



NORPAC FOODS INC.

MAR 23 2000

930 W. Washington
PO Box 458
Stayton, OR 97383-0458
(503) 769-2101

Federal Caucus Comment Record
C/O BPA-PL
707 W. Main Street, Suite 500
Spokane, WA 99201

March 13, 2000

ATTN: Comments on the Federal Caucus ALL-H Paper

Norpac Foods, Inc. is a frozen and canned vegetable processor employing about 1,000 full time and 5,000 seasonal employees at its 6 plants in Oregon. Norpac is a cooperative and its farmers depend on water from the Columbia river system for both irrigation water and power.

Norpac believes that much progress can be made toward recovering the region's salmon stocks without destroying the flood control and hydropower infrastructure that supports the economy of the region. To do so we must make changes based on common sense and good science. We are concerned that many are proposing radical changes based on emotion and symbols. Dams seem to get the spotlight as the main symbol of man's "unnatural" control over rivers while unprecedented levels of ocean harvest seem to be forgotten in the discussion. (And we have never understood how current fishing programs can be allowed under existing "taking" rules.)

The earth's population has grown to a point where things will never be the same as they were. It seems time to recognize that we may be forced to choose between producing a few "natural" fish in our rivers for commercial fishing boats from other countries to catch, or producing larger quantities of fish that may be born in a hatchery. Just as there exists a niche market for organic vegetables, there exists a felt need for wild fish. While we must save the salmon as a species, the current interpretations of species are hardly based in scientific truth. Hatchery-born salmon are salmon just as much as those born in the river. And a person who is simply hungry for dinner, will not know the difference. Our objective ought to be to provide food, power, and flood control for a growing population.

The environmental community that wants the dams removed today will, tomorrow, be complaining about the consumption of non-renewable energy sources and pollution from the power plants that would be needed to replace them.

Rather than jumping too fast on the fish wagon, let's use good science to systematically move toward the production of all the things we want. We want fish to exist as a species and for food; we want flood control and recreational opportunities; we want water for irrigation, drinking, and as a mode of transportation; and we want clean power. Lets make careful decisions based on good science and retain all of these good things!

Sincerely,

Mark Steele, Corporate Engineer