

MAR 13 2000

TESTIMONY ON DAM REMOVAL ON SNAKE RIVER
 MARCH 2, 2000
 CHARLES SWANSON, PRESIDENT

For the record, my name is Charles Swanson, Board President of Ravalli County Electric Cooperative. I am an elected official of an 8400 member owned system. We are deeply concerned about the rhetoric to remove dams in the name of salmon restoration. For the past two decades, the region has proven they can and will spend money on salmon - \$3 billion to date. Unfortunately, the region has never established goals or designed procedures around the complexities of the salmon and the Columbia River system. Success was measured by dollars spent rather than analytical measures from a comprehensive plan.

We remain committed to a sound comprehensive recovery plan. We cannot go back to the days of Lewis and Clark even if we desired to. It is a different century. The regional economy is tied to the Columbia River system. Plans developed on emotion will not restore the salmon and will, in fact, have a huge negative impact on the economic stability of the Northwest. A single plan centered on the H's appears to be the most feasible.

Habitat improvement for salmon should not be to the detriment of habitat for humans. Harvest from the oceans to the upper reaches of the river system has to be a key element. Hydro dams supply us with many things; power, flood control, recreation, navigation and irrigation, to name a few. We can fly a man to the moon and back when we know man cannot fly. Surely with that kind of knowledge we can design a cost effective plan to pass a fish up stream or down.

We remain opposed to the removal of dams. It is a giant step backward. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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