

## BREACHING THE SNAKE RIVER DAMS

To The Federal Caucus Committee  
 From Don Beets  
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The Hydro power of the 4 Snake River Dams is very important as they have a combined generation capacity of 3,483 MW. That is the power usage of the City of Los Angeles, Seattle and 2 cities the size of Portland. The entire States of Idaho and Montana use about 1,000 MW. The American Rivers say the dams produce 950 MW's, the Corps official study says 1250 MW's. In actuality they produce about 1600 MW's of power. In the spring of 1999 the dams were producing 2500 MWs. At \$24 a MW that is \$1,440,000 a day of revenue. Hydro electric dams are the cleanest and the most environmental friendly source of massed produced electricity in the world. There are news articles in the last week that says the Northwest Planning Council study shows we are near electric load capacity and have a one in four chance of having power brown-outs over the next 4 years in our region.

There is a consistent environmentalist claim the 4 Snake River plants have "No Flood Control". The Snake River dams weren't originally authorized for flood control but there is a "Lower Granite Flood Control Plan". The log book of Lower Granite shows that River Control called Lower Granite on February 10, 1996, during the huge Willamette Valley/Portland flood and asked Lower Granite to "help hold back water because the Columbia River is full". If ALL the dams upstream of Portland had not backed off their discharge Portland would have flooded. The estimate is the first 5 blocks, to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, would have flooded.

**Alternate Transportation of Commodities:** Additional truck loads would greatly increase congestion, road maintenance and the risk of accidents, death and injury.

One four barge tow can carry an equivalent of over 500 semi-truck loads. There is an average of 7 tows a day that come through McNary Dam. A tractor double trailer averages 90 feet in length.  $7 \text{ (barge loads)} \times 500 = 35,000 \text{ trucks (a day)} \times 90 \text{ feet (average length in Oregon)} = 3,150,000 \text{ feet}$  DIVIDED by 5280 = 596.6 miles of trucks bumper to bumper.

Many of the return trips the barges make up the Columbia and Snake Rivers carry gasoline and diesel fuel. Eliminating barge traffic will greatly increase hydrocarbon, carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions. The 2 lane

highways throughout Eastern Washington and Oregon are not designed for any traffic of that magnitude. There aren't loading and unloading facilities to accommodate truck and train traffic to that magnitude. The SMOG created by the increase in truck traffic would be greater than the SMOG created in Los Angeles when the electric street cars were replaced by diesel busses. Los Angeles was the SMOG capital of the United States. SMOG creates acid rain, nitrous oxide emissions reacting with water creates nitric acid, which will have a very detrimental affect on the United States east, or down wind, of this area. Acid rain is very harmful. BUT ON A POSITIVE NOTE: that would give these environmentalists another cause.

What will happen to the approximate 2 million people of this large area all of whom will be affected by the breaching. Entire communities (jobs, homes, lives and the future of the people will be terminated. Who will cover the millions of dollars of mortgages that can't be paid. What will happen to all of the unfortunate people displaced by the collapsed economy of the region. A KNOWN WAY TO SAVE THE SALMON/STEELHEAD: In the early 1980's the salmon/steelhead run of the Rogue River was on the edge of extinction. National Marine Fisheries IMMEDIATELY stopped ALL harvesting of the salmon/steelhead. In just a few short years the salmon/steelhead had made a dramatic recovery. Far greater than anyone had anticipated. After that NMFS has allowed a limited harvest of salmon/steelhead. That is a proven successful method with a dramatic short term gain. This still does not address the slaughter taking place of the over harvesting of the fishing fleets on the Pacific Ocean. Or the fact that the 3 dams upstream of the 4 Lower Snake River dams DO NOT have fish ladders. OXBOW, HELLS CANYON AND BROWNLEE DAMS DO NOT HAVE FISH LADDERS. Fishladders are proven successful means of fish transportation past dams. There will be NO recovery until those dams have fish ladders. They should have fishladders or be breached.

All of these highly important factors must be included in the formula about whether to breach the Snake River Dams. The above factors and many others, including the recent gains in returning fish, that appear to be at least partly to do with improvements in ocean conditions, fish screens on all Lower Snake and Columbia River Dams, and the barging of smolt strongly make a case that breaching the Snake River Dams is NOT the best approach to what may very well be a problem that is already turning the corner on its way to being corrected.

Respectfully  
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