

June 21, 2007

Letter to the Editor:

The article by Michael Milstein (“Humans 1, salmon 0,” June 21, 2007) was right in one respect. Operating the federal hydro system *is* a “delicate balance.” Daily generation decisions are based on factors as changeable as the weather and human behavior. And sometimes those decisions go awry.

The federal Columbia River power and transmission system supports electricity deliveries up and down the West Coast. A crisis in the Northwest can cause blackouts thousands of miles away that lead to injuries and death. Human error may have led up to the April 3 power shortfall, but once the emergency was at hand, the choice was stark: the possibility of a blackout or temporarily ramping up hydro generation.

As a hydro operator, would you take a chance risking power outages to hospitals, homes and traffic signals from here to Canada and California? All this to preserve a turbine operation many experts say has no benefit for fish passage? I wouldn't.

John Prescott  
President & CEO, PNGC Power  
Portland, Oregon

PNGC Power, 711 NE Halsey, Portland, Oregon 97232  
503-288-1234