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IDAHO STATE GRANGE

MAY 01 2000

FAX INFORMATION TO FOLLOW

* * * PLEASE DELIVER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE * * *

TO: Lower Snake River Study FAX # (509) 527-782
 COMPANY Dept. of the Army - Walla Walla Dist COE
 FROM: Mary Johnson
 DATE: 4/28/00 TIME: 4:40 pm
 TOTAL OF 3 PAGES (Including this cover page)

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NOTES: Our Comments on the Corps D.F.L.S.
Thank you!

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IDAHO STATE GRANGE

OFFICE OF THE STATE MASTER

April 28, 2000

SUBJECT: Comments on the Corps DEIS

Department of the Army
 Walla Walla District COE
 201 North Third Avenue
 Walla Walla WA 99362-1876

ATTENTION: Lower Snake River Study

The Idaho State Grange is a nonprofit organization representing several farmers, agricultural people and small business owners.

Agriculture has a critical interest in the future of the Columbia/Snake River system. Irrigation water is essential to the region's productive agricultural economy.

We feel that it is time for reason and common sense to merge with science and produce a plan that can be implemented now.

Breaching dams would take years to accomplish, has tremendous costs associated with it, and is the most drastic option because there is no empirical data that shows it would recover fish. Even the analysis by the NMFS shows that no one alternative alone, including dam breaching, can recover the salmon runs.

There are 26 West Coast runs of salmon and steelhead that are listed as threatened or endangered. There are another eight (8), which are candidates for listing. Of these 34 runs, only four (4) pass the lower Snake River dams. This problem is much broader than the dams. We need a solution that is more comprehensive than just destroying the four (4) dams.

The new NMFS data shows that survival of the fish through each dam is 95%.

Dam breaching OR flow augmentation will cost Idaho workers and Idaho's economy severely. It will be devastating on the farmers in Idaho. The current NMFS flow targets for the Lower Snake would require more water for flow augmentation in a low water year than is physically present in the entire Snake River Basin. The flow targets are not based on science or hydrological reality and they need to be eliminated.

Predator control, habitat improvement and harvest improvement can provide greater benefits more quickly than dam breaching.

Also the amount of power generated by the four dams is not as insignificant as some would have you believe. Their combined generating capacity is greater than that of Idaho Power Company.



Making up that deficit would require massive thermal generating facilities, with increased costs and air pollution problems.

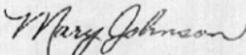
Alternative solutions that cost less and are less risky exist, and more are in development.

We recommend that you pursue a balanced plan that continues to improve hydro operations, restores habitat, limits harvest and refocuses hatchery operations.

The Idaho State Grange strongly believes that the Columbia/Snake River salmon stocks must be protected and recovered. We also believe that this can be done without compromising the integrity of the Northwest economy.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this issue.

Sincerely,



Mary Johnson, President
Idaho State Grange