

Cenex Harvest States

we grow value

March 28, 2000

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

Re: Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Feasibility Study
 Draft Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Sirs/Madam:

Cenex Harvest States urges retention of the lower Snake River dams subject to the feasibility study.

The importance of the Snake River dams, and the entire inland waterways system, to the economic health and international competitiveness of U.S. agriculture is well documented. Removal of the lower Snake River dams would cause the more than 2 million tons of farm and forest products moved annually on the Snake River to find alternative modes of transportation. These alternatives would be more costly than barge transportation and lead to a reduction in the prices received by the producers for these products. A realistic assessment of these higher transportation costs should be included in any evaluation of the impact of removing the four lower Snake River dams.

Some environmental groups have urged removal of the lower Snake River dams. Their position ignores the substantial environmental advantages of barge transportation. Barges are more energy efficient than either truck or rail for transporting bulk commodities. The cargo capacity of a typical barge on the Snake River is 30 times greater than one rail car and 125 times greater than one semi-trailer. Moving 2 million tons of cargo by these alternative modes would mean an additional 22,626 railcars or 93,333 trucks traveling the rails and highways of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana each year. This increased volume of road and rail traffic would lead to more highway damage and vehicle congestion, more air pollution and more noise pollution throughout the area. We strongly urge that the inclusion of the full economic and environmental costs of this increased traffic in any assessment of the impacts of removing the four lower Snake River dams.

The U.S. cannot afford to dismantle our transportation infrastructure as our competitors around the world continue to make significant improvements to their transportation infrastructures to increase their global competitiveness. U.S. agriculture must remain competitive in world markets.

While we share the concerns regarding the decline of the Snake River salmon population, we need to look for solutions that preserve and protect the economic health of the region, as well.

Sincerely,



Allen J. Anderson
 Vice President, Governmental Relations
 Cenex Harvest States Cooperatives

cc: The Honorable George Voinovich, Chairman, Transportation and Infrastructure
 Subcommittee, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
 The Honorable Sherwood Boehlert, Chairman, Water Resources and Environment
 Subcommittee, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
 The Honorable Richard Lugar, Chairman, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee
 The Honorable Larry Combest, Chairman, House Agriculture Committee