

# 2012 Idaho Energy Plan – Overview

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*Note: This document is a product of the Idaho Strategic Energy Alliance (ISEA). While we have tried to accurately portray the policy priorities and intent of the Idaho Legislature as set forth in the 2012 Idaho Energy Plan, this document was not produced or endorsed by the legislature.*

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Q: What is the purpose of the Plan?*

A: The Plan is the Idaho Legislature’s roadmap for “develop[ing] an integrated state energy plan that provides for the state’s power generation needs and protects the health and safety of the citizens of Idaho.”

*Q: Who prepared the Plan?*

A: The Plan was prepared by the Idaho Legislature’s Interim Committee on Energy, Environment and Technology with assistance from more than 150 ISEA volunteers and informed by comments received via e-mail and at public hearings.

*Q: Does the Plan have the force of law?*

A: No. As required by House Concurrent Resolution 62, which was approved by the Idaho Legislature and submitted to the Secretary of State on March 31, 2006, the Plan provides findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature.

*Q: Does the Plan contain specific goals and objectives?*

A: The plan does not include specific goals, but emphasizes five core objectives – these five objectives are listed at the bottom of the following page

*Q: How will the Plan be used?*

A: The Plan is being used by the Governor and the Legislature as a framework for executive actions, legislative and policy proposals, and other measures related to energy exploration, production, transmission and consumption in Idaho.

*Q: How will the Plan’s progress be tracked?*

A: The Idaho Governor’s Office of Energy Resources will report to the Legislature – as requested by the Legislature – at least every two years and as requested on the progress of Idaho state agencies, energy providers and energy consumers in implementing the recommendations in the Plan.

*Q: Can the Legislature take energy-related actions that are not reflected in the Plan or are inconsistent with the Plan?*

A: Yes. The 2012 Idaho Energy Plan is a framework. The Legislature can and should take energy-related actions that it deems appropriate in light of new information, changing circumstances, or for other reasons as it sees fit. In particular, recent years have seen significant and rapid changes in national and global energy markets; having a broad energy roadmap in place allows the citizens of Idaho and their elected officials to engage in the ongoing energy debate and to formulate state actions within an approved framework.

### 2012 Idaho Energy Plan – Background and Summary

In 2007, the Idaho Legislature’s Interim Committee on Energy, Environment and Technology prepared – and the Idaho Legislature approved – a new Idaho Energy Plan for the first time in 25 years. With rapid changes in energy resources and policies, the Committee recommended that the Legislature revisit the Idaho Energy Plan every five years in order to properly reflect the interests of Idaho citizens and businesses. In keeping with this recommendation, the plan was reviewed and updated by the Interim Committee and approved by the Legislature in 2012. The Idaho Office of Energy Resources and the Idaho Strategic Energy Alliance provided assistance to the Interim Committee during the update of the energy plan.

The 2012 update finds that Idaho citizens and businesses continue to benefit from stable and secure access to affordable energy, despite the potential economic and policy vulnerability caused by Idaho’s reliance on energy imports. Idaho currently lacks commercial natural gas and oil wells, and only generates about half the electricity it uses. Yet the state has abundant hydropower, wind, biomass and other renewable energy sources.

Ongoing changes in energy generation and consumption provide an opportunity for economic growth within the state. While the Idaho Energy Plan acknowledges the risks attributed to advances in energy generation, transmission and use technologies, it also recognizes these advances create prospective benefits. With this recognition, the 2012 Idaho Energy Plan emphasizes five core objectives:

- 1. Ensure a secure, reliable and stable energy system for the citizens and businesses of Idaho.*
- 2. Maintain Idaho’s low-cost energy supply and ensure access to affordable energy for all Idahoans.*
- 3. Protect Idaho’s public health, safety and natural environment and conserve Idaho’s natural resources.*
- 4. Promote sustainable economic growth, job creation and rural economic development.*
- 5. Provide the means for Idaho’s energy Policies and Actions to adapt to changing circumstances.*

The Legislature’s goal is to set a policy framework that will help meet these objectives. To that end, the Plan includes a series of policy statements and recommendations. These include, but are not limited to, the following:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a complete listing, see [http://www.energy.idaho.gov/energyalliance/d/2012\\_idaho\\_energy\\_plan\\_final\\_2.pdf](http://www.energy.idaho.gov/energyalliance/d/2012_idaho_energy_plan_final_2.pdf)

## Electricity

- The State of Idaho should enable robust development of a broad range of cost-effective energy efficiency and power generation resources within environmentally sound parameters.
- Idaho utilities should continue to acquire resources that are reliable, affordable, cost-effective, and environmentally sound to meet their customers' short and long-term electricity needs.
- When acquiring resources, Idaho and Idaho utilities should give priority to cost-effective and prudent: (1) conservation, energy efficiency, and demand response; and (2) renewable resources, recognizing that these alone will not fulfill Idaho's growing energy requirements and that these resources play a role in addition to conventional resources in providing for Idaho's energy needs.
- Encourage the development of customer-owned and community-owned renewable energy and combined heat and power facilities that meet the Energy Plan objectives of the State of Idaho.
- Idaho's electric utilities should continue evaluating transmission as a resource option in resource planning and should continue participating in the development of local, sub-regional and regional, national, and international transmission plans to construct cost-effective transmission facilities that are needed to provide reliable, low-cost energy service to their customers.
- Idaho utilities should provide customers with the information and choices that enable them to more effectively manage their electricity consumption, and Idaho utilities should continue to report annually to their retail customers their sources of electricity generation.
- Idaho leaders, electric utilities and other energy-related companies, economic development professionals, universities, other stakeholders, and the Idaho National Laboratory should work cooperatively to assess opportunities and risks associated with development of commercial nuclear power and nuclear energy-related services in Idaho and provide related recommendations.

## Natural Gas

- It is Idaho policy to encourage the most effective use of natural gas and ensure that Idaho consumers have access to a reliable low-cost supply, and to support responsible exploration and production of natural gas supplies and the expansion of the transmission, storage and distribution infrastructure.
- Idaho should encourage investments in natural gas supply resources, including landfill methane, anaerobic digesters, and biomass methane in a manner that protects property owners and the environment.

## Petroleum and Transportation Fuels

- It is Idaho policy to promote:
  - the production and use of cost-effective and environmentally sound alternative fuels;
  - conservation and efficiency as a means of reducing the burden of transportation fuel expenditures, improving the reliability and cost of Idaho's transportation fuel supply, and reducing transportation-related emissions; and
  - responsible exploration and production of petroleum supplies and the expansion of transmission, storage and distribution infrastructure benefiting Idaho.

- Idaho should ensure that its state vehicle procurement rules promote purchases of high efficiency, flex-fuel, and alternative fuel vehicles where cost-effective.
- Idaho should encourage the purchase of efficient, flex-fuel, and alternative fuel vehicles and investments in retail and wholesale alternative fuel supply infrastructure.

### Conservation and Energy Efficiency

- All Idaho utilities should fully incorporate cost-effective conservation, energy efficiency and demand response as priority resources in their Integrated Resource Planning.
- The Idaho Public Utilities Commission (PUC) should seek to eliminate disincentives that stand as barriers to implementing cost-effective conservation measures.
- The Idaho PUC should support market transformation programs, either provided by utilities or by the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA), which provide cost-effective energy savings to Idaho citizens.
- The Idaho PUC and Idaho utilities should continue to adopt rate designs that encourage more efficient and effective use of energy.
- Idaho should review international energy codes on a three-year cycle as a minimum for building energy efficiency standards and should provide technical and financial assistance to local jurisdictions for implementation and enforcement.
- State government should demonstrate leadership by promoting cost-effective energy efficiency, energy efficient products, use of renewable energy, and fostering emerging technologies by increasing energy efficiency in State government.

### Energy Facility Siting

- Idaho state agencies can play a role in providing technical assistance to support local energy facility siting decisions. Local jurisdictions should make a reasonable effort to consider testimony about the impact of proposed energy facilities from citizens and businesses in neighboring jurisdictions.

### Economic Development

- Idaho should pursue a regional dialogue with neighboring states and provinces, with the goal of pursuing common energy market economic development interests and managing energy-related policy risk.
- Idaho should continue to promote energy-related jobs and career opportunities for its citizens.