

# ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

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AWPPW

## PULP & PAPERWORKERS' RESOURCE COUNCIL

UPIU



Army Corps of Engineers  
Public Dam Breaching Hearing  
February 10, 2000

Testimony of  
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Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Jerry Klemm, recently retired from Potlatch Corporation. In my 39 years with Potlatch, I served in many leadership capacities with our union; and in the last several years before my retirement, I was heavily involved in resource issues, particularly those related to salmon and dams, as part of my participation in the leadership of The Pulp & Paperworkers' Resource Council.

I've watched the salmon issue evolve from the beginning. It has risen from a local skirmish over a test drawdown at Lower Granite to a full-fledged war over the complete elimination of the four lower Snake dams. My observation after listening to both sides for several years is this... "Whatever happened to common sense?"

You have already heard much testimony — some factual and much emotional. You will hear much more. In this community in particular, people have strong feelings about dam breaching because it has such a large potential impact on their culture and lifestyle, as well as their livelihoods. They also know the issue and they care about the fish. They've heard the facts on both sides. They are good people blessed with the ability to reason based on facts. That's why they turned out as they did a couple of weeks ago in a huge rally. That's why they're here today.

Dam breaching advocates certainly haven't made the case convincingly that destroying dams will fix our problems with salmon, nor have they made the case that dam breaching will do anything but harm to our economy. The scientific case for dam breaching continues to erode, and the evidence of harm — both economic and environmental — from dam breaching continues to mount. Almost every major newspaper in the region has voiced opposition to dam breaching. With rare exceptions, our region's political leaders are also opposing dam breaching. Why? Because it doesn't make sense.

- **It doesn't make sense** to tear down dams on the hope — the gamble, really — that it might help recover salmon a half century after the dams are removed. It doesn't make sense to focus on the four lower Snake dams when so many other factors in the salmon life cycle have such tremendous impact on survival and propagation. Predators kill hundreds of millions; harvest — both ocean and in-river — kills millions more.
- **It doesn't make sense** to let that destruction continue while we pursue dam breaching.
- **It doesn't make sense** to let that destruction continue while we pursue dam breaching.
- **It doesn't make sense** to rush to breach dams when research is continuing to show that smolt survival through the dams is much higher than previously thought.
- **It also doesn't make sense** to rush to destroy dams when new technology at the dams shows the promise of improving survival even more.
- **Finally, it doesn't make sense** to risk the economy of this region with so little provable benefits to the fish.

Dam breaching advocates have responded to the lack of common sense in their arguments by taking out full-page ads in major newspapers across the country. The ads are misleading and continue to tout facts that were long ago proven incorrect. They've resorted to slogans and catch phrases that perpetuate those same inaccuracies. They've tried to use showmanship in public hearings to draw attention away from the lack of substance in their arguments. Fish suits, inflatable fish, costumed witnesses, and many other devices have been employed to secure media attention in hope of building a national political base to achieve their ends. They know they have to enlist the uninformed, because those with information oppose them. Oh, yes, they've also secured the support of actors and actresses — all experts in salmon recovery, of course — to flag their cause. The latest is Adam West, the sometime actor who played lead in the 1960s Batman TV series. In the words of

Robin, his adolescent sidekick, "Holy salmonoid, Batman, they need sound bites and publicity stunts to make their case and their cause."

The people of this community that testify here today are, for the most part, private citizens expressing their opinions. They aren't famous — though some are infamous locally — and they aren't experts on fish. But neither are they fools. Nor are they misinformed.

What you will hear today will come from the heart... but also from the head. It will be grounded in common sense. I hope you will listen in the same spirit.

Jerry Klemm - Retired

Past Chairman of the National Pulp & Paperworkers' Resource Council - 3 years

Past Regional Director of the Rocky Mountain Region Pulp & Paperworkers' Resource Council - 8  
years

Past President Pace Local 712 - 13 years