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March 28, 2000

Mr. Greg Graham
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 Walla Walla District
 201 N. Third Ave.
 Walla Walla, WA 99362

Dear Mr. Graham,

I am the grain purchasing manager for the Elenbaas Company, a privately owned feed manufacturer in Whatcom County. We produce approximately 80,000 tons of various feeds for the dairy market in this county, Skagit County, and also in Southern Frazier Valley of British Columbia. The ingredients we use to produce our feeds come from all over the United States and Canada. This past year, all of the barley we have used was originated from the growers in Eastern Washington.

I was raised on a dryland wheat and cattle ranch in Garfield County and operated the farm in conjunction with my father and two brothers until 1982. Much of my youth was spent working cattle on the breaks of the Snake River, above the present Lower Granite Dam. Much time was spent raising, harvesting, and transporting grains to the Port of Garfield county located at Central Ferry.

When the dams were first installed, good land was inundated along the Snake; land that had supported many families growing fruits and raising cattle. The loss of this land was difficult to digest, but the benefits to the entire region have far outweighed the detriments.

Before farmers were able to use barging as a means of transporting grain to Portland, they were captive to the elevators, the railroad, and the truckers. Barging allowed for ready access to the export markets and brought competition into the entire freight system. Crops now grown in the Columbia Basis surpass the greatest dreams, dreams possible only with the addition of economical irrigation and electricity. Clean electrical power generation wrested from the river has meant clean growth for the cities of the Pacific Northwest and, indeed, the entire West Coast of the U.S. And a brand new ecosystem flourishes within and along the Snake River. Fresh water clams, sturgeon, bass, trout, and waterfowl grew in variety and abundance never seen before.

But the salmon and the steelhead started to decline after a while when the ocean fishing began to increase. Where once a few foreign vessels plied the waters of the Bearing Sea, even greater quantities of U.S. flagged floating slaughterhouses began scrapping the ocean bottoms, and stripping the open seas, wiping out everything in their path. As the ocean catch increased, the stocks of returning fish decreased. And the dams, the farmers, and the loggers were blamed.

As with all things, a number of factors have contributed to the decline of our salmon and steelhead stocks, but too much has been made of the presence of the earthen dams. I have singled out ocean fishing as it is a waste to capture the salmonids from the open ocean when they return, on their own, to our rivers. The surplus of fresh salmon on the world market would seem to make ocean fishing obsolete.

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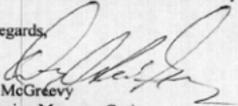
Having been involved in farming in some manner all my life, I understand what happens when the soil is mined for its nutrients, without returning something to the land or allowing for rest. I know what happens if proper conservation practices are not followed; land erosion, needless flooding, pollution, all manner of destructive happenings. The same thing holds true for fishing. Irresponsible practices in our oceans have been devastating on more species than just PNW salmonid runs. I am not alone in the belief that changes in our ocean fishing practices can do more than any other single item towards restoring our fish runs. Cooperation between NMFS, agriculture, Indian rights, all of these and more could stand to work more equitably together. But I do despair, at times, that entrenched positions can be changed; that those who seek power and prestige will tend to less confrontational, self-interested beliefs.

I would ask that you consider science as a base for decision making, but then it becomes a matter of whose science is used. One can find a study to support anything, if one looks long enough. Instead, I ask that you consider these words from one who remembers the river as it was, knows the river as it is, and accepts the benefits we enjoy with what we now have. I ask that you consider that the trucking and rail industry cannot replace the barges as a means of transporting grain to the export terminals of Portland and beyond. I request that you see the future of a PNW and West Coast that will continue to grow, with an ever increasing need for cleanly generated electricity. I ask that you consider we can use our intelligence and technology to modernize our dams to make them more fish-friendly. Consider the Kaplan Turbine Runner, a method that seems to have been opposed by the Army Corps of Engineers, but which may offer an inexpensive alternative to so many of the proposals now on the table, including breaching.

Solomon of the Old Testament was once asked to determine to whom an infant belonged; two women pleaded for possession of the child. When he drew a sword to divide the baby between them, the true mother was made known by her selflessness in allowing the child to go to the other plaintiff, while the false mother would have allowed the child to die. Solomon's wisdom saved the child's life and brought forth tremendous joy from a grieved mother.

There are those who would sacrifice the child of progress that has grown over the years, progress and diversity made possible only because of the dams of the Snake River. We can all live here in peace, if only common sense and truth are allowed to prosper.

Best regards,



Doug McGreevy
Purchasing Manager-Grain