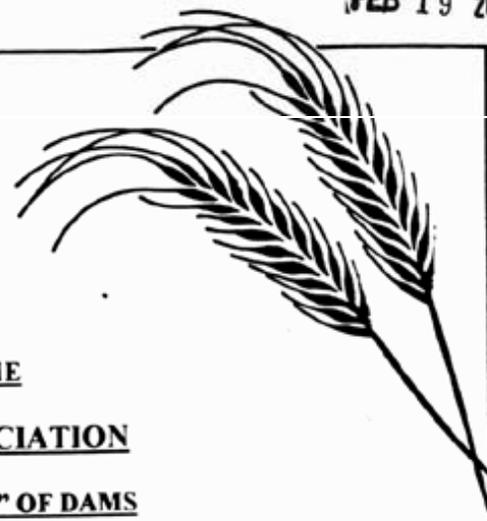


# UNIONTOWN CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

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## RESOLUTION

### THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE UNIONTOWN CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION OPPOSES THE "BREACHING OR REMOVAL" OF DAMS

#### ON THE LOWER SNAKE RIVER

The Uniontown Co-Operative Association is a locally owned and controlled agricultural cooperative located in the lower East portion of Whitman county, in Washington. The Association began in July of 1916 and has served it's members in the area from that time. The Association serves in excess of 170 members and patrons and is located 14 miles Northwest of Lewiston, Idaho at Uniontown, Washington.

The Association believes the federal hydroelectric projects on the lower Snake and Columbia Rivers provide our company, members, and the county with benefits vital to sustaining and preserving our local economy and social well-being as well as contributing to our members economic livelihood.

Advantages to preserving the present river system include:

1. **WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT:** Providing forage and shelter benefits for resident and migratory species of wildlife, including game animals, waterfowl and fish, which depend upon water conditions provided by the present structures.
2. **FLOOD CONTROL:** The protection provided by the hydroelectric projects along the lower Snake River serves a vital roll in saving lives and property from flooding which ravaged the low-lying areas prior to their construction.
3. **COMMERCIAL NAVIGATION:** Since there is little or no viable rail transportation available to or from our area, our producers depend very heavily on barge transportation. Commercial navigation allows the economic movement upriver of agricultural inputs such as fuel and fertilizer. We depend on the river system to ship wheat, barley, peas and lentils from our facilities by barge to vital cash markets on the West coast and throughout the world.
4. **ELECTRICAL POWER:** Cost effective hydroelectric power is vital to the growth and prosperity of our region and is more "ecologically friendly" to the environment and residences of our region than more costly and non-renewable fossil fuels or less stable nuclear energy as a source of light and power for our homes, businesses and communities.
5. **RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES:** The lower Snake River projects have created a recreational industry that is used by our families and visitors for boating, fishing, hunting and other sporting activities that enhance the lifestyle that has become characteristic of this region.

Efforts to restore and enhance populations of wild salmon and steelhead to Northwest rivers and streams is a worthy goal, but we can not support the unproved and costly suggestion of dam breaching or removal as a solution to a complex environmental problem. This approach may actually prove more destructive to the fish we are trying to save, while wreaking havoc on our agricultural producers, local economies and the social, judicial, political systems across our region.

My name is Robert Holmes. I am the general manager of Whitman County Growers, Incorporated, a cooperative owned by nine hundred and eighty three farmers and landlords in Colfax, Whitman County, Washington. We rely on both river and rail to ship our growers grain to its ultimate destination and have felt very fortunate to have access to both modes of transportation in the past. Because we do utilize both rail and barge, we have some insight into the costs and benefits associated with each.

This is the second one of these meetings which I have attended but the first in which I felt compelled to offer comment. The reason for my desire to comment is simple. I am very tired of this forum being used as a dam bashing circus, a seemingly endless string of well-intentioned speakers convinced that dam removal is the panacea, the silver bullet which will bring the salmon back to pre-Lewis and Clark historical levels.

I would like to remind everyone of some very simple and well-known facts. Salmon have been declining since the white man first came to the northwest in significant numbers. Before any of the dams were built salmon runs were declining. The cause of the decline before the dams was mainly over-harvest, with some habitat destruction problems thrown in. In honesty the dams did not help the situation especially as they were originally managed which was with little regard or understanding of their effect on the fish. We believe that with evolving technology and understanding of the fish and their life cycle that the dams are no longer the "Major" problem. Latest data on fish passage bears this out. The size of salmon runs has also long been known to vary dramatically with ocean conditions as well as weather conditions which affect spawning beds in the upriver areas. If dams were the only problem runs would not be in decline in areas where the fish don't have the dams to worry about.

For those who think dam removal will solve all the problems, we submit that for runs to rebuild to pre-Lewis and Clark levels, a lot of other things must return to pre-Lewis and Clark levels such as population, industrialization, etc. That is not going to happen whether or not the dams are removed. Your silver bullet is a blank. What is needed is to put the best available technology to work to rebuild the runs. We believe that dams and greater numbers of salmon are not mutually exclusive.

Being a shipper both by rail and barge, we would also submit that increased costs if either of these modes are lost will be much greater than those identified in your draft EIS.

Back in the days when our part of the country shipped most of our production by rail, we had access to three rail carriers, and freight costs even without adjusting for inflation were substantially higher than they are now because of lack of competition by barge. I would hate to think how much rail rates will increase if there is no alternative. Then too there is the problem of lack of available cars. We currently ship about 45% by rail and more times than not have to wait substantial periods for cars. If we have to ship all our production by rail we will have a significant problem. Also many of our elevators no longer have rail access. Who will rebuild the lines?

We applaud the premise of the All-H paper in expanding the scope of the study to other areas besides the dams and believe that the best answer lies with a balanced approach using the best available knowledge and technology.

You gentlemen and ladies have access to the best and most current scientific data available and we, the public, must rely on you to use it to formulate a "total" program for revival of salmon runs which makes the most sense.

Thank You.

FEB 19 2000



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
Walla Walla District

## Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Draft Feasibility Report/ Environmental Impact Statement

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers invites any person who has an interest in the Draft FR/EIS or represents a group of people that have an interest in the subject matter of this study, to make comments. The Corps will respond to the comments related to their Draft FR/EIS in their next NEPA document produced for the Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Feasibility Report/EIS. Comments will be accepted through March 31, 2000.

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**Comments:**

See Attached

*Send comments by*

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**Mail:** Department of the Army, Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers, Attention: Lower Snake River Study, 201 North Third Avenue, Walla Walla, Washington 99362-1876