



PORT OF COLUMBIA

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MAR 27 2000

March 24, 2000

Department of the Army
Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers
ATTN: Lower Snake River Study
201 North Third Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

SUBJECT: Saving the Snake River Dams and our way of life

I have lived along or near the Snake River for almost 76 years. In the late 1920s and 1930s, we used to picnic on the Snake River, everyone fished, and most of the fish caught were suckers, squawfish, and carp. One in a hundred might be a crappie, cat fish or bass. No one ever caught a salmon and very seldom a steelhead. I was there and know that fish runs had all but stopped long before even Bonneville Dam was built. There is no one that wants our water supply to be contaminated, our fish or animals destroyed, our forests devastated, our land eroded, and contaminated air unfit to breathe.

Let's take a look at what China is doing. They are building the largest dam on earth. It will contain nearly as much concrete as all the Columbia and Snake River Dams combined. Why are they doing this? The purpose is that they know it will furnish inexpensive, clean power long after fossil fuels are gone from the earth or become too expensive to obtain even though it means covering a million acres of farm land, moving 2,000,000 people to new locations, and covering cities that have been there for thousands of years. I firmly believe that our first major step towards becoming a second or third rate nation is to remove the great Snake River dams.

We would lose enough equivalent electrical power to run Idaho and Montana, put 7 million tons of freight each year on the highways and the rails that will in turn release thousands of tons of contaminants into the air because it requires so much more power for rail and truck transportation.

No one wants to destroy the salmon and we certainly don't have to if we do it right. We can have the salmon and the dams and all the benefits of both. I really can't believe that anyone really wants to tear such an unrepairable hole in the economy of the whole northwest. What is so very sad is that the people who wish to take the dams out have been lied to so much and for so long that

they actually believe that by removing the Snake River dams the salmon will bounce right back and everything will be just great. The real truth is that the silts that are released will kill every Snake River salmon for years to come and the only chance of getting them back would be to plant hatchery salmon back into the river, which is what they are now trying to avoid.

We must preserve our dams. They are as much a part of this area as the hills and valleys.

Sincerely,



Donald G. Turner
Manager
Port of Columbia

C: Pacific Northwest Water Ways Association