

# Latah County Grain Growers, Inc.

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April 6, 2000

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

Attn: Lt. Col. William E. Bulen, Jr.

Dear Col. Bulen:

I am writing this letter on behalf of our Company, which represents almost 400 farmers and landowners in the Latah County area in Northern Idaho. Latah County Grain Growers (LCGG) is a cooperative owned by these 400 people.

We oppose Alternative 4, which calls for the removal of the four Lower Snake River dams for the following reasons. We feel that a combination of Alternatives 1, 2 & 3 would give fish the best alternative for survival and also give our agricultural industry the best chance for economic survival as well.

During the last 30 years LCGG has become very dependent on barge transportation for shipping commodities produced by our member/owners. The railroads started disappearing from our area in the 1970's and at this time only two of our grain elevators can be served by the railroad. In 1975 LCGG joined with other Companies such as ours, that were facing rail abandonments also, in the construction of Lewis-Clark Terminal at Lewiston, Idaho in order to provide economically feasible transportation of commodities to the Portland, Oregon area export markets.

If the river mode of transportation were to be lost the economic impact to agriculture in particular, and other industry in general, would be tremendous. As an example, the cost of moving one barge equivalent, about 115,000 bushels or 3,500 tons, all of the way to Portland by a truck would increase costs to our farmers by approximately \$86,000. The additional cost of moving the same amount of grain to the Tri-Cities of Washington to a Columbia River facility by truck would be about \$23,000. This would convert to about \$1.8 million and \$500,000, respectively, of additional cost annually for our 400 farmer members. (Remember, there is little, or no, rail transportation available to us due to the abandonments.)

The amount of grain shipped out of Lewis Clark Terminal (LCT) each year amounts to 150 to 175 jumbo barges (18 to 20 million bushels). To replace this transportation would require about 17,000 semi trucks, or 5,300 jumbo hopper cars annually. To replace the barge transportation with trucks would create a tremendous impact on State highways that are already impacted by heavy traffic and lower funding for repairs and/or replacement. And, it's very doubtful that railroads could provide the necessary equipment or service to replace the barge transportation.

I have seen statements made by General Strock stating he was surprised by the number of pro-breaching advocates speaking at the Lewiston area hearing, and the lack of anti-breaching advocates giving testimony. His assumption appears to say that with the high number of pro-breaching advocates speaking at the hearing that we on the other

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side didn't care. **HE WAS WRONG!** We had little, if any, chance to speak at the meeting. The pro-breachers from Moscow and other communities hauled people to Clarkston, early, and took away the opportunity for the working people, that depend on the river system for transportation, to testify.

The EIS shows uncertain biological benefits from breaching the lower four Snake dams. And, although we believe the negative economic impacts are seriously underestimated, the EIS shows that there is certain economic harm.

The region needs a recovery plan with a clear vision, goals, and priorities. We need a plan that rebuilds healthy fish runs while maintaining a healthy economy.

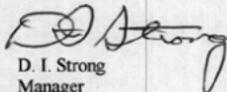
Recent studies show that survival is as high as it was in the 1960's and 70's before the dams were built. And, rivers that flow into the Pacific Ocean from Washington and Oregon, without any impediments such as dams, are losing their fish runs as well.

We feel that dam breaching will create significant negative environmental impacts with the loss of habitat for the existing resident fish and wildlife, and increased air pollution from the trucks and trains necessary to move the products that are now moved on the river.

We hope that you will consider all of the testimony, not just the vocal groups that crowded the rest of us out at Clarkston, and will forward to Congress a recommendation that will help the fish but will also allow us humans to survive economically as well.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our concerns!

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. I. Strong". The signature is stylized and cursive, written over the typed name.

D. I. Strong  
Manager