

Resources bill given support

SEATTLE (AP) — An amendment that could allow the Bonneville Power Administration to spend as much as \$700 million on conservation programs and the development of alternative energy resources has been approved by a U.S. House subcommittee.

This is the second time around for the controversial amendment and proponents of the measure previously said BPA is holding it "hostage" until the regional energy bill is approved by Congress.

BPA officials deny the allegations, but continue to insist such legislation is a piece-meal approach to a very complicated problem.

The amendment was tacked onto the Department of Energy's authorization act on Wednesday by the Subcommittee on Water and Power Resources of the House Interior Committee.

A similar proposal was passed by the full House last year, but never was acted on in the Senate.

"It gives unlimited authority to BPA for conservation and renewables," said Mark Reiss, an aide to Rep. Jim Weaver, D-Ore., the architect of the amendment.

Specifically, the amendment allows the BPA to, "finance, promote and encourage energy conservation and the utilization of renewable resources."

At present, the BPA is allowed to borrow as much as \$1.25 billion from the U.S. Treasury for the construction, acquisition and replacement of transmission systems. Gene Tollefson, a spokesman for BPA in Portland, Ore., said Thursday.

The amendment would allow those funds to be used also on conservation

and projects to develop renewable energy.

Tollefson said about \$550 million already has been committed to transmission facilities through the end of 1980 and additional funds may be committed.

But that leaves as much as \$700 million to implement provisions of the Weaver amendment.

Tollefson points out that the proposed regional energy bill, which has been passed by the Senate and is under debate in the House, would set up a \$1.25 billion fund for conservation and renewable energy projects.

"The basic posture of the Weaver amendment in its earlier form and its present form is good," said Tollefson.