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Advanced Agri-Tech

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MAR 01 2000

Lower Snake River Study Brigadier General Carl Strock
Department of the Army
Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers
201 North Third Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

Dear General Strock;

Because of the devastating impact that Dam Breaching would have on Washington State agriculture, I would like to take the opportunity to provide comments on salmon recovery efforts. I believe that the goal of this process is to save fish. This is what the debate is all about, or what it should be about. I care about salmon, but I also care about having a healthy economy and Washington State agricultural industry.

We will all end up losers, if we continue to focus on alternatives such as Dam Breaching and drawdowns. I oppose removing dams for the following reasons:

- Ten years ago the focus on the Snake River dams may have been understandable. Today the situation has changed and many scientists realize that dam removal is not the answer. We should shift away from debates that do nothing.

- Breaching dams will dry up thousands of acres of productive farmland and will eliminate thousands of agricultural and food processing jobs in Washington State.

- We spent billions of dollars to build the Snake River Dams. Now we spend billions to take them out and we are not positive that this solution will work. Maybe we should be spending the time debating whether we can use that money to restore the fish another way without taking out the Snake River Dams and destroying our economy.

- Hydropower is clean and renewable. Replacing hydropower with other sources of power will adversely impact air quality. Using more rail and truck transportation to move our products (instead of barging) adds even more air pollution. A lot is at stake

and these alternatives and study results should be considered carefully. We need to seriously consider the consequences of radical and risky "fixes" that have the ability to devastate the economy or harm our environment. As an example, consider the negative impact on air quality that would occur as a result of breaching the lower Snake River dams and eliminating barging. Nearly 750,000 more truck miles would be needed to deliver our product to market.

- In addition, during peak summer and winter months, the West Coast power grid is at full capacity. If the power generated by the Snake River Dams is taken away brownouts could occur.

Taking out dams is not the answer. We need to look more honestly at improving habitat, hydropower and hatchery operations while addressing harvest. We must have a comprehensive plan, if the region is truly interested in recovering our fish populations. I urge you and your colleagues to base decisions on good, sound science. Our life here is built around these remarkable rivers. They have given us clean, renewable power, irrigation for growing our crops, navigation for moving our products to market, recreational opportunities, as well as prevented floods. We need to seriously consider the devastating impact of Dam Breaching, which will destroy our economy, and the lives of thousands of people in the Pacific Northwest.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Devon W Woodward

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