**Northwest Public Power Association**

**Resolution 2017-03**

**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 ensure a reliable and safe electrical system.
* NWPPA support having a single federal agency limited, emergency power to address “imminent” cyber security threats to the Bulk Electric System.
* NWPPA also supports action by the federal government to provide utilities with timely, actionable information on threats, to enable effective response.
* 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, that would give FERC authority over facilities beyond the Bulk Electric System, or that bypass the existing standards-setting process to address geomagnetic disturbances (GMD) or electromagnetic pulse (EMP) events.
* NWPPA members are working with the electric sector and DOE, DHS, FBI and local law enforcement to enhance security measures at their critical substations.

Origination Date: 2009. Revised in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017.