Tri-Cities/Hermiston Leadership Statement February 12, 2000

FEB 18 2000

To the members of the Federal Caucus:

In reply to the environmental and economic reviews for salmon recovery conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bonneville Power Administration, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we the undersigned residents and community leaders from Columbia Basin do hereby issue this statement:

We believe it is possible to have both dams and salmon.

The science developed through years of research by members of the Federal Caucus supports this concept. The most recent studies suggest that breaching dams would cost hundreds of millions of dollars and disrupt the economy of the region while returning only minimal or speculative benefits for salmon over non-breaching alternatives.

The same studies suggest that breaching dams could have an overall negative effect on the environment:

- The release of silt;
- The need to replace lost power generation through the use of fossil fuels;
- Increased truck and rail transportation; and
- The loss of habitat for other species.

The river drawdown and dam breaching issue is now the single greatest impediment to the review and implementation of meaningful salmon recovery. Removing this issue from further discussion would remove one of the most contentious and divisive issues regarding salmon recovery and allow the Northwest to move forward with meaningful recovery measures.

The Federal Caucus should move beyond the destructive debate over dams and direct their efforts toward improving existing project bypass and fish transportation facilities, restructuring the existing NMFS flow augmentation program and improving water management within the region by implementing a water management alternative developed by water right holders.

The above statements, we the undersigned, do hereby affirm: