

1 **Northwest Public Power Association**
2 **Resolution 2018-12**
3 **In Support of Improved Efforts, by Utilities and the Federal**
4 **Government, to Respond to Natural Disasters**

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6 **Background**

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8 Each year, between 100 and 200 federal natural disasters are declared. Federal statistics show
9 that the frequency and severity of natural disasters are increasing. According to the National
10 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 2017 saw record-breaking losses from
11 natural disasters, totaling \$306 billion worth of damages. Nearly every area of the country has
12 been touched by hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, and ice storms. These events threaten loss of
13 life and property, both from the direct impact and the often extended periods before electric
14 service can be restored, disaster assistance provided, and facilities and personal property
15 rebuilt.

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17 As community-owned resources, public power utilities are committed to improving the
18 resiliency of their systems, responding expeditiously to disasters, and restoring service as
19 quickly as possible. Public power utilities also help each other—through the provision of
20 mutual aid by public power systems providing crew and equipment to repair both neighboring
21 and distant utilities.

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23 Recent experience underscores the value of mutual aid and federal disaster assistance, but also
24 highlights areas where improvements can occur, including:

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- 26 • Expand voluntary participation in, and coordination of, mutual aid efforts;
 - 27 • Improve administration of FEMA grants to reimburse utilities, which can in turn expedite
28 payments to those utilities that have provided mutual aid; and
 - 29 • Reform federal disaster assistance programs to facilitate greater focus on disaster
30 prevention, staging, system resiliency, program efficiency, and improved oversight.

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32 **NWPPA's Position**

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- 34 • NWPPA supports action by Congress to reform federal disaster assistance programs to
35 enable public power utilities to use federal funds for disaster prevention and system
36 resiliency investments, expedite federal payments to utilities for both direct disaster
37 responses and mutual aid payments, and provide adequate federal funding for disaster
38 response.
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