



STATE OF WASHINGTON

FREIGHT MOBILITY STRATEGIC INVESTMENT BOARD

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March 30, 2000

Dan O'Neal
Chair

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Walla Walla District
201 North Third Avenue
Walla Walla, Washington 99362-1876

Karen Schmidt
Executive Director

Atten: Lower Snake River Study

Board Members

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

Clifford Benson

Washington State's Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Feasibility Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Draft FR/EIS) released by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) in December 1999.

*Barbara Cothorn**Andrew Johnson**David Kalbener**Don Lemmons**Sid Morrison**Carol Moser*

We have had an opportunity to review the comments of Washington States Department of Transportation as well as the remarks from the Oregon Department of Transportation and concur in their statements. We will not reiterate the points they made, but instead focus on what we believe to be a crucial component in the discussion.

*Patricia Otley**Ross Kelley**Jim Toomey*

Our region has had a long history of trying to protect our environment while not sacrificing the necessary infrastructure needs of our citizens. In recent years, the Governor and Legislature have introduced programs to mitigate stormwater runoff and remove fish passage barriers. Millions of dollars go into these programs annually, and the state can point to numerous success stories especially in the WSDOT environmental affairs office where their innovative environmental programs have received national recognition.

Web Site

www.fmsib.wa.gov

Washington State has also elevated their efforts to keep our state economy strong by focusing on removing barriers to freight mobility. We believe the movement of freight while protecting our economy are not mutually exclusive goals.

Governor Locke and the Legislature created The Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board, which is composed of public and private sector representatives, to emphasize the importance of freight movement to our state's economy. The Board is charting a course to help keep Washington products competitive in a global economy by removing transportation barriers to rail, truck, barge, marine, and air cargo movement.



It is therefore of great concern to us that the Draft FR/EIS - Alternative #4 envisions a Dam Breaching scenario. Your Draft FR/EIS estimate of 5 million tons of annual waterborne barge commerce that would need to be diverted assumes that the grain and other agricultural products would continue to move to domestic and International markets, however there is no assurance that this could or would happen.

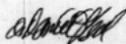
Transferring 5 million tons of product to our current overburdened road and rail system would require significant infrastructure investments for the volume to be accommodated. It is questionable whether an adequate number of trucks and rail cars could be dedicated to this task. The current road system would not be able to accommodate the additional traffic, and even if sufficient capacity is developed, the costs to ship the products may eliminate their ability to be competitive in domestic and international markets.

- 1 The Washington State Legislative Transportation Committee is continuing to study the impacts to the state transportation system as well as the impact to city and county transportation routes. We ask that the Corp factor in the costs to local jurisdictions if Alternative #4 is
- 2 chosen by including the findings of the second part of the WSLTC
- 3 study. In assessing volumes, please also weigh the practical limitations of capacity on BNSF's Columbia River Gorge and Stevens Pass mainlines, the realistic availability of grain cars, and the availability of trucks needed to increase movement by 2.6 million miles in Washington.

We believe there are alternatives that will benefit our Salmon production while maintaining a balance for our regions economic needs. Alternative #4 does not provide that balance. In addition, the study clearly points out that the biological benefits are uncertain. We ask that you consider the states economy and our freight movement needs as well as our desire to improve Salmon migration. The two interests can be addressed positively without one or the other suffering.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with our Board's comments and concerns on the Draft FR/EIS. We welcome the opportunity to continue to work with you as you weigh the impacts of the options available.

Cordially,



Dan O'Neal
Chairman
Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board

cc: Governor Gary Locke
FMSIB Board