

**EASTERN OREGON IRRIGATION ASSOCIATION**

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**Federal Caucus Public Meeting Pasco, Washington February 17<sup>th</sup> 2000**

My name is Fred Ziari and I am representing the Eastern Oregon Irrigation Association in Hermiston Oregon. Our members are family farms in Eastern Oregon that depend on the bounties of the Columbia River for their water, their electricity, and for the transportation of over \$1.5 billion dollar annual worth of agricultural goods and products. Our farmers are proud of providing bountiful, safe and affordable food for their fellow citizen in the US and for the hungry world abroad.

Over the last decade, mainly due to the indecisions by our federal and state agencies involved in fish recovery, manipulation by various politicians while egged on by sensationalism of the urban media, we have put the very people that needed to sit down and work together, on the opposite side of the table.

Where the landowners, Tribes, environmental communities and the community leaders needed to communicate to resolve this problem, they are being kept apart with no unity of efforts and actions. We can see the same disorganized approach amongst the Federal and State Agencies. For this reasons I say, shame on you the agencies and to your big bosses in Washington D.C., in Boise, Salem and Olympia.

Our farmers and ranchers are stretching their hands in friendship and are seeking for the spirit of cooperation to work toward a common goal of helping in recovering the fish. The fact of the matter is this, since the major part of the salmon habitat in Oregon, Washington and Idaho, and most of the water resources in the Northwest is in the private ownership, it is obvious to us that the main stakeholders that need to be involve in the process of recovery are the private landowners, farmers and the Tribes. It is bewildering to us, to see that the Federal Agencies have even to this date excluded the landowners from the recovery process. Although it was shown in the Umatilla County, that through cooperation between the Farmers, Tribes, and Agencies successful salmon recovery has and can occur.

After reviewing all the available scientific reports our organization conclude the following:

- **Our comment "Corps Of Engineers' Snake River Study"**
  - The Corps Of Engineers should consider alternatives 1 through 3 with major emphasis in fish passage and surface bypass system improvements and to move away from the Dam removal option, which we have found to be a risky proposition.

- It is our opinion that the Corps Of Engineers' study has overestimated the value of recreation and underestimated the regional farming impacts.
- We also recommend that Corps Of Engineers and NMFS to seriously consider the regional fish recovery alternatives as was identified by the farming communities in both Oregon and Washington.
- We agree with Corps Of Engineer's recommendation on the John Day Dam Breaching study, and encourage pursuing major improvement of the fish passage at the John Day Dam.

- **Our comment on NMFS "All H" report include:**

- **For Hydropower-** we support option 1 and 2 and not option 3. We recommend restructuring existing flow augmentation program, the adoption of the New Water Management Alternative, improvement to habitat and watershed, implementing regional water efficiency measures, and the stakeholder and Tribal involvement as equity partners.
- **For Habitat –** We reluctantly support Option 1 and 2. We see habitat programs mainly driven by the agencies, this we believe is non productive. We recommend that the major emphasis should be put toward private landowners participation and locally driven plans.
- **For Hatchery –** We support more research on this subject and a realistic and truthful assessment of wild vs. hatchery fish. Generally we support improvement in hatchery practices, and the use of supplementation as a major part of salmon recovery.