



April 6, 2000

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
 Walla Walla District  
 Attention: Lower Snake River Study  
 201 North Third Avenue  
 Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

RE: comments on the Draft Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration FR/EIS.

I am opposed to breaching the four Snake river dams. My reasons are given in this letter.

Concern about declining salmon numbers began in the mid-1800s, about a century before the first major dams appeared according to a document prepared for the Corps in 1994 entitled "Saving the Salmon: A History of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Efforts to Protect Anadromous Fish on the Columbia and Snake Rivers". Congress first directed the Corps to investigate causes of declining salmon runs in 1887 due to their concerns about increasing impacts of harvest, mining, logging, and farming. These facts point out that there are many factors other than the dams that have had a negative impact on the salmon runs.

I attended the "Keep the lights On" conference held in Portland February 28, 2000. The major conclusion of the conference was that the Northwest region will need an additional 3,000 MW of generating capacity by 2003. There is a 24% chance that the region will be unable to serve loads at some level in the winter months with the existing generation capacity. The 3,000 MW of proposed new capacity would reduce this probability of a blackout to 5%. The four lower Snake River hydro facilities have a peaking capacity of 3,033 MW. Breaching the four Snake river dams would remove the generating capacity of these dams, thus requiring the immediate addition of 6,033 MW. The impact of power outages on the human population are significant and should not be left out of the total picture when looking at saving Salmon.

The environmental impacts of some of the economic shifts that would take place under a dam breaching alternative are of great concern. There is a high potential for large negative impacts on air quality resulting from breaching. In the area of power generation, replacement power for the 3,033 MW of lost capacity is likely to come from thermal resources, thus increasing emissions into the air. In addition, nearly 750,000 more truck miles per year would be needed to deliver products to market, another significant impact on emission of carbons into the atmosphere.

Harvest by non-human predators continues to be an area needing improved policy and enforcement. For example, NMFS research has indicated enormous impacts from Caspian terns and cormorants nesting on islands near the mouth of the Columbia. With estimates that tens of millions of salmon and steelhead are being consumed by these birds each year, this problem can not be taken lightly. Seals are another predator that have a major impact on returning salmon.

There are many factors impacting the salmon runs, including estuary conditions, ocean conditions, spawning and rearing habitat, hatcheries, harvest, predators, and hydro impact on downstream and upstream migration. A viable recovery effort must address all aspects of the salmon lifecycle. The "All-H" concept paper being developed by the Federal Caucus of nine agencies is a step in the right direction. Breaching the four Snake river dams would not solve any of the problems caused due to the habitat, harvest and hatcheries.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "David J. Blake". The signature is written in a cursive style.

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