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Mr. Riek Itami
National Marine Fisheries Service
c/o Bonneville Power Administration-PL
707 W. Main Street, Suite 500
Spokane, WA 99201

Dear Mr. Itami:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIS concerning the future of the four lower Snake River dams. I appreciate the chance to share with you the Greater Seattle business community's concerns.

While the power these dams generate for the Pacific Northwest is substantial, there are two other issues I would like to address: the air quality implications of removing these dams and the increased traffic on our state's roads should the dams be removed. Both of these issues are extremely important and neither should be overlooked.

Together with the Columbia River, the lower Snake River system allows barges to navigate as far inland as Lewiston, Idaho. Each barge navigating the river holds the equivalent of over 37 rail cars or 150 25-ton semi trucks. In addition, each barge tow can haul as much as 1.5 100-car unit trains or 600 semi trucks. To replace the approximately 4,600 barges that travel the river every year, an additional 120,000 rail cars or 700,000 semi trucks would be required on Washington's highways and railroads. Adding such a large number of trucks to our already overclogged highway system would go a long way toward crippling Washington's economy.

Not only would this add to the considerable traffic congestion problems facing Western Washington – and the Puget Sound region in particular – but it would pose a serious threat to the quality of the air we breathe. One gallon of fuel can move a ton of commodity 514 miles by barge. That same gallon can move that same ton a mere 59 miles by truck. To imagine such a large amount of additional fuel being burned in our state every year is incomprehensible.

I strongly urge the National Marine Fisheries Service to keep the four lower Snake River dams in place.

Sincerely,



Bob Watt
President & CEO