

FEB 18 2000

February 17, 2000

U. S. Army Corp of Engineers  
Walla Walla District  
201 N. Third Ave.  
Walla Walla, WA 99362

RE: Proposal To Remove The Lower Snake River Dams

Dear Ladies/Gentlemen:

I am writing to express my deep concern and opposition to any proposal to remove any or all of the Lower Snake River Dams. Since their construction, these dams have been vital links in our Columbia River water transportation system and critical for irrigation, flood control, recreation and hydroelectric power generation. Their removal would have a devastating economic impact on the Inland Northwest.

The Lower Snake River Dams are important for the following reasons:

1. We need them to ensure adequate electrical power generation in the years to come. Should gasoline and oil prices escalate in future years, we will need a more economical source of power generation for the future. The Lower Snake River Dams give us that capability.
2. Washington's highway and rail system cannot handle the freight currently carried by barges on the Snake River system. Barging is not only a cost-efficient transportation mode, it keeps our two-lane highway system in southeastern Washington safer and less congested.
3. Washington State needs a strong agricultural economy. It needs agricultural diversity to compete in a global marketplace. Irrigation has opened up thousands of acres for fruit and vegetable crops. This is critical to our state's economy.
4. Increased shipping costs for produce will make it that much more difficult for our region's farmers to compete globally.

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While attempting to save salmon runs is admirable, it can't be done at the expense of people's livelihoods. Other solutions need to be found to save the salmon. A good place to start is by eliminating gill-netting on the rivers, modifying Indian fishing rights, and dealing with the tern population problem at the mouth of the Columbia. I fear that efforts to save the salmon are too little, too late. Why should our region suffer the consequences of inadequate planning to preserve the salmon runs previously? It makes absolutely no sense whatsoever to remove the Lower Snake River Dams.

Sincerely,



Mark M. Newbold  
Corkery & Jones Benefits, Inc.

MMN/ps