



VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

MAR 27 2000

225 E. Bannack St.
P. O. Box 71
Dillon, MT 59725-0071

Telephone (406) 683-2327
Fax Number (406) 683-4328

March 21, 2000

Corps of Engineers
201 North Third Ave.
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

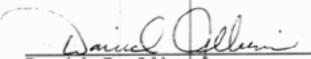
On behalf of the Board of Directors of Vigilante Electric Cooperative, Inc., we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the December 1999 Draft Conservation of Columbia Basin Fish. Several of these directors provided testimony at the public hearings.

The Board has instructed me to voice their unanimous opposition to the proposed breaching of the lower Snake River dams. The facts show that the improvements for salmon survival that have been implemented over the last 10 years have greatly improved the migrating juvenile salmon survival rate and do not support the assertion that these dams continue to be a significant source of mortality. We feel that the new success rate of migration should be allowed to mature along with improving several other areas of concern.

We think that the All H process should move forward but that the draft should further address fishery management practices, entrenched harvest practices, and should include actions to reduce predation. The draft should eliminate the bias against hydro-power dams and operations.

We feel that the highly charged emotional cry to "tear out the dams" has little scientific support and does not address the reality of the economic impacts to this region. As romantic as the notion may sound, we cannot return to the pre-Lewis and Clark days. Saving and enhancing salmon runs is the issue, not tearing out the dams. Let's follow on a sound scientific plan and not waste resources pursuing an ill-informed popularity agenda.

Sincerely,



David J. Albert
General Manager

DJA:lkM