

# Nuclear and coal plants on horizon for Northwest

Stories by  
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Of the Emerald

The eighth Northwest Energy Policy Project (NEPP) report, released Thursday, predicts that at the lowest likely growth-rate condition the region will need five new nuclear and two new coal-fired power plants by the year 2000.

The report also concludes that more expensive energy supplies will cause Northwest energy prices to rise substantially, even though future demand is expected to grow at a significantly slower pace than in the past.

The NEPP studies are sponsored by a commission composed of governors John Evans of Idaho, Bob Straub of Oregon and Dixy Lee Ray of Washington, with co-chairer Patrick Vaughn as the presidential appointee. The

studies are designed to give the governors and state Legislatures information, which they can use in planning for future energy needs.

The report, called "Energy Supply and Environmental Impacts," projects energy demand under three different growth-rate scenarios; low, moderate and high energy-growth conditions.

The report considers the moderate scenario to be the most likely. It would require nine new coal-fired and 13 new nuclear power plants by the end of the century, NEPP says.

Under high growth-rate conditions, the report predicts, "as many as 28 new coal-fired and 21 new nuclear power plants might be needed." The report notes that successful conservation policies would reduce the need for generating capacity under any scenario.

Because cheaper hydroelectric power resources have already been fully developed, the more expensive thermal and nuclear sources will cause price increases for residential consumers of from one to two percent per year more than the current rate of inflation.

Natural gas, coal and petroleum prices will also rise as fast or faster than inflation, because of more imports of those products.

Alternative energy sources, such as solar and wind generation are not mentioned in the "supply" section of the report, but the "impact" section states that "environmental impacts from unconventional energy sources such as solar, wind and geothermal are less than the impacts from conventional energy sources, although all energy sources would produce some adverse environmental impacts."

## Weaver deplores log exports

Jim Weaver, 4th District Democratic Congressman, has plans to stop the sale of National Forest timber to companies that export logs.

Weaver, chairer of the House forests subcommittee, says his proposed bill states, "If you have so many of your own logs you can afford to export them, nothing in this bill will prohibit you from doing so. But, stay out of the competition

for National Forest timber. This timber should go to mills which depend on public timber for their source of supply."

The brunt of the timber supply problem in the region falls on the smaller independent mills, Weaver says, citing the closures of six such mills in the 4th District during the last two years.

"A log exported is a log lost to our domestic supply," according to Weaver. "I am proposing a bill to protect buyers of federal timber from the effects of exports."

His bill will not affect export practices that do not have a drastic effect on domestic needs, such as the overseas sale of Port Orford Cedar, Weaver says. The bill will give the Secretary of Agriculture, who administers the Forest Service, authority to decide, through hearings, what exports are affected under the measure.

The proposed bill is aimed primarily at Japanese log imports;

Weaver points out the value of the yen increased 20 percent over the purchasing power of the U.S. dollar in 1977. "This means that the Japanese products we import are costing us more and the logs we are exporting are costing the Japanese less every day," Weaver says.

"Already the Japanese demand has pushed the price of timber beyond what many of our mills can afford and some have closed," Weaver adds. "If prices are pushed up \$50 or more per thousand board feet, it could easily squeeze profit margins into the red for even more mills."

In addition to helping the regional timber industry, Weaver says the bill should induce more investment in the forest products industry to meet the Japanese demand for processed lumber, and provide a lift to the area's economy by increasing employment.



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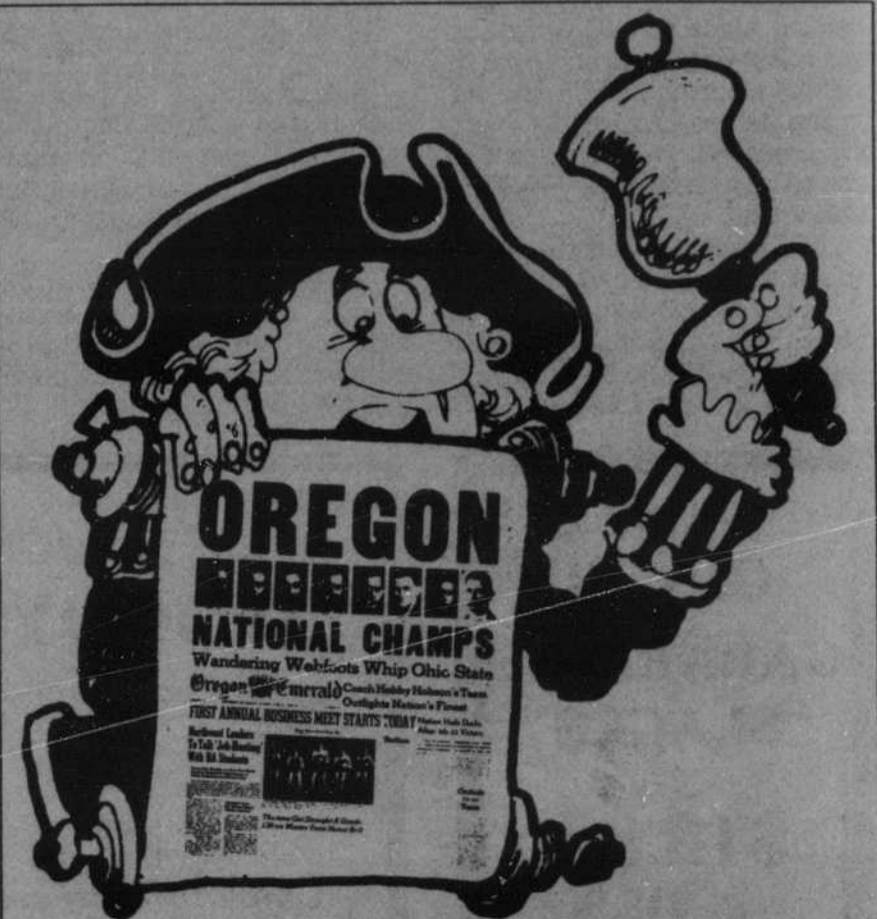
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