

State to draft bill on Palisades power project

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Ken Dunn, Boise, deputy director of the Idaho Department of Water Resources, said this week he will begin drafting

legislation soon that will authorize the State of Idaho to install a 90 megawatt generator at the federally-built Palisades Dam.

Dunn said this is the next step, after he has been assured

support for the project from the Department of Interior and all four members of Idaho's congressional delegation.

Dunn also reported that in a personal conference last week at Portland, Sterling Munro, Bonneville Power Administration director, told him the BPA has taken a neutral position. He explained it is not the BPA's policy to support such a project, but likewise it will enter no opposition, and that he views with favor any plan that will develop new sources of energy.

Senators support

Dunn said both Sens. Frank Church and James A. McClure, who sit on the Senate Interior Natural Resources and Environment Committee's subcommittee on energy, research and development, had personally given him warm support. This will be the key Senate subcommittee to first consider the project.

Dunn said he did not talk personally to Idaho's two U.S. Reps. Steve Symms and George Hansen when in Washington a couple of weeks ago, but that their staff assured support.

The legislation will take the form of an amendment to a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation feasibility study on hydroelectric projects, explained Dunn.

Favorable reaction also was expressed by Tom Cavanaugh, senior staff member of the House water and power

resources subcommittee under the chairmanship of Rep. Abraham Kazen, D-Texas, which will first consider the legislation in the House.

Dunn said his talks in

Washington indicate the legislation will likely be first considered next month.

Feasibility study

R. Keith Higginson, commissioner of the USBR and former Idaho DWR director, said earlier that \$293,000 has been earmarked for the feasibility study which is expected to include Palisades.

Dunn noted the project, to cost about \$50 million, will entail installation of two generators of 45 megawatts each and an addition to the present powerplant at Palisades located on the Snake River South Fork about 50 miles east of Idaho Falls.

Dunn also talked with Higginson, and Joe Nagel, Andrus' assistant on federal-state relations, in his Washington trip.

The 90 megawatt generators would augment existing capacity of 115 megawatts and would generate 158 million kilowatt hours a year, estimated enough for a city of 30,000, which is half the size of Idaho Falls and environs.

Under plans, the state would contract with USBR to install the generators, with the project to be financed by revenue bonds to be paid off from sale of power to consumers over a 25-year period.

Dunn said he has just written Church requesting information for drafting the initial legislation.