

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 25, 2026

Travis Kavulla
Administrator and CEO
Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, OR 97208-3621

Dear Administrator Kavulla:

As Congress continues its oversight of the nation's energy infrastructure and wholesale electricity markets, we write to underscore the strategic importance of the Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA) pending decision regarding regional market participation and to express strong support for BPA's timely participation in the Southwest Power Pool's (SPP) Markets+ initiative.

For more than two decades, much of the West has operated under wholesale electricity market structures heavily influenced by policies and rules developed through the California Independent System Operator (CAISO). While regional coordination has delivered benefits, many utilities and consumers outside California have experienced market outcomes that often prioritize California's policy objectives over the needs of the broader West. Markets+ presents a historic opportunity to establish a more balanced, efficient, and independently governed regional market framework that better meets the needs of all western states on an equitable basis.

A majority of western utilities outside of California have selected an SPP-operated market. Markets+ is transparent and accountable to all participants, unlike frameworks that remain closely tied to the interests of a single state. Participants in SPP have formal opportunities for engagement and voting rights on governing documents and market changes.

The importance of independent governance cannot be overstated. CAISO's Extended Day-Ahead Market (EDAM) model continues to raise concerns among many western stakeholders because CAISO is and remains statutorily beholden to the interests of the State of California. Under this model, CAISO is expected to simultaneously serve as both California's balancing authority and as a regional market operator. These dual responsibilities will create market outcomes that disproportionately benefit California participants.

There is substantial support for Markets+ throughout the Pacific Northwest. In addition to BPA's 2025 Day-ahead Market Policy that set the direction and a financial commitment towards BPA joining Markets+, entities including Chelan County PUD, Grant County PUD, Puget Sound Energy, and Tacoma Power have invested resources in the development of Markets+ and have expressed their intention to participate in the market. The Public Power Council, which represents the interests of BPA's consumer-owned utility customers, has repeatedly voiced strong support for BPA's participation as well.

A timely decision by BPA is necessary to provide certainty to market participants, many of whom have already made investments in preparation for the launch and implementation of Markets+. Delays risk increasing costs, creating uncertainty, and undermining years of collaborative work undertaken by utilities and stakeholders throughout the region. More importantly, postponement could jeopardize the development of an independent western market framework at a pivotal moment when the region is seeking greater reliability, affordability, and energy security.

The choice before BPA extends beyond market design. It is fundamentally a decision about whether western states will have access to an independently governed market platform that reflects the interests of the broader region, or whether much of the West will remain dependent upon policies and structures shaped by California's priorities.

For these reasons, we encourage careful consideration of the broader regional implications of BPA's decision and support efforts that advance Markets+ as an independent market solution for the reliable and affordable future of the West.

Sincerely,


Tom Cotton
United States Senator


John Boozman
United States Senator