



# ORCAS POWER & LIGHT COOPERATIVE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## POWER OUTAGE CAUSED BY BPA EQUIPMENT FAILURE

The power went out for most of San Juan County on Monday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:27 am. OPALCO engineers used their SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system to pinpoint possible faults and determined that the outage was on the BPA transmission side. While the engineering staff spoke with BPA officials, linemen on Lopez were dispatched to scout the area around the BPA substation, where power comes up from the submarine cable into the islands. “We found the fault at the BPA substation where a jumper cable had broken away from the rigid bus work that ties the transmission lines to the BPA submarine cable,” said system engineer Joel Mietzner.

OPALCO’s Lopez crew members cooperated with the BPA substation maintenance supervisor to make the necessary repairs and had the power back on for most of the county by 3:00 pm. Some scattered areas of San Juan Island were not restored until later that afternoon as circuits overloaded when the power came back on. The San Juan line crew addressed these related outages and all power was restored by 5:30 pm. BPA personnel will examine the faulty jumper cable to ascertain what caused it to break away and to prevent similar equipment failures in the future.

**How can you get information and updates during an outage?** The OPALCO phone system often gets overloaded with calls during an outage, but a voice message is updated as soon as new information is available. OPALCO’s website ([www.opalco.com](http://www.opalco.com)) has the most up-to-date information on outages (if you can’t get online, call a friend with power to check it for you) and you can follow OPALCO on Twitter @orcaspower for updates on your mobile devices.

**To prepare for winter outages,** make sure you have surge protectors installed on all sensitive equipment and appliances, keep flashlights in handy places with fresh batteries and assemble a box of supplies to meet your household’s needs. In case of a prolonged power outage, unplug appliances, electronics and computer equipment, leaving one light on to let you know when power has been restored. This helps to protect your equipment and lessens the load on the system when the power restarts, helping to restore power more quickly and safely. For a complete list of outage preparation and safety recommendations, go to [www.opalco.com](http://www.opalco.com).

OPALCO is a member-owned cooperative electrical utility serving more than 11,000 members on 20 islands in San Juan County. OPALCO provides electricity that is 95% greenhouse-gas free and is predominately generated by hydro-electric plants. OPALCO was founded in 1937 to bring electricity to rural islanders.

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Photo captions:

- 1) Broken jumper cable at BPA substation on Lopez Island.
- 2) OPALCO Journeymen Linemen Tim Savage and Brian Swanson at work restoring power.