian Province of British Columbia. There are many energy resources in this region, among them coal, nuclear plants, solar energy, and wind, but Hirt concentrates on the major source of electricity, hydropower. He marvels at the transformation electrification made in people's lives. Within a short period of time electricity was used for streetcar lines, factories, mines, and for a growing number of items in homes. Electricity made kerosene lamps obsolete and inspired the growth of consumer items that are today taken for granted.

Initially most of the power came from utilities such as Washington Water Power Company, BC Electric, and Portland General Electric. Municipal power systems were restricted to cities; rural areas, deemed unprofitable by the private utility companies, remained in the dark (literally and figuratively) for decades. Private utilities found ownership of public transportation companies cash cows in terms of profit. But the power companies had to first create an infrastructure of dams that generated electricity. Larger companies bought out smaller ones, creating a regional grid. Electrical cooperatives were also formed.

Electricity also brought inevitable rivalries. During the Great Depression the federal government sponsored the construction of Grand Coulee Dam and Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River, and established the Bonneville Power Administration, a modest version of the Tennessee Valley Authority, yet of major importance in Northwest power development. However, two federal agencies, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, argued over funding, construction, and operation of federal hydroelectric dams. After World War II, public utilities overtook private power companies in production and, as Hirt observes, municipal power was delivered more cheaply than the rates charged by private companies. In British Columbia the trend moved in the opposite direction, as private companies led by BC Electric dominated power production in the province.

In the postwar era, as consumer demands for more electricity bought more and more power production, the number of likely dam sites declined as rivers and creeks were blocked by dozens of dams producing electrical power. Long ignored by local, state, and federal agencies, Native fishermen protested the construction of dams and consequent flooding of traditional fishing sites. Salmon numbers precipitously declined because dam builders failed to build ladders to provide access to spawning grounds, or built inadequate ones, and fish hatcheries were unable to provide salmon in quantity to make up for the decline in commercial fishing.

Hirt ends his book in the 1970s, but his concluding chapter provides an optimistic note. Despite the many issues that challenge the electric power system, "*we should celebrate rather than lament that complexity, unless we want to return to those simpler eras when only a few interests directed the electric power system toward a few narrow outcomes*" (p. 371). Turning the clock back to those "simpler eras" isn't a viable option for a society that takes its electricity for granted.

Readers will be impressed by Hirt's depth of research (55 pages of end notes and an excellent bibliography) and his skill in weaving a coherent narrative that takes in dozens of power systems, their consolidation and growth, and the development of electricity in three states and a province, with some mention of power development in other states as well. This book is required reading for anyone interested in how electricity became so essential in shaping modern society. 📖

*Abraham Hoffman*  
teaches history at Los  
Angeles Valley College.

