FROM: Northern Tier Transmission Group (NTTG)

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## **NEW TRANSMISSION ORGANIZATION LAUNCHED**

## "Northern Tier Transmission Group" Work under Way to Improve Grid Operations in Seven Western States

Boise, Idaho — Five utilities have launched a new organization tasked with improving overall operation and expansion of the high-voltage transmission network that delivers power to consumers in seven western states. A steering committee composed of senior utility executives and state agency officials will lead the Northern Tier Transmission Group (NTTG).

"Northern Tier is focused on results," NTTG co-chair and Idaho Public Utilities Commissioner Marsha Smith, explained. "Much can be achieved quickly. For one, we will offer transmission customers a new level of insight into the workings of the transmission system, enhancing its value to all consumers".

The utilities associated with NTTG include both investor-owned and public utilities. Members are: Deseret Power Electric Cooperative, Idaho Power, NorthWestern Energy, PacifiCorp and the Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS), and it covers all or parts of the transmission system in the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Wyoming, Washington and California.

NTTG has organized around three work agendas, which will be informed by stakeholder participation as Northern Tier proceeds. The topics include: improving available transmission capacity, expediting "actionable" planning for transmission grid expansion and collaborating on control area operations.

A detailed plan for sharing key control area operations was developed by several NTTG members in conjunction with the British Columbia Transmission Corporation. Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) staff personnel have recently reviewed the plan. NTTG is committed to the fundamental principle of observing FERC policy, such as implementation of the emerging Order 888 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

"We will increase efficiency and lower operational costs when we improve communications," said, John Cupparo, NTTG co-chair and PacifiCorp Vice President for Transmission. "Enhanced data sharing between our respective

control areas will enable us to better share existing resources and more easily integrate new resources such as wind power to the benefit of our consumers. Also, the coordinated planning and construction of new power lines will improve our ability to deliver new resources including wind and other renewables."

NTTG will hold the second in an ongoing series of stakeholder working meetings on January 30 from 1:00 – 5:00 pm and January 31 from 8:30 am – noon in Boise, Idaho. The meeting, at Boise's Red Lion Hotel, will focus on achieving transparency in available transmission capacity and advancing sub-regional planning.

"Everyone who has an interest is invited to Boise at the end of the month," said Smith. "Stakeholders will find that NTTG is looking for more than dialogue, it's looking for ideas we can implement."

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