

The Friday Burrito

Close Calls and Far Off Dreams

"I wasn't handed college or graduate school or anything else on a silver platter. I had to work very hard, but I did it because I wanted to. That's the real key to happiness. I think unhappy people are those who feel that circumstances are forcing them into a pattern. Happy people are not slaves to the system."

Rosalyn Sussman Yalow

"Enjoy the journey of life and not just the endgame."

Benedict Cumberbatch



The Burrito is written for intellectual stimulation. Why, then, the dry humor and stale stories? Oh, it's to give your brain some relief from the usual boring coverage that is paraded as conventional wisdom. This week it has been difficult to find exciting narratives that typically populate our industry. In other words, it was a slow week absent of the usual mayhem.

However, you don't want to hear that! You want to read about issues that pique your curiosity. Okay. I have a few below based on diligent research, hard facts, and solid journalism. The rest I made up. Just saying.

Bill Gates' Breakthrough Investments in Energy

There are many prognosticators about future technology shifts for energy transitions with emphasis on climate-impactful clean electricity. In fact, most of the media coverage of our biz focuses on that because it's easy to write about something in the nascent stages before rigorous testing and lack of commercial triumph tosses the concept into the waste pile. The slim odds for success are to be expected.

Entities that put money on the line for the same, such as Bill Gates and his network of companies, (Breakthrough Energy Ventures, Breakthrough Energy Solutions, Breakthrough Energy Fellows, and others), focus on investment, advocacy, and research to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They also have some non-profit projects. This network was founded in 2015 and has lavished \$2.2 billion on more than 160 startups and other initiatives. I think Gates' perspective on which investments look promising and which are long-shots is a better reality check than Op Ed columns written by people with a vested commercial interest in a particular application. The [WSJ ran a really good article whereby Gates did a sweeping review](#) of current prospects.

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Odds & Ends (_!_)

Western States Ticker

CAISO YTD Renewables Curtailment:

As of 6/30/24: 2,841,761 MWh
As of 6/30/23 2,160,057MWh

% of solar and wind output curtailed:

YTD as of June 2024 7.17%
YTD as of June 2023 6.53%

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The best investments have been in incremental improvements of existing processes. For example, the company TS Conductor with its first plant located in Southern California, *"Makes a power cable that weighs less and carries more electricity than conventional wires."* The company is planning on opening a second manufacturing facility to increase production ten-fold. I doubt it will also be located in Southern California given the regulatory and business climate in the State.

Other projects that Gates has been funding push the envelope in new directions with the stated goal of eliminating cost-premiums for going green. For example, one of the startups deep in the cost-cutting mode is green hydrogen. To date, it remains more expensive to split water molecules to capture the hydrogen than using convention thermal applications. In another example, heat storage energized by electricity has significantly narrowed the cost gap between using clean energy sources for heating as an alternative to gas boilers and furnaces, which are less efficient. Although Gates has invested in a company called Rondo Energy, I [penned an article last September](#) about Antora Energy that is developing thermal batteries that use renewable energy to heat carbon blocks and storing the thermal energy for industrial processes.

The long-range technology for which I am anxious to succeed appears as far off and unreachable as it has for the last handful of years. That is, small modular nuclear reactors (SMR) that would be an ideal source of carbon-free electricity. The [WSJ](#) reported that, *"Since 2008 ... he has poured more than \$1 billion into TerraPower, a company he founded to develop nuclear reactors that are smaller and cheaper than conventional nuclear power plants. TerraPower recently broke ground on its first project in Wyoming, which the company hopes will come online in 2030. 'As long as that looks promising to me, I'll make sure that it's financed,' he said."*

Despite the long lead time for commercializing SMR, I read this week that Dominion Energy has issued a request for proposals to assess the feasibility of constructing an SMR at its North Anna nuclear power station in Louisa County, Virginia. The request is for construction and startup after 2030, about the same window as TerraPower has projected for its product line. [Per an article in Utility Dive that quoted a source from the utility](#), *"Our most recent Virginia IRP includes plans for the first SMR to be deployed in the mid-2030s, with several other units over the following decade."*

Good Luck Renting an EV and Recharging It Upon Return

The news that Hertz has been shedding a ton of its fleet of EVs isn't news these days. That item has come and gone. However, the [NYT did a very good job in an article that ran last weekend](#) explaining the challenges that rental companies have maintaining an EV fleet for their customers. *"Last year, more than 4 percent of the cars sold by*

What we believe...

Competition yields lower electricity costs. Stable and transparent rules and regulations promote private investment.

Private investors, rather than utilities, will spend money on new power plants and transmission facilities if they can earn a return that is balanced with the risks.

Private sector investment results in lower average prices without risking consumers' money.

However, when IOUs do the investing, the risks to them are minimal or non-existent because ratepayers effectively cover the utilities' costs.

Overcapacity lowers electricity spot market prices; yet retail rates can still increase in this case due to full cost-of-service regulation.

Markets work best when there are many buyers and sellers.

At-risk money will be put to investment where markets exist that are well regulated and yield credible prices.

And what we should do ...

Believe in ourselves.

Actively support the creation of independent, multi-state regional transmission organizations that coordinate policies with respective state utility commissions.

Support rules for resource adequacy that apply uniformly to all load-serving entities.

Enforce competitive solicitations by utilities for purchasing either thermal or renewable power.

manufacturers to rental companies were electric, according to S&P Global Mobility. So far this year, that number is just 1.4 percent."

Here are some of the factors slowing down the trend. First, chargers near airports where most rentals originate are few and far between. Tesla has a better record on that score, but other EVs such as Polestar and Kia cannot use Tesla Superchargers to replenish the battery. Renters can't return their EV on empty. *"Many rental companies expect customers to recharge electric vehicles to around 70 percent before returning them. That means customers must plan to stop at a charger near the end of their trips, which is not always easy to do when people are trying to catch flights and there aren't enough fast chargers near the rental car center."*

[Continued on the next page](#)

Support choice among retail electricity customers.

Lobby for core/non-core split of retail customers.

Advocate against policies that limit, through bid mitigation, merchant returns on investment that are comparable to utility returns.

Simply Suedeen

[Click here to learn more about Suedeen Kelly](#)



The Supreme Court has ended its 2023-24 Term with a Triple Crown series of decisions set to dramatically affect the future business of the federal executive branch of government, including FERC. In SEC v. Jarkesy, the Court found that the 7th Amendment right to a jury trial means the SEC cannot pursue civil penalties for securities fraud through an administrative proceeding; it must go to court. This holding applies directly to FERC enforcement actions too. No more enforcement of market manipulation or fraud actions under the Natural Gas Act or the Federal Power Act through the FERC ALJ process. Whether this prohibition will expand to include other types of FERC enforcement actions where civil penalties attach and perhaps even to the current FERC enforcement process where FERC "adjudicates" show cause orders without a jury is unclear for now, but litigation of these issues is certain. Whether FERC has the authority, without amendment of the NGA, to go to court for enforcement is also unclear. (The FPA, unlike the NGA, does give the defendant the choice of a judicial forum instead of the FERC forum.)

In Corner Post, Inc. v. Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the Court held that the ability to challenge an agency rule "first accrues" not when the rule is issued but rather when the plaintiff is injured by the final agency action. As a practical matter, this means that administrative agencies, including FERC, can be sued long after final agency rules take effect. As the dissent explains, "After today, even the most well-settled agency regulations can be placed on the chopping block." It used to be thought that when a new business comes to a regulated marketplace, it must take the rules as it finds them. Not so anymore. A new entrant can challenge an offensive rule within six years of its formation.

And in Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo (and its companion case, Relentless v. Dept. of Commerce), the Court overruled the 40-year-old Chevron deference doctrine, which had mandated courts give deference to an agency's interpretation of its statute unless that interpretation was unreasonable. Now we return to the pre-1984 world where courts, not agencies, decide what Congress intended. It remains to be seen whether courts, in deciding what the statute means, will give the agency's view any type of special consideration.

So, what does all this legal upheaval mean? At the heart of all these cases is the placement of significant constraints on federal agency policymaking/lawmaking. All agency actions will be subject to more challenge, and more litigation will ensure. The increase in legal challenges, in turn, expands the uncertainty regulated entities will experience around any regulatory change—e.g., will it "stick," or not? Already, regulated entities are discussing how they can reduce their risk in the face of this change and how they can develop both affirmative and defensive litigation strategies. We are off to the races!

Second, resale values of used EVs have cratered as Tesla and competitors this year lowered prices on new models. When new car prices drop, the depreciation curve on used vehicles also accelerates. To wit: *"Resale values are a critical part of the financial calculus for rental companies because they generally sell cars before they accumulate too many miles. Rental car companies record losses when they sell cars for less than they expected to. In the first three months of the year, the diminished value of Hertz's electric fleet lowered its profit by \$195 million."* Not chicken feed.

My A.I. Journey

Curiosity may kill the cat, but it's the only thing that prompted me to explore the vast new world of artificial intelligence (A.I.) *á la* ChatGPT. There are other products that do the same thing as ChatGPT. However, since I nervously was sticking my toe in the A.I. pool there wasn't any appetite to test alternatives. After five months as a user, I elevated my subscription from "free" to \$20/month. That alone should tell you something about my interest in the application.

First, and the primary reason for trying the A.I. machine was to translate between English and Spanish since I remain active in the trade association I started in Mexico. *Mis colegas en México* raved about its facility to include idiomatic expressions and translate colloquial jargon. Compared to Google Translate there was no question that ChatGPT did a better job and was easier to use. I just pasted an English text and told it to give me the phrase in Spanish, or translate a Spanish text into English. Once the A.I. app knows I want translation in either direction I don't need to retype the reason for entering the words. That is, if I ask for an English translation of Spanish the next entry can also be in Spanish and it knows I want to see the translation. Pretty cool. And it's a great educational tool.

My next foray into the world of ChatGPT was to replace the once powerful Microsoft Office search engine that no longer works on my MacBook Pro. It has gone kaput. The indexing function has been obliterated such that I had to retrieve, based on my ancient memory, when I wrote something about Topics X, Y, or Z. It was a time-consuming hunt-and-peck exercise. I discovered that ChatGPT allows the user to upload files from their computer, one at a time, and ask questions about a topic, or a general inquiry such as, "Create an Executive Summary." Flash bang came back the answer. It was in this mode that the free version limited my access because it allowed just so many questions before it cut me off for the rest of the day. The paid subscription bypassed that limitation.

However, there was still a drawback in that ChatGPT claimed it only could upload one file at a time, and the file remains resident until the session ends ... whenever that may be (not exactly clear to me). Each year I scribe 36 Burritos and scanning a topic across one year would be impossible uploading one file at a time ... I could do that just as well opening each Word file and do a "find" command. So, I asked ChatGPT how I should overcome this issue. The little rascal told me to combine the 36 files into one file and upload it to ChatGPT. Incredible. Why didn't I think of it?

Merging Word files together is tedious work. I would start with the first issue of the year and insert the next issue, then the next one, and so on. Mistakes are common but I became facile at the operation such that I could merge a year's worth of Burritos into one file in about 10 minutes plus or minus ... longer if I had a long-neck bottle of Rolling Rock beer within reach. So, for example, [when I wrote above about the topic of heat storage](#) of carbon bricks I simply uploaded the 2023 merged Burrito file, and put in a general query to ChatGPT, "New technology for heat storage." Within seconds it returned several items including the reference to Antora Energy. Mission accomplished. One shortfall of ChatGPT is it could not tell me the date and title of the Burrito wherein the reference was found. For that, I had to return to Word and do a search on the merged file for "Antora," which would have taken much longer without ChatGPT to identify the company I wrote about.

The third thing that I found A.I. to be helpful with is creating summaries of documents. In fact, in the email message that introduces the edition for WPTF readers, I use ChatGPT to create an intro using the request: "identify the topics of interest for a first-time reader." Yep. That's what I enter, and it does a good job. BTW, someday I hope that the CAISO in its future website reforms employs an A.I. engine to help search topics. The ability to dialogue with the bot and narrow the search is especially handy. However, there is a ton of information on the CAISO website so as a non-technical advocate I don't have a clue if what I am asking for is possible. Seems like it should be.

Finally, and something you industry hacks should take note, A.I. is a fantastic editor. Unbelievable. Occasionally I would write a paragraph herein that was confusing or mangled. I would ask ChatGPT to improve what I wrote and it always came back with a smoother version. For example, take the sentence I just wrote. I copied it into ChatGPT, asked the app to improve it, and here is what it returned: "*Finally, something industry professionals should take note of: A.I. is a fantastic editor. It's unbelievable. Whenever I wrote a confusing or complex paragraph, I asked ChatGPT to improve it, and it always returned a smoother, clearer version*". Same idea but a charming use of words. The one caution is that it might insert words I wouldn't employ in my normal writing, and it takes on a polite tone of a politician or ex-commissioner ... hardly my style but much appreciated. Look, I know how most of you folks write because I read your emails, reports, and whatnot. Grammar is not your forte and simple explanations mostly elude you. Online A.I. should be your best friend for that very reason.

Things Regulatory

The Regulatory Lag on Innovative Rate Design

I tread carefully when I use the words innovation and rate design in the same sentence. If there was ever a regulatory construct that has been static for the last century or so it has been utility rate design. However, the time is nigh for a change of attitude. The business model for supply and demand for power has so radically changed that the inclusion of new rate classes becomes essential to achieve a balance between cost causation and revenue recovery.

My exploration into this dark corner began with an idle discussion about transmission upgrades needed to fulfill the demand obligations of new data-center loads. Randy Hardy in his column last week explained it perfectly: "*Recent data center driven load growth will likely add 6-8 GW of new load in Hillsboro and eastern Washington/Oregon by the early 2030s – all of which will require service by 80 percent clean energy in 2030 ... Portland General Electric faces unique challenges in serving high-tech load growth of 3.0 – 3.5 GW by the early 2030's in Hillsboro. Transmission options to serve this load alone will probably cost \$2-3 billion.*" His passage plus my idle musing lead me to the question: Who should pay for these infrastructure upgrades? All customers or the data centers themselves? Nasty question, no?

Well, the question, nasty or not, cannot be addressed without considering the creation of a new rate class in the commercial and industrial segment called for the sake of argument "Data Services". A utility cannot allocate transmission costs to a group of customers without a rate design that provides an accounting bucket to record costs and revenues. Doing so is like a double-edged sword, however. Transmission cost allocation to a subclass increases those customer electricity rates (fixed or variable, you pick) and chase away an attractive element of energy growth and profitability. On the other hand, given the flat load shape of data centers it might behoove them to capture the benefits of 7 x 24 consumption profile that is much easier to supply (or used to be in the

old days of fossil fuels) than, say, small commercial loads that diurnally go up and down on business days. You feel me?

Energy-intensive industrial customers have had a separate rate class long before I started in this industry. Fifty years ago it was the norm and it still is today. But there's a two-fold challenge facing many of these customers including the four aluminum smelters that remain in the U.S. processing recycled cans into commercial grade product ... first, the constancy of their production and therefore electricity supply, and second, the desire to switch to clean energy supplies. It's that second part that makes large industrial customers akin to data centers ... or maybe a bit different. The [WSJ](#) ran [an article two weeks ago](#) entitled, "The Challenge of Building a New Plant: Paying the Electric Bill." The report focused on aluminum smelters but it included this comment close to the conclusion: "*Much of that renewable-energy capacity isn't yet connected to power grids, making it difficult for industrial users to access it ... Other big users of electricity are also vying for large loads of renewable energy, including new semiconductor-chip plants and computer-server centers that are expanding to accommodate artificial-intelligence products such as ChatGPT.*" Me thinks that the cost causation by the largest industrial customers should be split into parts such that data centers stand-alone both for assessing high-voltage connection costs to the grid and the transmission build out to clean energy resources. Aluminum smelters might follow suit and indeed I recall when smelting the Pacific Northwest was about 5 GW of load ... long gone but they were a separate rate class. There will be more data centers developed over the next decade than aluminum smelters and steel fabricators in the U.S.

Compare the stasis in electricity rate design to commercial airline pricing for seats and inflight services. Increasingly, the customer's demand for explicit comforts comes with a price tag. You want more leg room, you pay. You want food during the flight, you pay. You want to check extra baggage, you fork over some dough. You want a glass of water and a salty snack that you might find in a dive bar ... well, I don't think one pays for those but who knows, someday you may. Everyone on the flight departs and arrives at the same time. So, using this tortured analogy for electricity, all customers get the electron flows they need. However, some costs beyond the expense of generating electricity might be attached to new types of customers that create large fixed costs that probably shouldn't be spread across all customers.

Many years ago, when I was executive director of the WPTF in its infancy, the CPUC's Energy Division director at the time, Paul Clannon, was a guest speaker at our general meeting. His task was to explain the workings of the agency and how to navigate its labyrinth of rules. I recall precisely his comment that, "*The PUC is a like an ocean liner at sea. It can't stop and change direction on a dime ... it needs time to turn around to a new direction.*" That image comparing the ship to the CPUC has been in my mind for over twenty years.

Okay, so things don't move fast at a state regulatory body but who's fault is that? What party or parties can move for a redesign of rate classes? Actually, I think any party can do that including the CPUC undertaking an investigation and subsequent ruling, or a jurisdictional entity, or even a public body that makes a formal request. If the State's overstuffed and underpaid consumer advocates were on the ball, then they would make such an entreaty. Alas, I doubt I'll ever see it happen. More is the pity.

Grand Phunk Salsa a la Energy GPS

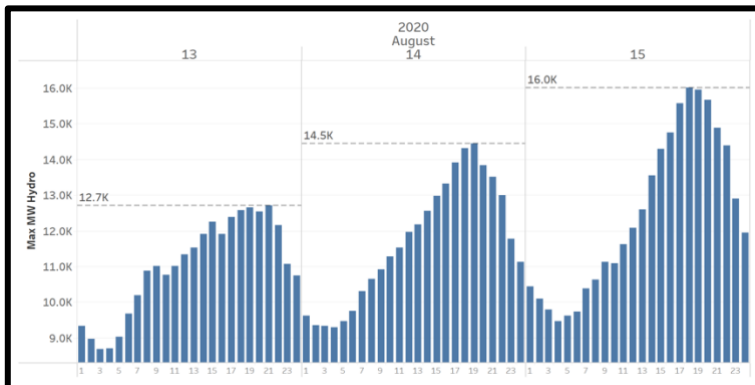
The Op Ed below is from the team at EnergyGPS with Tim Belden as the lead author. Energy GPS' report on the interplay between fish spill and reliability can be found [by clicking here](#). To learn more about Energy GPS' offerings please email them at sales@energygps.com.

Fish Spill Roulette

I've read in a few places that as the region progresses into summer the supply-demand balance gets tighter as hydro production declines. This statement is true and logically flows from the fact that as the snowmelt diminishes the natural inflows into western rivers declines. If you are talking hydro in the west, then the story should focus on the Columbia and Snake River basins which have 32 GW of installed capacity on the U.S. portion of these rivers. There is one important factor that provides a boost to hydro production later in the summer that has been changed for summer of 2024 -- water spilled for fish ("fish spill").

The Endangered Species Act, as implemented through a complex stakeholder/judicial process, requires the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation ("Dam Operators") to divert a certain amount of water from the turbines to the spillway to support fish heading to the ocean. Some dams have no fish spill obligations while others have a significant amount, and each dam has its own set of rules. There are three phases of fish spill operations. Phase 1 runs from early April until mid-June and has the highest amount of fish spill. This typically isn't a big deal because the lost production isn't missed much due to mild weather, high river flows, and solar overproduction. Phase 2 has historically run from mid-June until mid-August. While the fish spill obligations are lower than in Phase 1, the lost production is measured in the low thousands of MW which has a material impact on the supply-demand balance in the Pacific Northwest as well as the ability to export energy from the Pacific Northwest to California. Phase 3 has lower fish spill obligations than Phase 2 and usually begins in mid-August.

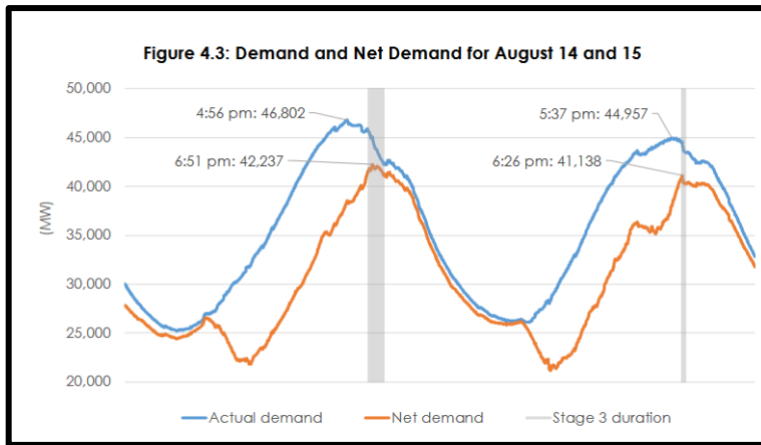
If the hot weather had come a few days earlier, Phase 2 fish spill operations would have still been in place, hydro production would have been lower, exports from the Pacific Northwest to CAISO likely would have been lower, and blackouts in California may have been even greater.



This year, the fish spill obligations will shift from Phase 2 to Phase 3 on August 1st rather than in the middle of the month. This will result in greater hydro production as well as effectively increasing the maximum output that can come from the system. This is a big deal. The image to the left comes from Energy GPS' proprietary hydro production model which combines reported MW for those dams which publish hourly production as well as estimated hourly hydro production for those dams which do not report production. The

graph shows the transition from Phase 2 to Phase 3 spill operations in August of 2020.

On August 13th of 2020, the Phase 2 fish spill operations were in full effect. By August 15th, the Dam Operators had fully shifted from Phase 2 to Phase 3 fish spill operations. On the 13th, the maximum hourly output was 12.7 GW and by the 15th the maximum hourly output was 16 GW, a full 3.3 GW higher. People at the CAISO surely have these dates seared in their memory – these are the dates when CAISO experienced extreme heat and blackouts. The figure below is taken [from the “Root Cause Analysis” report](#) published jointly by the CAISO, the CPUC, and the CEC which examined the August 2020 extreme heat event.



If you look at transmission flows from the Pacific Northwest to the California for these same days and hours, you would see that north to south transmission flows increased as the hydro output increased. If the hot weather had come a few days earlier, Phase 2 fish spill operations would have still been in place, hydro production would have been lower, exports from the Pacific Northwest to CAISO likely would have been lower, and blackouts in California may have been even greater.

Who knows what the balance of the summer of 2024 will bring to the region. It is fortunate that the Pacific Northwest hydro system will have more energy and flexibility beginning in early August should a heat wave materialize between August 1st and August 15th.

Shout Outs and Recipes

German Potato Salad with Chef [Laura Manz](#)

"We enjoyed a traditional German potato salad as the perfect accompaniment to Texas barbeque brisket. The vinegar-based side was a welcome break from the mayonnaise forward traditional recipes. Try fingerlings in place of the traditional red or gold potatoes for a fun twist on your summer favorites."

Place 1½ lbs. of potatoes in a pot of boiling salted water. Reduce heat, cover, and cook until tender, about 20-25 minutes. Drain, cool and slice potatoes. In a large skillet, cook ¼ lb. bacon (3-4 slices) until crisp. Remove to a paper towel. Add ½ cup chopped onion and cook until tender. In a small container, combine 1 Tbsp. of flour, 2 tsp. of sugar, ½ tsp. of salt, ½ tsp. of pepper and ½ tsp. of celery seed. Add the flour mixture to the onions. Stir and cook until the flour begins to brown. Add ½ cup water and ¼ cup apple cider vinegar to the pan. Heat to boiling, stirring continuously. Crumble bacon and sliced potatoes into the pan. Continue cooking until the liquid has thickened to a sauce. Serve warm or at room temperature.



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Ja, das klingt köstlich. Vielen dank, Laura. I believe that your dish can be veganized by using plant-based bacon. We are big fans of the Morningstar product. I hate to pay almost \$5 for a box of it, but the taste and consistency of the bacon is impossible to distinguish from what I recall real bacon tastes like. And it is done in a minute in a conventional microwave oven.



Odds & Ends (_!_)

Registration for the WPTF D.C. Roundtable is open and can be [accessed here](#). The current agenda is as follows:

15th Annual WPTF DC Roundtable

Thursday, August 8, 2024

9:30 a.m. Opening Remarks

9:45 a.m. Panel I: Low Energy Prices vs. High RA Prices; What gives?

Brian Theaker	Middle River Power
Ian White	Shell Energy
Anna McKenna	CAISO
Rebecca Sexton	Western Power Pool

California has been experiencing low energy prices, especially in the South. Yet Resource Adequacy (RA) prices have been soaring in the out years. At the same time, California has been exporting energy to neighboring states. Do these data points provide any guide as to the future resource mix of the West as market integration accelerates but with differing RA regimes?

12:00 p.m. Lunch plus Green House Gas (GHG) accounting for non-pricing states in emerging Western markets – thoughts from Clare Breidenich, Chair of WPTF Carbon & Clean Energy Committee

1:00 p.m. Panel II: Update on Pathways Governance Initiative

Kathleen Staks or Pam Sporborg	Western Freedom/Portland General
Evelyn Kahl or Spencer Gray	California CCA/NIPPC

The West Wide Pathways Governance Initiative (Pathways) has articulated a “stepwise” approach to governance for a large regional market to include California. Step 1 was a proposal for increased independence under current state laws and federal precedent. Step 2 is under consideration for an independent “Regional Organization” (RO), the details of which are to help shape legislation for consideration by the California legislature. What is the status and what are the main issues for Step 2.

2:45 p.m. Participants: The Most Important Thing I learned Today...

3:00 p.m. Adjourn & Reception

The 2024 WPTF Summer General Meeting will be held on August 22 and 23, 2024, at the Big Sky Resort located about 50 miles from the Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport.

[Room reservations can be made at the Summit Hotel](#) which is on the edge of the Big Sky Resort village and at the foot of Lone Mountain. Rooms in the WPTF block are \$199 - \$339/night depending on room

type/location. Our room block is for Wednesday and Thursday nights so make your reservation and call the hotel to add additional nights either before or after the meeting.

AGENDA

Thursday, August 22

9:00 a.m. WPTF Golf Tournament (consecutive tee times). Separate registration required (\$150.00 total fee - includes golf, cart and luncheon. Rental shoes and clubs are an additional fee paid directly to the course)

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Hosted Reception

7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Dinner with Guest Speaker: Montana Governor Gianforte

Presentation of the Kent Wheatland Award to Carrie Simpson, SPP

9:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. Dessert Reception

Friday, August 23

8:00 a.m. Buffet Breakfast

9:00 a.m. Keynote speakers: TBD

WPTF Consultant Presentations

Roundtable Discussion

12 Noon Luncheon

1:00 p.m. Program Concludes



Below are your stories if you are reading the red-meat edition. Have a great weekend and remember that cooler weather is just around the corner.

Gba

Being a Mother

After 21 years of marriage, my wife wanted me to take another woman out to dinner and a movie. She said, "I love you, but I know this other woman loves you and would love to spend some time with you."

The other woman that my wife wanted me to visit was my MOTHER, who has been a widow for 19 years, but the demands of my work and my three children had made it possible to visit her only occasionally.

That night I called to invite her to go out for dinner and a movie.

"What's wrong, are you well," she asked?

My mother is the type of woman who suspects that a late-night call or a surprise invitation is a sign of bad news.

"I thought that it would be pleasant to spend some time with you," I responded. "Just the two of us." She thought about it for a moment, and then said, "I would like that very much."

That Friday after work, as I drove over to pick her up I was a bit nervous. When I arrived at her house, I noticed that she, too, seemed to be nervous about our date. She waited in the door with her coat on. She had curled her hair and was wearing the dress that she had worn to celebrate her last wedding anniversary. She smiled from a face that was as radiant as an angel's.

"I told my friends that I was going to go out with my son, and they were impressed," she said, as she got into the car. "They can't wait to hear about our meeting."

We went to a restaurant that, although not elegant, was very nice and cozy. My mother took my arm as if she were the First Lady.

After we sat down, I had to read the menu. Her eyes could only read large print. Half way through the entries, I lifted my eyes and saw Mom sitting there staring at me. A nostalgic smile was on her lips. "It was I who used to have to read the menu when you were small," she said. "Then it's time that you relax and let me return the favor," I responded.

During the dinner, we had an agreeable conversation, nothing extraordinary but catching up on recent events of each other's life. We talked so much that we missed the movie.

As we arrived at her house later, she said, "I'll go out with you again, but only if you let me invite you." I agreed. "How was your dinner date?" asked my wife when I got home. "Very nice.

Much more so than I could have imagined," I answered. A few days later, my mother died of a massive heart attack. It happened so suddenly that I didn't have a chance to do anything for her.

Some time later, I received an envelope with a copy of a restaurant receipt from the same place mother and I had dined. An attached note said: "I paid this bill in advance. I wasn't sure that I could be there; but nevertheless, I paid for two plates - one for you and the other for your wife. You will never know what that night meant for me. I love you, son."

At that moment, I understood the importance of saying in time: "I LOVE YOU" and to give our loved ones the time that they deserve. Nothing in life is more important than your family. Give them the time they deserve, because these things cannot be put off till "some other time."

Bubba and the Yankee

Bubba (from Auburn University) applied for an engineering position at a Lake Charles refinery.

A Massachusetts Yankee applied for the same job and both applicants having the same qualifications were asked to take a test by the manager.

Upon completion of the test, both men only missed one of the questions.

The manager went to Bubba and said: "Thank you for your interest, but we've decided to give the Yankee the job."

Bubba asked: "And why are you giving him the job? We both got nine questions correct. This being Louisiana, and me being a Southern boy I should get the job!"

The manager said: "We have made our decision not on the correct answers, but rather on the one question that you both missed."

Bubba then asked: "And just how would one incorrect answer be better than the other?"

The manager replied: "Bubba, it's like this. On question #4 the Yankee put down; "I don't know."

You put down, "Neither do I."