

Nestlé USA

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POTATO BUSINESS UNIT

Division Office

March 29, 2000

Department of the Army
Walla Walla District
Corps of Engineers
201 North Third Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

Re: Lower Snake River Study

Nestlé USA is writing to express our concern about removing dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers. Both of these rivers provide a key source of water for the northwest region and removal would have a drastic impact on food and agriculture production in this region. Our comments are in response to the Corps' request for comments on the Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Feasibility Report, commonly referred to as the Corps EIS.

As background, Nestlé has two frozen potato-manufacturing facilities in Washington, and one in Idaho. These three facilities employ over 1,300 people. Nestlé USA has 19,500 employees nationwide and \$8 billion in sales in 1998. Some of our well-known brands include: Nestlé® Drumstick®, Nestlé IceScreamers®, Nestlé Crunch® and Butterfinger® ice cream bars, Nestlé® Toll House®, NesQuik®, Carnation® Coffee-mate®, Stouffer's®, Lean Cuisine®, Nescafé®, Libby's® Juicy Juice®, and Taster's Choice®.

Nestlé has a strong commitment to habitat protection work. This April, Nestlé will be donating 58 acres in Washington to the King County Department of Natural Resources for their habitat protection. The parcel of land being donated is in the lowland area and will be used by the Department of Resources for the spawning of salmon.

Conservation has been incorporated into our manufacturing processes at these three facilities over the past few years. We have made equipment upgrades and changes in our processes to reduce the amount of water used. In addition, we have developed a system to recycle the water used in the potato manufacturing process. Farmers now use this water to irrigate their fields because the water is dense with nutrients.

The availability of hydropower and irrigation water are the key reasons our facilities are located in this area. The discussions about removing these dams will have a detrimental effect on our production

capabilities without increasing salmon recovery. According to the current NMFS science the benefits of dam breaching are minimal and would take many years to realize any benefits to salmon population.

Dam breaching is an extreme action with huge cost and Nestlé supports a more reasoned, science based concept that is being advocated by the Northwest Food Processors Association. This plan recognizes that no single action, such as dam breaching, will result in recovery and it seeks to implement actions that offer the greatest and most immediate returns in a reasonable time frame.

1 | We are also concerned about efforts to increase flow augmentation as it is the most expensive program and does not positively effect travel time for salmon. The science is not conclusive whether increased flow augmentation will benefit Chinook salmon and it may only benefit spring/summer Chinook. This is an extreme, expensive option that may not have any benefit for increased salmon recovery.

Nestlé looks forward to continuing the dialogue with the region's stakeholders in discussing solutions that offer a balanced approach to salmon recovery. We support scientific solutions that have a defined positive outcome – dam breaching is not this solution. Careful consideration needs to be given to the economic consequences of any actions such as dam breaching which would jeopardize our operations in the northwest.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tom Martinez
Director, Administrative Services