

TRI-CITIES LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

"Working together as the united voice for business"

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March 30, 2000

MEMBERSHIP

Tri-Cities Area Chamber of Commerce

P. O. Box 6986
Kennewick, WA 99336
(509) 736-0510

Pasco Chamber of Commerce

P. O. Box 550
Pasco, WA 99301
(509) 547-9755

Richland Chamber of Commerce

P. O. Box 637
Richland, WA 99352
(509) 946-1651

West Richland Chamber of Commerce

P. O. Box 4023
West Richland, WA 99353
(509) 967-2902

TRIDEC

901 N. Colorado
Kennewick, WA 99336
(509) 735-1000

Tri-Cities Visitor & Convention Bureau

P. O. Box 2241
Tri-Cities, WA 99302
(509) 735-8486

Army Corp of Engineers
Attn: Brig. General Carl Strock
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Dear General Strock,

At our March 29th meeting, the Tri-Cities Legislative Council voted to once again strongly oppose breaching or draw downs of the lower Snake River dams. We believe that this is a regional issue and should not be decided by national environmental groups or regions that have no vested interest in this region or the people who live here.

It is the opinion of many in the Tri-Cities area that the hearings strongly favored national groups and were held in regions not impacted by the Snake River dams or the Snake River salmon. Only two hearings were held in communities that reside on the lower Snake River and it is very easy for someone from Montana or Alaska to make decisions that do not impact them.

We agree that the protection of salmon is important, but we feel that many issues have been swept aside by those who wish to breach the dams. We feel that the dams and the following issues need to be addressed concurrently to bring about a complete solution.

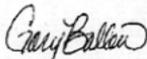
- Controlling the loss to predators.
- Determining the impact of ocean conditions.
- Improving barging, hatcheries, and fish passage at the dams.
- Limiting excessive domestic and international commercial salmon fishing.
- Working with Native American tribes to modify treaties to protect endangered species.

- Determining alternative methods for protecting wild runs other than killing hatchery fish.

There is conflicting scientific evidence that dam breaching will increase salmon runs, and some evidence that the salmon will be adversely impacted. Some facts we do know, the dams have provided us with clean hydropower, affordable barge transportation, revenue to the federal government, and water for irrigation and recreation.

Breaching the Snake River dams would significantly impact our region and our way of life. We believe that dams and fish can coexist with common sense and cooperation. But more importantly, we believe local people should make local decisions.

Sincerely,



Gary Ballew

Chair

Tri-Cities Legislative Council