Skeels Orchard's Inc.

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March 15, 2000

Walla Walla District
Corps of Engineers
Attn: Lower Snake River Study
201 North Third Street
Walla Walla Washington 99362-1876

Dear Sir or Madam:

Have you ever felt like someone was debating a law which allowed them to take all you had, the food out of your children's mouths, and turn all your assets into worthless scrap metal and swampland? If you could get your mind around these facts, you could begin to understand how naked and alone farmers feel. Its not right that we need to defend ourselves from things that we all take for granted are civilized advances in safety, science, and standard's of living.

If we could debate the issues on the facts it would be a short and obvious discussion. These proponents of "Dam Breaching", have yet to provide any facts to support their case, and by their own statistics, ***we prove ours!***

For every 10 salmon returning to spawn, 6 are taken in ocean harvest, 2 are reserved for "Tribal Nets", 1 is killed by Predators, and only 1 will have the chance to Spawn, all this occurs before there are any dams to be breached.

In the Pacific Northwest at least 10 cents of every dollar paid for your monthly electric bill goes for salmon recovery. This amount will vary from area to area, ranging from 10 percent, up to 20 percent.

Only in the United States can you buy an endangered species for $2 a pound, continue to commercially harvest them, while at the same time spend $1 BILLION per year to save them, with no one in charge, and with little accountability for the money that is being spent.

1. **Electrical Power:** Hydropower is environmentally clean and renewable. If the four dams are breached; it will eliminate 1286 megawatts. This is more power than it takes for residential use in all of Idaho and Montana. There is already a power shortage during peak loads, (extreme cold or heat) and the only way to replace it would be coal or natural gas generation, which have major adverse environmental impacts.

2. **Transportation:** Presently dry land and irrigated crops are barged to coastal ports. Without the dams, products would have to be shipped by diesel semi-trucks. It will take an extra 700,000 truckloads on the highways to the coastal ports each year to replace the efficient barging system. This would use up more fuel and increase air pollution.

3. **Irrigation:** Dam breaching would lose more that 36,000 acres of irrigated crops in Washington, and 600,000 acres of irrigated crops in Idaho through river flow augmentation. Those acres help keep food in abundance here and now help feed millions of people worldwide and reduce the trade deficit abroad. These irrigated crops clean carbon dioxide out of the air at a rate of 13 tons per acre for potatoes, 18 tons for corn and 7 tons for wheat each year. These three crops in Washington State alone clean the CO2 emissions produced by more than two million autos.

4. **Recreation:** The dams and irrigation have created wetlands and wildlife habitat for a multitude of other species of wildlife. This enhances opportunities for hunting and fishing, boating and expanded tourism.

5. **Taxes:** The thousands of jobs and businesses that rely on the dams pay millions of dollars in taxes to the counties, states and the Federal Government.

6. **Flood and erosion control**: During flood events, dams save lives and millions of dollars of damage.

The hydropower produced from the 4 lower Snake River dams is a consistent 1286 megawatts. Their full nameplate rated hydropower capacity is about 4000 megawatts. These 1286 megawatts is enough to power all of Idaho and Montana, or the whole greater Seattle area.

Here are some facts that I thought everyone would like to have. If the 4 lower Snake River dams are breached then that hydropower would have to be make up for by other means. Probably that would be a natural gas fired plant or coal fired generation. If it is coal-fired generation, then this is what it would consume. 1 pound of coal is required to produce one-kilowatt hour of electrical energy. Producing 1,230,000 kW per hour for a year comes to 10,684,800,000 pounds of coal would be needed. This is 5,342,000 tons of coal. If freight cars haul 100 tons each, that would take 53,420 carloads of coal per year, or 146.3 railroad cars per day. A coal train has about 135 cars per mile. A power plant capable of supplying the electrical energy the four lower Snake River dams provide would need a train load of coal more that a mile long every day. If we mine that much coal out of a 6-foot-deep seam, at least 510 acres of coal land would have to be mined each year. This would produce about 14,247,000 tons of carbon dioxide gases that would be released in to our environment. This information comes from a letter to the editor in the Feb 4th Capital Press Newspaper. George Thompson, a 72-year-old farmer with a degree in thermodynamics, wrote it.

Any intelligent person would conclude that with all these proven and guaranteed benefits, outweigh such drastic measures such as removal of the dams.

Please, Please, Please don't threaten our livelihood and children's futures.

Michael T. Skeels

Clyde G. Skeels