

Palisades power measure is waiting amendments

Sun June 21, 1981

BY BEN J. PLASTINO
Post-Register political editor

U.S. Sen. James A. McClure, R-Idaho, chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said the long-delayed Palisades Dam power hydroelectric bill is awaiting addition from two states.

McClure said in a telephone interview with The Post-Register that Nevada and Montana want to add their own hydroelectric proposals to a bill which is considered unique in Congress.

"We are holding up the bill until this is done," said McClure.

The bill passed the Senate committee in May, along with other legislation embraced in the Hydroelectric Powerplant Construction Act.

McClure added an amendment which authorizes construction of an additional 90 megawatts of generated capacity at the existing Palisades Dam on the Snake River's South Fork, 50 miles east of Idaho Falls.

The additional generation would cost an estimated \$65 million and produce an additional power for the Bonneville Power Administration grid serving the Pacific Northwest.

The project has been under consideration since approved by the Idaho Legislature two years ago to cooperate with the federal government.

The bill provides for floating state revenue bonds that could be retired by sale of power. At

the time of Legislature approval, it was figured \$50 million in revenue bonds would be necessary.

The project has been delayed the last two years to reach an agreement with the American Public Power Association which represents the Rural Electrification Associations. The APPA has objected to a state-financed project and wants preference clauses for public utilities and federal projects.

Under the proposal the Palisades power plant would be expanded from the present 90 megawatts.

Also added to the bill is an amendment authorizing \$60 million for construction of an additional 30 megawatts at Minidoka Dam and a \$13 million construction project for an additional 30 megawatts at Anderson Ranch Dam east of Boise.

McClure noted these projects will return more than their construction cost while the public will benefit from additional comparatively cheap power.

It would create little adverse environmental effect as there are existing dams, noted McClure.

McClure said that all the projects are currently owned and operated by the federal government. He added the appropriations would still be necessary before any construction of the new generating facilities could begin.