**Northwest Public Power Association**

**Resolution 2016-03**

**Protecting the Bulk Electric System from Cyber and Physical Attacks**

**Background**

NWPPA supports protecting its electric infrastructure from cyber and physical attacks. In the Energy Policy Act of 2005, Congress authorized the creation of an electric reliability organization certified by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and tasked with developing technical standards to ensure the reliability – including cyber security – of the bulk electric system. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) was certified by FERC to perform these duties.

Standards are developed through a NERC process that takes input from technical experts in all sectors of the North American utility industry and sends the standards to FERC where they are approved or remanded for modification. Once approved, they are mandatory and enforceable. Nuclear reactors are also subject to mandatory cyber standards required by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). In recent years, Congress has become increasingly concerned that the North American electric grid is vulnerable to cyber attack and has debated various legislative proposals to strengthen the cyber security of the bulk electric system.

**NWPPA’s Position**

* NWPPA members are actively engaged in efforts to protect the electric grid from cyber and physical attacks and other reliability measures to protect and ensure a reliable and safe electrical system.
* NWPPA members support granting a single federal agency new, limited, emergency power to address “imminent” cyber security threats to the Bulk Electric System.
* NWPPA also supports authorizing the federal government to provide utilities with timely, actionable information on threats, to enable us to respond more effectively.
* NWPPA opposes measures that would undermine the current NRC-required standards for nuclear reactors and the existing FERC/NERC process for developing cyber security standards—including measures that would give FERC authority to develop standards to address cyber vulnerabilities or that would give the Commission authority over facilities beyond the Bulk Electric System.
* NWPPA is working with the electric sector and DOE, DHS, FBI and local law enforcement to bring utility operators and local law enforcement together to enhance security measures at our critical substations, as well as to participate in a FERC-NERC assessment in response to a request by Senate leaders.

Origination Date: 2009. Revised in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016.