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February 18, 2000

U. S. Army Corp of Engineers
Walla Walla District
201 North Third Ave
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Dear Sir or Madam:

I write this letter with great concerns for the plans that are being made for the Snake River and the dams that are a part of the infrastructure of the river. I am sure that it will not be the only letter you receive within the next few weeks, nor will it be the only opinion that you receive.
There are of course two sides to every story and I would like to take one side only and hope that it makes sense to you.
First, removing the dams so that fish can come up river is just poor planning. First of all, I don't eat salmon or any other fish but I do go to the grocery store at least once a week and see that there is always plenty of salmon at cheap prices. I also know many fishermen who are not complaining about a shortage of fishing grounds. It is also my understanding that salmon live in the ocean and once each year then fight the river to spawn. This means that eventually you are going to have to remove the dams on the Columbia River since the salmon must come up the Columbia river in order to get to the Snake River. It will only be a matter of time before you start removing them.
The Sierra Club and other proponents of the dam removal want to replace lost hydroelectric generation from the four dams with "Clean Conservation and renewable" energy sources. What does that mean? We have worked hard in this country to remove oil and coal burning plants because of pollution. Windmill plants are useless, nuclear plants no longer can be built. I think that asking the Sierra Club what they mean would be very appropriate.
The Sierra Club states that we can convert commodity barge shipping in the lower Snake to " train and truck" shipping..
Removing the barges so that we can no longer depend on cheap dependable transportation for our goods in the Northwest is at best, foolish. In order to transport the goods that just one barge can accommodate, it will take about seventy-five truck loads. Can you imagine having seventy-five trucks going down our two lane highways.
I am sure that there is more then one barge movement each day as I hear that as many as twenty five barges are underway at any time and that means eighteen hundred and seventy five truck-loads per day. I would think that the pollution problem by itself would be a greater risk to the environment.

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As far as train use goes that would be wonderful, but the U.S. Government has to give subsidies to the rail roads as they cannot move freight at a reasonable cost so that they can make money. The purchase of land for train right a way alone would break the railroad. Noise pollution, and the risk of derailment etc.

The Sierra Club further states that we could grow more crops. Well last years crop of wheat is still in the silos unsold, the apple growers are turning their soil over and burning the trees as the price that they can get for apples is less than it cost to grow them. Its cheaper to take the trees out then to try to grow more fruit and not only that, it is cheaper to import fruit from South America, New Zealand and China. Where would they get the water to irrigate?

In closing, I can't find a good reason to remove the dams. If the human being is to continue to live and prosper in the manner we have over the last hundred years or so, leave everything alone and let the good people of this state decide what they want to do with the dams. A vote on the matter would show each of you how ridiculous this issue would be. The finial analysis of this action is that at best it is poor and will not accomplish anything but putting our hard working farmers out of business as well as many small independent businesses. Removing our inexpensive electricity so we can replace it with more expensive! Creating more pollution then we can handle as well as increase in freight cost across the state.

Beware the "Spotted Owl", after the famous Sierra Club ruined the Lumber industry of the North West, guess what they found? A lot of "Spotted Owls" Surprise! Surprise! When queried, they remarked "it was just a ruse" but us locals bought into it. Nope, our idiots in the Government bought into it!

Sincerely,

John Level

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