**Northwest Public Power Association**

**Resolution 2016-07**

**Urging EPA Consideration of Economic Impacts on Rural Utilities When Developing New Environmental Regulations**

**Background**

NWPPA members in some rural communities, Alaska in particular, pay some of the highest electric bills in the Nation.  When the unique circumstances facing these rural communities are not considered, the resulting regulations can make the cost of producing electricity too expensive for a local economy to sustain. Business and industry leaders abandon communities that have an unsustainable cost of power, and this has a cascading effect that further cripples struggling rural economies.

Rural-based utilities in Alaska are distinctly different than those in other parts of the nation where access to basic infrastructure is readily available, and their significant differences should be considered when developing any new regulatory requirement. All Americans deserve to live in a healthy and productive community, yet the approaches to improving environmental standards must be practical and achievable for each unique community.

**NWPPA’s Position**

* Consideration should be given to isolated communities and consumer-owned utilities, particularly those in Alaska, that have few or no alternatives for affordable energy. Evolving environmental regulations in many cases could result in pricing of the cost of power at rates above what the local economy can sustain.
* EPA’s focus in implementing environmental regulations should be to assist communities in reducing pollution, not indiscriminately dictating tighter air quality standards or waste handling protocols without regard to practicality, cost or economic burden.
* NWPPA urges EPA to provide conditional exemptions for small, stand-alone electric systems within rural communities to reduce the local economic burden of implementing new environmental compliance requirements.

Origination Date: 2011 and 2012.