



March 27, 2000

Lieutenant Colonel William E. Bulen, Jr.
 Commander
 Walla Walla District
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 201 North Third Avenue
 Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

Dear Colonel Bulen:

On behalf of the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, we would like to extend our comments on the Draft Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement for the Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Study. The Chamber believes that the region needs a recovery plan with clear vision, goals and priorities. A plan is needed that rebuilds healthy fish runs while maintaining a vibrant economy.

The Chamber opposes any alternative that includes dam breaching. We recognize that this is a complex problem and that the scientific evidence is inconclusive to whether breaching the Snake River dams will increase the number of salmon returning to the Snake River. However, of the 34 salmon and steelhead runs listed under the Endangered Species Act on the West Coast, only four pass the Snake River dams.

Dam removal is not a panacea for the larger problem of salmon recovery. There is no one answer for the recovery of Northwest salmon. Attempting to find one only leads us into a debate where people, the economy and the environment of the Northwest would be adversely affected. Consistent with our previous positions, the Chamber is in favor of a multi-pronged approach to salmon recovery that addresses harvest, hatcheries, habitat and hydropower.

Today, the National Marine Fisheries Service reports that salmon smolt survival is as high as it was in the 1960's, before the dams were constructed. Therefore, the Chamber believes returning to pre-dam conditions is not a precursor to increasing the number of returning salmon.

Much is at stake and the alternatives of the Environmental Impact Statement should be considered carefully. We must seriously consider the consequence of risky fixes that have the ability to devastate the economy and the environment. For example, imagine the impact to our air quality that would occur as a result of breaching the Lower Snake River dams and eliminating barging. Nearly 750,000 more truck miles would be needed to deliver Washington State goods to market.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ross Jacobson'.

Ross Jacobson
 Chair, Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Langton'.

Sarah Langton
 President & CEO

cc: U.S. Senator Slade Gorton
U.S. Senator Patty Murray
U.S. Rep. Jennifer Dunn
U.S. Rep. George Nethercutt
U.S. Rep. Doc Hastings
Will Stelle, National Marine Fisheries Service
Jim Toomey, Port of Pasco
Ben Bennett, Port of Benton
John Givens, Port of Kennewick
Todd Klabenes, Lewiston Chamber of Commerce
Rich Hadley, Spokane Chamber of Commerce
Ann Philip, Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce