



Department of Commerce

Energy News Overview

Pacific Northwest Weather

The most notable October weather event was the storm that didn't show up on the 14th. Forecasters identified a typhoon in the middle of the Pacific a week before it would make landfall in the Pacific Northwest. Early tracking suggested that it could match the Columbus Day storm of 1962 in ferocity. The public was given several days warning and dutifully prepared for the storm, which ebbed and turned a bit northward during the last 12 hours before landfall. Meteorologists were widely criticized for not accurately forecasting the storm severity – forecasting isn't an easy job.

October rainfall records were set in several cities in Washington State. SeaTac saw 10.05 inches for the month breaking the old 2003 record of 8.96 inches. Because we have moved into La Nina weather conditions it is somewhat more likely that we will experience a wetter and cooler than normal winter. Climate models also point towards heavier rainfall during October and November. See weather related articles on page 3.

Energy & Climate Politics

State energy and climate politics have been a bit edgier than usual the last several months; most likely because of hotly contested state and national campaigns. The Washington state climate tax initiative, I-732, gained support this fall and significant money flowed into both the Yes and No camps of I-732 during the last part of October. A hedge fund billionaire and Leonardo DiCaprio were among the supporters of I-732. Puget Sound Energy, Tesoro refining, Kaiser Aluminum and the Koch brothers sided with the No on I-732 campaign. In the end national recognition and funding I 732 was rejected 42 to 58 percent on Nov.8. The environmental alliance is considering developing a carbon tax initiative in 2018.

Puget Sound Energy was also in the news over its proposed liquefied natural gas plant in Tacoma. Local opponents to the project contend that customers are not fully shielded from the project's financial risk and potential property devaluation.

Removal of some or all of the Snake River dams was back in the news. Last May, federal judge Michael Simon rejected the government's plan for protecting threatened and endangered salmon in the Columbia River system. Simon's order has initiated a series of public meetings throughout the Northwest.

The victory of Donald Trump puts several climate friendly policies developed during the Obama administration in jeopardy. More on national energy and climate issues in our next newsletter after the dust has settled.

Climate Change

The New York Times published a list of nine cities to live in if you are worried about climate change over the next 25-30 years. Boise Idaho was the only city in the Pacific Northwest that made the list – no sea level rise issues there.