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TO: US Army Corps of Engineers, National Marine Fisheries Service, Bonnaville Power Administration.
FROM: Bill Slack. 1995 East Post Creek Road. St. Ignatius, Mt.

DAM REMOVAL

I would like to start my remarks with a take off from a renowned statesman. You'll recognize the author. "Mr. Babbit, **DON'T TEAR DOWN THOSE DAMS!**"

Impacts of dam removal on the lower Snake and Columbia rivers will be enormous and far reaching. And with little or no demonstrable benefit or gain. While Montana's interest is indirect it is no less tangible.

It is hard to believe that dam removal proposals are serious. The salmon and steelhead runs in Idaho's high valley rivers were famous long after the dams were in place. Experts point to other causes for fisheries problems.

So really, what is the purpose? What's the hidden agenda?

If it is just another assault on western agriculture, it isn't necessary! Farming and ranching is already on the ropes and reeling from repeated low prices and competition from developing nations. But we are beginning to adjust. All we need is time to complete the process.

If it is part of the over-all attack on production industry, that is mis-placed effort! No reasonable thinker can justify a dependency on outside resources. That is the one thing that makes this nation the strength of the world and the dominating influence that it is.

If it is the extinction of animal species, don't take so much credit! Species were going extinct long before the great dams were built. Extinctions and propagations were taking place even before man had a hand in managing the world. And there is nothing to say that natural process won't continue in spite of his puny efforts.

Let's get real! These western developments were just that, **developments!** They harness resources and help control disasters. Just because they now only produce five percent of the power consumed in a large area doesn't alter the fact that it is still the cheapest power in the system. And it is the cleanest. River commerce may no longer be King. But it is still important - to the whole region.

My family owns the land around an old log cabin in the Mission Valley. It is said to be one of the oldest permanent buildings in the Northwest - a monument of sorts. It got a modern door and glass windows about 70 years ago, and a new roof and some new logs about 15 years ago. Now, thousands of dollars are being pledged to preserve it as a historical site. It quit being useful about 50 years ago.

Something is wrong, when we even consider removing our truly great monuments and try to reverse history. These dams are among our great achievements. And, they are still useful.

If adjustments need to be made in their operations. Let's do it. The gates open, and they close. And, operating procedures can be changed.

If the structures need to be modified. Let's do that. Engineers and builders are eager for new challenges. And, they have proven capable of that kind of task.

Why is it that someone always wants to destroy?

Whatever we do, let's not go backward!

Mr. Babbit, **DON'T TEAR DOWN THOSE DAMS!**