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## Idaho unlikely to face electricity shortages

**But, assessment says prices could still increase.**

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Despite hot weather and high demand for electricity, Idaho is unlikely to face an electricity shortage for the next five years, according to an assessment by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council.

However, while the power supply is adequate, it may not always be inexpensive. Northwest utilities are investing in new resources, especially conservation and renewable energy, and that must continue to ensure power remains reliable and affordable, the council said in a news release.

The assessment shows that while the available power supply exceeds anticipated demand, and will through at least 2012, much of that surplus is not committed to utilities and exists in the wholesale marketplace, where prices can be highly volatile and power is sold to the highest bidder. Prices could be high, particularly during short-term periods of high demand, as during extremes of weather as Idaho faces now.

"The assessment provides a high assurance that the Northwest will avoid blackouts due to an inadequate overall power supply for the next three to five years," Council Chairman Tom Karier said. "This is good news, but it does not ensure that the region will avoid periods of high prices, nor does it ensure that individual utilities have control over enough electricity through contracts with power suppliers or from their own power plants to meet their customers' needs."

The council's power plan calls for "continuing aggressive efforts" to conserve energy and develop renewable resources. "This will minimize expenditures over time and also minimize environmental risks, such as the risk of increased emissions from older, dirtier power plants that run mainly when demand for power peaks," Karier said.

The council is an agency of the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. The Northwest Power Act of 1980 directed the council to prepare a program to protect, mitigate and enhance fish and wildlife of the Columbia River Basin affected by hydropower dams while assuring the region an adequate, efficient, economical and reliable power supply.

The assessment will be posted on [www.nwcouncil.org](http://www.nwcouncil.org).