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Idaho Women in Timber
Lewis and Clark Chapter
P.O. Box 2238
Lewiston, Idaho 83501

February 23, 2000

Brigadier General Carl Strock
Department of the Army Corps of Engineers
Walla Walla District
201 North Third Avenue
Walla Walla, Washington 99362-1876

Dear General Strock,

My name is Lori Weller and I am a citizen of Lewiston, Idaho and a representative of Idaho Women in Timber (IWIT). I would like to comment on several specific sections of the Draft - Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Feasibility Report / Environmental Impact Statement.

First of all, I quote William E. Bulen Jr. Lieutenant Colonel, Corps of Engineers District Engineer, who said on the first page of the summary document, " you will see that the scientific evidence is not conclusive and that we face some hard choices." Because the science is not conclusive on this issue, I don't believe that we, or anyone, is in any position to make any decisions on whether to remove four lower Snake River dams. I believe that the Corps should continue to perfect the **surface bypass collection technology, enhance behavioral guidance structures, make turbine improvments and work to reduce total dissolved gas in spillway flow.** Over the last few years the Corps has done a good job of improving the survival of salmon up and down the river. However, in Appendix I the Economics, it appears time and again, that the Corp would prefer to be in the dam removal business instead of in the business of maintaining the dams they've built.

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2 I'm not sure that there isn't a concentrated move to get people out of our rural communities and send them to the big cities to live and work. Not only are the six new 250-megawatt gas-fired electric power plants going to be built in the Tri-Cities and Puget Sound area, (section 6.3.1.3), but the tidewater railroad track for car storage will be built in Oregon, (6.3.4). The time frames for most of these improvements to be completed is within a year of decision, does the Corps think that we will be revamping our whole government system and that things will be approved and funded in as little as a year. They have been trying to re-authorize the ESA for the last 20 years, how is this going to be handled so much differently.

3 In section 6.3.1, Power, the report states that, "Some industries may be able to pass part of the increased electric bill on to their customers." Do you really believe that Potlatch Corp., is going to be able to charge $100.00 for a package of bathroom tissue or paper towels when the personal income in the region will have decreased because of dam breaching ?

4 In section 6.3.2 Recreation, it states that after breaching there would be an increase in fishing trips because of an increase in fish, but in the same paragraph it states that the increase would, however, be **severely** limited by the number of fish available for recreational harvest. So will the fish be going to the highest bidder $$? Also in the same paragraph it states that we will no longer be able to enjoy flat-water oriented recreation activities, so now we are going to deny access to our river to our seniors and handicapped unless they can kayak or raft the river. However, in section 6.3.2.3 Recreation and Tourism in the Reservoir Subregion, the report eludes to increases in recreation under Alt. 4, but as already stated they cannot project how many people will be able to fish and then, only those people who are in good physical condition and only those with enough money.

5 In section 6.3.4.5. Cruise Ship Effects of Alt. 4, breaching the lower Snake River dams would **terminate** the cruise-ship industry in the Lewiston/Clarkston area and probably on the Columbia

5 River. A reduction in direct purchases and payroll by cruise ship companies in the upriver subregion would result in a decrease of **$7.96 million** in annual sales, **76** lost jobs, and **$2.11 million** lost personal income per year. The loss in Lewiston alone will be $1.21 million. .

Idaho Women in Timber cannot support the Draft EIS as long as dam breaching is an alternative. After reading the document I cannot possibly imagine where all of the resources that will be required to clean up, repair, replant, and construct the items necessary once the dams have been breached will come from. The tax structure in the river regions will be taking hits from all sides, so how can we pay for all of this with fewer tax dollars. The existing debt that was incurred to construct the dams will not just go away, we will be required to pay for a resource that no longer generates any return on investment. Just throwing money out the window.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Lori A. Weller

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Idaho Women in Timber Chair