



Portland, Oregon

# Agenda

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

## At-a-Glance Schedule

Sunday, June 1	Monday, June 2	Tuesday, June 3	Wednesday, June 4
4-6 Conference Check-in	8:00 Breakfast	8:00 Breakfast	8:00 Breakfast & WCPSC Commissioners Business Meeting
5-6:30 Welcome Reception with a view – Skyline room (23 <sup>rd</sup> floor)	9-10:15 Opening & General Session	8:30-9:30 General Session	9-10 General Session (CLE Credit available)
	10:15-10:30 Networking Break	9:30-9:45 Networking Break	10-10:15 Networking Break
	10:30 –11:30 Concurrent Panels 1	9:45-10:45 General Session	10:15-11:30 Closing Session – Keynote and Chairs Panel
	11:30-1 Lunch & General Session	11:15-12:15 Concurrent Panels 4	11:30 Adjourn
	1-2 Concurrent Panels 2	12:15-1:30 Lunch & General Session + 2026 Preview	
	2-2:15 Networking Break	1:30-1:45 Assemble in Hilton main floor lobby for tours	
	2:15-3:15 Concurrent Panels 3	2-5 Afternoon Activities (Tours) Walk – Energy efficiency Hike – Wildfire mitigation Drive – Two options Family – Oregon Zoo	
	3:15-3:45 Networking Break		
	3:45-4:45 General Session	5-9 Reception & Dinner – World Forestry Center <i>(Limited space for dinner, so check your tickets)</i>	
	<i>Dinner on Your Own</i>		

## Sunday, June 1, 2025

### 4:00 – 6:00 PM

**Conference check-in for pre-registered attendees**  
Plaza Level, Park Room

### 5:00 – 6:30 PM

**Welcome Reception with a View**  
Skyline Room I & II, 23<sup>rd</sup> Floor

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## Monday, June 2, 2025

### 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

**Conference check-in for pre-registered attendees.**

*Plaza Level*

### 8:00 AM

**Continental Breakfast Available**

*Plaza Foyer, Pavilion Ballroom*

### 9:00 – 10:15 AM – Opening and General Session

**Opening Session**

*Pavilion Ballroom*

*Land acknowledgement: Jason T. Younker – Ph.D., Chief of the Coquille Indian Tribe and Assistant Vice President and Advisor to the President on Sovereignty and Government-to-Government Relations at the University of Oregon*

*Opening Speaker: Les Perkins -- WCPSC President & Oregon PUC Commissioner*

*Keynote Speaker: John Hairston – BPA Administrator and CEO*

**Opening General Session – Federal Keynote**

*Pavilion Ballroom*

*Introduction: Commissioner Les Perkins -- Oregon Public Utility Commission*

*Speaker: Chairman Mark Christie -- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission- Virtual*

### 10:15 – 10:30 AM

**Networking Break**

*Pavilion Foyer (Plaza Level) - Visit the sponsor tables!*

### 10:30 – 11:30 AM – Concurrent Panels 1

**Panel 1A – The Plight of Small Water Companies: Navigating Infrastructure Challenges and Modernizing Aging Water Systems**

*Atrium Ballroom*

Drinking water systems face a slew of challenges, from aging infrastructure, to demand growth, to a constantly evolving regulatory landscape. Small water companies face these challenges with a limited customer base and limited access to capital. Panelists will discuss the issues and solutions available to small water companies.

*Moderator: Commissioner Naomi Kuwaye -- Hawaii Public Utilities Commission*  
*Speakers: Jennifer Lukins -- Owner, Lukins Brothers Water Company and Chair, Small Company Committee, CA Water Association*  
*Richard Rauschmeier -- Cal Advocates Water Branch Manager*  
*Tom Puttman -- President, NW Natural Water*  
*Christy Baril -- Director of Water Quality and Environmental Compliance, California American Water*

## **Panel 1B – New Technologies, New Procurement Challenges, and New Risks**

*Broadway Room*

With capacity at a premium in the West, utilities are considering technologies that are either new to the market or have not been procured at large scales in decades. Among the new technologies are advanced nuclear, long-duration energy storage, hydrogen, geothermal, and thermal with carbon capture and storage. Even established thermal technologies may face new siting challenges and fuel constraints. How can power suppliers, utilities, and customer advocates find a smoother path to promote both fair competition among capacity resources with very distinct characteristics and fair allocation of risk?

*Moderator: Commissioner Colin Yost -- Hawaii Public Utilities Commission*  
*Speakers: Mark Thompson -- Senior Director, State Affairs, Form Energy*  
*Pete Marsters-- Head of Market Fundamentals, Fervo Energy*  
*Tim Belden -- Energy GPS*  
*Rick Link -- Senior Vice President of Resource Planning, PacifiCorp*  
*Michele Beck -- Executive Director of Utah Office of Consumer Services*

## **11:30 AM – 1:00 PM**

### **Lunch**

*Pavilion Ballroom*

## **11:50 – 12:50 PM**

### **Lunch General Session—Bringing “Affordability” into Focus**

*Pavilion Ballroom*

Each panelist will offer a modern definition of the long-hallowed but seldom-defined regulatory objective of “affordability.” Panelists will discuss whether and why these definitions make sense for the interests they represent and offer thoughts on whether and how regulators should define this objective.

*Moderator: Commissioner Letha Tawney -- Oregon Public Utility Commission*  
*Speakers: Nina Suetake -- National Association of State Consumer Advocates*  
*Julien Dumoulin-Smith -- Jeffries LLC*  
*Rep. Pam Marsh -- Oregon House of Representatives*  
*Paul Kjellander -- Public Utilities Fortnightly*

## **1:00 – 2:00 PM – Concurrent Panels 2**

## **Panel 2A – Gas Supply in the West: Mitigating Risks Amid Supply Constraints, Market Volatility, and Rising Demand**

*Atrium Ballroom*

A global marketplace makes price volatility a persistent issue for natural gas, with liquefied natural gas and geopolitics perennial uncertainties. But the West has faced unique gas supply constraints and risks due to pipeline and storage capacity issues, made worse when drought shifts electricity generation to gas and this and other factors contribute to low storage levels. These constraints have led to higher natural gas prices in the region. Hear different perspectives on what the future holds and how we should be responding.

*Moderator: Commissioner Greg Nibert -- New Mexico Public Regulation Commission*

*Speakers: Kim Rush -- President, NW Natural*

*Camilo Amezcuita -- Vice President & General Manager of Williams Northwest Pipeline*

*Scott Kinney -- Vice President, Energy Resources and Integrated Planning at Avista*

*Ted Lehmann -- Vice President, Sales and Regulatory Affairs, Cost Management*

*Services Energy Advisors, speaking for AWEA*

## **Panel 2B – Broadband Rollout and Electric Safety Clash in the Rural West**

*Broadway Room*

Broadband Rollout and Electric Safety Clash in the Rural West Broadway Room With historic federal funding for broadband deployment on a tight timeline, contractors are swarming the rural West to run lines. Pole owners, often rural electric providers with few human resources, are challenged to keep pace as the only line of defense against attachment practices that exacerbate the risk of wildfire ignition. Hear how this issue is playing out in both FCC states and those under state jurisdiction, and why regulators concerned about wildfire risk should care.

*Moderator: Sam Ackley -- Hunter Comms and Oregon Joint Use Association Board President*

*Speakers: Leon Grumbo -- Oregon PUC Electric Safety Staff*

*Vice Chairman Nick Myers -- Arizona Corporation Commission*

*Jeffery Carlson -- Safety and Compliance Manager, Consumers Power Inc.*

*Christopher Barley -- President of Oregon Aerial Construction*

**2:00 - 2:15 PM**

### **Networking Break**

*Pavilion Foyer (Plaza Level) - Visit the sponsor tables!*

**2:15 – 3:15 PM**

## **Panel 3A – Electric Reliability: Responding to the Alarm Bells**

*Atrium Ballroom*

We have heard the many warnings about reliability risks in the Western Interconnect – even before new large loads emerged as an additional challenge. Responding to the early warning signs, whether close calls or extreme prices, has been uneven. Siting and interconnecting facilities, managing the capital requirements – including the impact on bills, and allocating space on the transmission network to move

the needed energy all create challenges. Panelists will unpack the barriers to responding and suggest how we can work individually and collectively to overcome them.

*Moderator: Commissioner Ann Rendahl – Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission*  
*Speakers: Edna Mariñelarena -- Assistant Vice President, Moody's Ratings*  
*Spencer Gray -- Executive Director, Northwest Intermountain Power Producers Coalition*  
*Rich Glick -- GQ New Energy Strategies and former FERC Chair*

### **Panel 3B – Customer and Community Consultation Enters a New Era**

*Broadway Room*

Engagement with utilities is at an all-time high. Customers of all types—from energy burdened residential customers to new hyperscale loads—are concerned about bills and access to service. Some customers seek more choices and opportunities to inform their energy supply. Tribal and local governments are likewise concerned about rising rates, while also looking to share in the benefits and avoid the burdens of energy infrastructure development. Can utilities remain trusted providers with so many divergent and engaged constituencies? What is working and what is not working around the region when it comes to consultation and engagement?

*Moderator: Chair Pat O'Connell -- New Mexico Public Regulation Commission*  
*Speakers: Chuck Sams -- Northwest Power and Conservation Council*  
*Erifili Draklellis – Manager Community Engagement and Co-Benefits, RMI*  
*Pat Ehrbar – Director of Regulatory Affairs, Avista*  
*Silvia Tanner – Senior Energy Policy and Legal Analyst at Multnomah County Office of Sustainability*

**3:15 - 3:45 PM**

### **Networking Break**

*Pavilion Foyer (Plaza Level) – Visit the sponsor tables!*

**3:45 – 4:45 PM**

### **General Session – Lagging Technology Adoption Rates and Regulatory Reform**

*Pavilion Ballroom*

Load growth, extreme weather, and policy requirements all contribute to a need for rapid scaling of technology investment in the energy system. How can utility regulation keep up?

*Moderator: Commissioner John Reynolds -- California Public Utilities Commission*  
*Speakers: Jay Griffin -- Former Chair of the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission and current Regulatory Assistance Project Senior Advisor*  
*Lauren McCloy -- Policy Director, Northwest Energy Coalition*  
*Elliott Nethercutt -- EEI Senior Director State Regulatory Affairs*  
*Steven Wellner – Senior Legal Advisor, Office of Commissioner Judy Chang, FERC*

**5:00 PM**

## Tuesday, June 3, 2025

### 8:00 AM – 12:00 Noon

Conference check-in for pre-registered attendees.

*Plaza Level*

### 8:00 AM

**Continental Breakfast Available**

*Pavilion Ballroom*

### 8:30 – 9:30 AM

**General Session – Is Affordability Possible When Costs are Rising?**

*Pavilion Ballroom*

*Moderator: Commissioner Matt Baker -- California Public Utilities Commission*

*Speakers: Justin Palfreyman -- President & CEO, NW Natural Holdings*

*Kevin Tilden -- President, California & Hawaii American Water*

*Russell Elliott -- CEO, Siskiyou Telephone Company*

*Robert Kenney -- President, Xcel Colorado*

### 9:30 – 9:45 AM

**Networking Break**

*Pavilion Ballroom (Plaza Level) - Visit the sponsor tables!*

### 9:45 – 10:45 AM

**General Session – Presenting Big Ideas from Around the Region!**

*Pavilion Ballroom*

What's new and exciting in the energy world? Hear short and focused presentations from passionate people working on solutions to our many challenges. Think TED Talk, but for energy nerds.

*Moderator: Megan Decker – Principal, Staircase Advisory and former Chair of the Oregon PUC*

*Speakers: Tziporah Feldman -- Policy and Research Director, Scenic America*

*Ben Hanson – VP of Sales, Pano AI*

*Anna Lafoyiannis -- Program Lead of Bulk System Integration of Renewables and Distributed Energy Resources at EPRI – Climate READi*

*Elaine Hart -- Co-Founder and Principal at Sylvan Energy Analytics*

*John Igo – VP of Business Development, Mainspring Energy*

*Ben Corwin – VP, Business Operations and Technology, EarthGrid*

## 10:45 – 11:15 AM

### Networking Break

*Pavilion Ballroom (Plaza Level) - Visit the sponsor tables!*

## 11:15 AM – 12:15 PM

### Panel 4A – Cooperation: Essential Services and Extreme Fire Risk

*Atrium Ballroom*

Expert practitioners explore how partnerships between utility commissions, utilities, emergency managers and critical infrastructure operators can make our communities safer as we weather the impacts of outages during high-risk conditions or when an urban conflagration begins to unfold. What can we prepare now to limit cascading consequences? Whether it's fuel shortages, communications outages, continuous water flow or waste-water treatment, how can we prepare together to limit the impacts of growing fire risk and urban conflagration?

*Moderator: Chair Leo Asuncion -- Hawaii Public Utilities Commission*

*Speakers: Jim Alberts -- Chief Operating Officer, Hawaiian Electric Company*

*Daryl Osby -- Vice President, Emergency Preparedness, Safety, and Security, California Water Service*

*Nick Russell -- Vice President, Operations, WatchDuty*

*Scott Schifando -- Vice President Operations, ALERTWest*

### Panel 4B – Large Loads: Tracking the Emerging Regulatory Best Practice

*Broadway Room*

What is the state of play on large loads? Panelists engaged in designing and implementing solutions around the country and the West will discuss what regulatory compromises and solutions have emerged for reliability, cost-shifting, and policy mandates.

*Moderator: Chair Eric Blank -- Colorado Public Utilities Commission*

*Speakers: Ellen Zuckerman -- Head of Energy Market Development, Google*

*Peter Cappers -- Staff Scientist, Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, Lead Author of [Electricity Rate Designs for Large Loads](#)*

*Branden Sudduth -- Vice President, Reliability Planning and Performance Analysis, Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC), [Assessment of Large Load Interconnection Risks in the Western Interconnection](#)*

*Bob Jenks -- Executive Director, Oregon Citizens' Utility Board*

## 12:15 PM – 1:30 PM

### Lunch

*Pavilion Ballroom*

## 12:45 – 1:15 PM

## **Lunch General Session**

*Pavilion Ballroom*

*Keynote Speaker – Chuck Sams -- Oregon Council Member of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council and former National Parks Service Director*

## **1:15-1:30 PM - Learn about 2026 WCPSC Event and Leadership Transition**

*Pavilion Ballroom*

Leadership handoff by outgoing WCPSC President Les Perkins and hear from incoming President Pat O'Connell about the 2026 WCPSC event in New Mexico!

## **1:30 – 1:45 PM**

Those attending a tour will meet in the Hilton main floor lobby and be ready for departure by 1:45 p.m. All tours will return to the Hilton prior to the 5 p.m. reception at the World Forestry Center except for the hiking tour. Check your WCPSC confirmation for the activity you signed up for. **Dress comfortably and wear your badge!**

## **1:45 – 5 PM Afternoon Activities/Tours**

### **Activity – Walking Tour**

Hosted by: Energy Trust of Oregon – Meet in Broadway Room (Plaza Level) by 1:45 p.m.

Learn firsthand about energy efficiency and renewable energy development through site tours of several projects in downtown Portland. We'll highlight buildings that participated in Energy Trust programs and see a range of projects, meeting site owners to learn about their efforts to lower operating costs, manage energy use, and make their built environments more comfortable and resilient. Energy Trust program staff will serve as your tour guides on this 2-mile, 2-hour tour. A map with locations and project narratives will be provided. Dress comfortably!

### **Activity – Hiking Tour**

Hosted by: Oregon Public Utility Commission – Meet in Pavilion Ballroom by 1:45 p.m.

Urban hiking at its finest! Walk from the conference to the reception and dinner at the World Forestry Center. In just ~3.5 miles and ~800 feet elevation gain, you'll pass Providence Park, climb through historic Portland neighborhoods, and spend most of the hike on trails in the rose gardens of Washington Park and forested Hoyt Arboretum. Though the walk is officially self-guided, unofficial activities coordinator Megan Decker and some Oregon PUC staff will collect hikers at the hotel and two other meeting points to prompt a group discussion of utilities and wildfire risk as we contemplate Portland's legendary urban forests.

### **Activity – Driving Tour #1 – PGE's Integrated Operations Center**

Hosted by: Portland General Electric (PGE) – Meet in Hilton main floor lobby (by restaurant) by 1:45 p.m.

Tour PGE's new Integrated Operations Center (IOC), a state-of-the-art grid control room that is the cornerstone to enabling a smart energy grid that is dynamic, flexible and responsive. PGE's IOC is the foundation of all kinds of new renewable energy projects, and it's the key to creating our clean energy future.

### **Activity – Driving Tour #2 – Hydrogen Blending Tour & Beer Tasting**

Hosted by: NW Natural Gas Company – Meet in Hilton main floor lobby (by restaurant) by 1:45 p.m.

Enjoy an on-site tour of Northwest Natural's nearby resource center (10-minute drive) that hosts Modern Hydrogen's methane pyrolysis unit. The unit produces hydrogen from natural gas, which is introduced into the company's low-pressure distribution system. Following a brief tour, we'll visit an Oregon brewery, for a hosted beer-tasting.

### **Activity – Welcome to the Oregon Zoo**

Meet in Atrium Ballroom by 1:45 p.m.

You're welcome to join Commissioner Tawney and her family at the Oregon Zoo. Ride MAX from the Hilton to enjoy an afternoon at Portland's award-winning zoo where you'll see our new baby elephant, Tula-Tu. After, you'll walk across the street

*Updated 5/29/2025 11A*



to enjoy the reception at the World Forestry Center. **Bring the family!** Entrance tickets NOT included in conference registration.

## 5:00 – 9:00 PM

### Reception & Dinner at the World Forestry Center

4033 SW Canyon Road, Portland OR 97221

**\*\*Check your tickets provided at check-in to ensure which of these events you're registered for.**

*Travel to reception & dinner -- Hop on Portland's award-winning MAX light rail system for a quick trip to the reception and dinner. Travel on your own is easy or meet in the Hilton main floor lobby at 4:30 PM to travel as a group. MAX tickets are provided if you reserved them at registration. If not, tap your payment card (mobile wallet, contactless credit card) when you board.*

**MAX Instructions from Hilton** -- Walk two (2) blocks to Pioneer Square North MAX Station (#8383). Board MAX Red Line to Hills Airport/Fairgrounds or MAX Blue Line to Hillsboro. After about 4 stops, exit at the Washington Park MAX Station (#10121) it's an easy walk across the street.

**MAX Instructions Back to Hilton from World Forestry Center** – At Washington Park MAX Station (#10120), board MAX Red Line to Portland Airport or MAX Blue Line to Gresham. Exit at Pioneer Square South MAX Station (#8334). Walk about 500 feet to Hilton.

**How to Pay for MAX** -- Use the MAX Hop Pass provided by the conference, if you reserved a pass at registration. To pay on your own, tap your phone's mobile wallet (Apple, Google, Samsung Pay) or contactless credit card (VISA, MC, Discover, AMEX) when you board.

## 5:00 – 6:30 PM

### Reception ~ World Forestry Center Museum

4033 SW Canyon Road, Portland, OR 97221

*Appreciate the museum while you enjoy light hors d'oeuvres and refreshments, including beer and wine.*

## 6:30 – 9:00 PM

### Dinner at the World Forestry Center – Miller Hall

*There's limited space at the dinner, so **make sure you have a ticket for this event.** It's a short walk from the museum! Music by Thirsty Squirrels, a local 80's and 90's cover band featuring employees of the Oregon PUC.*

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## Wednesday, June 4, 2025

## 8:00 - 9:00 AM

**Continental Breakfast Available**

*Pavilion Ballroom*

**8:15-8:45**

**WCPSC Commissioners Business meeting (closed)**

*Park Room or Skyline II Room - TBD*

*Bring your breakfast!*

**9:00 – 10:00 AM**

**General Session – Legal Ethics and PUC Practice**

*Pavilion Ballroom*

Hear about the legal ethics quandaries most likely to arise before PUCs from an ethics expert, commissioners, and experienced PUC practitioners. Relevant for non-lawyers too!

*Moderators: Adam Lowney – McDowell Rackner Gibson PC & Max Greene – Sanger Greene*

*Speakers: Mary Throne – Commissioner, Wyoming Public Service Commission  
Darcie Houck – Commissioner, California Public Utilities Commission  
Nellie Barnard – Legal Ethics Attorney, Schwabe, Williamson, & Wyatt  
John Hammond – Commissioner, Idaho Public Utilities Commission*

**10:00 – 11:30 AM Closing Session**

*Pavilion Ballroom*

**10:00-10:30 Keynote Speaker**

*Introduction: Commissioner Tom Plant -- Colorado Public Utilities Commission*

*Speaker: Bill Ritter -- former Colorado Governor, author, and founder of the New Energy Economy at Colorado State University*

**10:30-11:15 Panel of State Commission Chairs**

**11:15-11:30 Closing Remarks and Adjourn**

*Speaker: Les Perkins, WCPSC President & Oregon PUC Commissioner*