



# GRANT COUNTY

OFFICE OF

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## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

POST OFFICE BOX 37  
EPHRATA, WASHINGTON 98823  
(509) 754-2011

### TESTIMONY: FEDERAL CAUCUS

February 29, 2000

By LeRoy C. Allison, Grant County Commissioner

Ladies and Gentlemen, esteemed federal panel. I am LeRoy Allison, a Grant County Commissioner and Secretary Treasurer of the Washington State Association of Counties, which represents all 39 counties. I thank you for this opportunity to comment on this very important issue.

Because I'm elected in a County of 70,000 people, I'm a Human advocate!

#### Today's Questions is:

Should infrastructure built to meet human needs be sacrificed before exploring simple solutions such as predation control, habitat enhancement, and run specific harvest limitations?

I believe the answer is a very clear **NO**.

Your own studies to date point out that it will be 50 years before we **MAY** SEE AN INCREASE IN FISH POPULATIONS if AND ONLY IF THERE IS AN ACTUAL IMPROVEMENT OF FISH RETURNS BELOW Bonneville Dam. This begs the Question:

Why are we not focusing on the returns below Bonneville Dam in the first place? Before such risky, **DISTRUCTION** proposals such as dam breaching or extreme draw downs. The destruction and devastation to the riverine habitat and the aquatic life along the established river corridor, not just by the removal of the dams the first year, but each and every year thereafter by the annual snowmelt event is well remembered by early inhabitants here in the northwest, including the Tribes. It is hard to believe we are even talking about, let alone considering what most would consider a major step backwards.

I believe we need to focus future efforts on positive steps built on sound **PROVEN** and tested **SCIENCE**, not on risky unproven hypothesis especially on a magnitude of this scale. I believe the public deserves a much more common sense approach to the Salmon survival issue.

For example, if we have the technology to deliver 98% of salmon reared upriver to a point below the last dam on the river, with a clear shot at the ocean, and 7 out of 10 of these fish are not returning to the river after their three year journey in the ocean. Then shouldn't we be asking the simple question **WHY?**

Common sense would suggest that we face the issues involved in the river estuary and in the ocean, not turning our backs and expending much time, effort and resources looking miles upriver at hydropower elimination and transportation destruction.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe time is of the essence and we must address the simple less destructive issues first with real attention paid to proven science, not actions based on unproven hypothesis. We have seen the example of flow augmentation which has not proven its hypothesis. Please don't let **DAM REMOVAL** be another **FEDERAL FISH FIASCO**. The price is **much too high**.

Attached Resolution-November 13, 1998/ Yakima, WA  
Adopted by the Washington State Association of Counties.  
Representing all 39 counties in the State of Washington

**A RESOLUTION OF THE WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES  
IN FAVOR OF SUSPENDING ACTION ON BREACHING OR DRAWING DOWN DAMS  
ON THE COLUMBIA AND SNAKE RIVERS**

WHEREAS, the Columbia and Snake Rivers are critical to the health of agriculture, the basis of the economy of Eastern Washington, and also provide renewable hydroelectric resources, transportation benefits and recreational opportunities for the entire Pacific Northwest; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Association of Counties recognizes the need to improve our salmon and steelhead recovery measures; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Association of Counties supports scientifically-based and cost-effective strategies for recovering and enhancing threatened or endangered salmon and steelhead stocks; and

WHEREAS, enormous sums of money have been spent on studies or experiments to determine how many salmon and steelhead would be saved by various recovery strategies, including removing dams, creating deep drawdowns of the reservoirs behind the dams, and increasing spills over the dams, with no improvement in the salmonid population; and

WHEREAS, the county governments have repeatedly requested that the Governor's Salmon Team review other options to enhance salmonid recovery such as the effects of habitat, harvest, and the most recent developments in hatchery propagation; and

WHEREAS, local governments are in the process of developing Watershed Management Plans for many watersheds in the state and are directly involved in implementing salmon recovery programs in their respective areas;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that a more open process be developed to ensure all local governments are included and involved in decisions that are made by the Federal and State agencies, particularly when the decisions could lead to economic hardship and loss of quality of life in counties and cities across the State; and

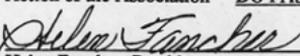
 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that additional effort and discussion involving dam breaching or reservoir draw downs be suspended; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all other factors impacting salmonid populations -- riparian and ocean habitat, domestic, tribal, and international harvest, predators, and hatcheries -- be scientifically reviewed as part of an overall strategy for cost-effective salmonid recovery; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be immediately forwarded to Governor Locke and to every member of the Washington State Legislature and the state Congressional delegation.

Action of the Board of Directors DO PASS

Action of the Association DO PASS

  
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Helen Fancher, President

November 13, 1998  
Yakima, Washington