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PUBLIC MEETING SESSION

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
DRAFT LOWER SNAKE RIVER JUVENILE SALMON MIGRATION
FEASIBILITY REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
WITH
FEDERAL CAUCUS CONSERVATION OF COLUMBIA BASIN FISH
"ALL-H PAPER"

TED FERRY CIVIC CENTER
888 VENITIA AVENUE
KETCHIKAN, ALASKA

PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION

MARCH 6, 2000
7:00 P.M.

COURT REPORTER: WILLIAM J. BRIDGES, CM, RMR, CSR

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1 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Please state
2 your name, and if you are with an organization or an
3 agency, please let us know.

4 If you don't want to state that because you
5 are not with one, or you are not representing them
6 today, that's fine, too.

7 At the beginning here we would like to
8 offer the Mayor, Bob Weinstein, the opportunity to
9 come up and speak, and then we will move on and we
10 will start after Bob with Roland Stanton, followed by
11 John Burke, followed by Wayne Weihing.

12 And I apologize if I say your names wrong.
13 I am not meaning to. No disrespect.

14 MR. BOB WEINSTEIN: You did a good
15 job on mine. Thank you.

16 My name is Bob Weinstein. I am the Mayor
17 of the City of Ketchikan, and I guess my comments are
18 directed to all agencies involved with this issue and
19 decision.

20 First of all I'd like to thank you for
21 coming here to discuss an issue of great importance to
22 this community, to this area.

23 While I don't have any expertise in this,
24 my comments will be I'm sure magnified by those on
25 both sides who do have a lot of expertise on this

1 subject.

2 It's my understanding that significant and
3 further reductions of the Alaskan fish harvest will
4 have virtually no positive impact on Snake River fish.

5 Those reductions, however, should a
6 decision be made to implement them, will have major
7 adverse impacts on commercial and sports fisheries in
8 this area, and therefore significant adverse impacts
9 upon the economy of this community.

10 This area is already suffering economically
11 due to federal policy changes with respect to timber
12 harvests. We don't need another federal policy change
13 which will have a disparate personal and economic
14 impact upon this area.

15 Decisions such as this should be based upon
16 science, which my understanding, that scientists
17 inside Alaska and outside Alaska agree that restoring
18 Snake River fish will not be accomplished by further
19 harvest reductions in Alaska.

20 The question seems to be a simple one.
21 Even though the answer may not be. The question is,
22 do you have Snake River fish, or do you have Snake
23 River dams?

24 In closing, Alaska and Alaskans are not the
25 problem. Therefore, we should not be the solution.

1 Thank you.

2 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thank you
3 very much, Bob.

4 Roland Stanton, followed by John Burke,
5 followed by Wayne Weihing.

6 MR. ROLAND STANTON: I am a retired
7 engineer and observer. I am not a fisherman.

8 If you want to get birds off an island,
9 pigs. Two pigs will work fine. We use them on a
10 airport up north, an island in front of an airport.
11 Works great. They eat the eggs.

12 I'm here to tell you, really to comment on
13 the fisheries from Frazier River south and what's gone
14 wrong in the ocean and what you can do about it.

15 Wally Hickel, when he was Secretary of the
16 Interior, he's a former Governor of Alaska, made the
17 California sea lions sacred. Can't touch them. Can't
18 talk to them. Can't throw rocks at them. Can't shoot
19 at them anymore.

20 So, one sea lion at Ballard in Seattle at
21 the mouth of the fish ladder managed to wipe out a
22 total fish run all by himself, and now he has buddies.
23 So they have finished them off.

24 And there's 200,000 of them now, courtesy
25 of Wally Hickel, who took them from 10,000 up to

1 200,000 with a stroke of a pen, and now that years
2 have passed, and can you manage how many salmon
3 200,000 sea lions can eat?

4 And now the solution. Recently, oh, ten
5 years ago there was a big die off of seals in the
6 north sea by England and Norway. When they checked it
7 out, they discovered that a dog disease wiped out the
8 seals. Can't remember whether it was distemper or
9 parvo, or something like that.

10 So the solution is really easy. All we
11 need to do is take one dead dog, cut it up, put pieces
12 of it in herring and feed it to a sample population
13 like ten of sea lions, and we will have a nice
14 epidemic, and your problem will be solved.

15 In about ten years you will be able to
16 overfish the mouth of the Columbia again.

17 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thanks a lot,
18 Roland.

19 John Burke, followed by Wayne Weihing,
20 followed by Richard I think it's Schuerger.

21 MR. JOHN BURKE: The 4-H paper. My
22 name is John Burke. I have been professionally
23 involved with fisheries for the past 30 years. I
24 worked with the Department for 20 years until I
25 retired two years ago.

1 While I was working for the department the
2 last five years I was at Headquarters. At that time I
3 worked on the Chinook technical committee for the
4 Pacific Salmon Treaty. I was the state's expert
5 witness on the harvest and distribution of migratory
6 path Chinook took for the U.S. vs. Washington case.

7 I drafted several of the state's Section 7
8 permit applications related to the incidental harvest
9 of Snake River fall Chinook. I also was the state's
10 alternative representative to the implementation team
11 for a period of two years.

12 I am currently the General Manager of
13 southern southeast regional aquaculture association,
14 and after all of that, I am here to represent myself.

15 These fish are very important to us. I
16 think you wanted to hear that, and I hope you will
17 tonight.

18 At the level of long term difficult life
19 history choices, these fish are here, that is why many
20 of us live here, period.

21 We came here because of them, we stay here
22 because of them. I realize this is a legal exercise
23 as much as anything else.

24 One solution would be to minimally
25 forestall the extinction of these fish while others

1 range to actually restoring the runs of Snake River
2 fall Chinook to the level of health that would support
3 some harvest in the river as well as at least
4 incidental harvest elsewhere.

5 It is hard to imagine Alaskan fishermen or
6 perhaps any fishermen anywhere that would support a
7 plan that was designed to simply prevent extinction
8 and nothing more.

9 Most of us, including our own scientists,
10 only have a vague concept of exactly what that means.
11 I think Larry tried to explain that today. It's very
12 difficult to explain.

13 I would like to talk about two of the H's
14 that have brought the fish where they are today.
15 Hydro and habitat.

16 In Alaska we manage our salmon fisheries in
17 a sustainable fashion. In fact the last several years
18 some of these fisheries have reached all time harvest
19 records.

20 And obviously nature has a lot to do with
21 that.

22 We try to do all the important things and
23 yet we certainly have made mistakes managing our
24 fisheries. But somehow these do not seem to
25 accumulate over time and the stocks most often quickly

1 recover. Why?

2 There is one reason for this and one reason
3 alone. The habitat utilized by these fish is largely
4 unaltered. The Pacific salmon is a very resilient
5 animal and if, and only if, they have an opportunity
6 to recover, they will, but without habitat, regardless
7 of the measures our managers might take, they do not
8 have that opportunity.

9 I will skip to near the end. I would like
10 to talk about hatchery shortly. We have a number of
11 successful programs in Alaska. We have run our
12 hatchery with serious constraints involving genetics,
13 pathology and fish culture.

14 We've always judged them based on adult
15 returns and the value of those returns, never on the
16 number of fish released. Simply put, all hatcheries
17 are not the same. They should not be painted with the
18 same brush. There are probably things you could do
19 with innovative measures and enhancement which could
20 help these fish come back.

21 There is a strong prejudice against
22 hatcheries on the Columbia River. Perhaps if you
23 could look beyond these prejudices, do some innovative
24 things, hatcheries might actually help you more than
25 you have thought.

1 Just to summarize, a brief comment about
2 the economic analysis. If the things you put forward
3 don't work, you really haven't put the other part in
4 the equation, the cost to these people here of the
5 failure. It's not there.

6 Finally I would think Alternative Number 1
7 would be the one I would most generally support.

8 Thank you.

9 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thank you very
10 much, John.

11 Wayne Weihing, followed by Richard
12 Schuerger, followed by Nevin May.

13 MR. WAYNE WEIHING: Thank you. For
14 the record my name is Wayne Weihing. I have been a
15 long term resident of southeastern Alaska.

16 My background is I have commercial fished,
17 I continued to support fish. I have fished for
18 subsistence. I have watched the changes in the
19 fisheries here in southeastern, my friends in all the
20 peer groups. I have seen them taken some real hits as
21 far as reductions, to save some of the Snake River
22 salmon.

23 I would advocate for a real aggressive
24 approach in the methods that you spoke on tonight,
25 talking about restoring those areas that are taking

1 salmon away and not allowing them to get past either
2 the dams, and it's a very complex issue, one of which
3 I would like to speak to a little bit tonight, is my
4 experience with Eastern Oregon, Western Idaho, is a
5 habitat issue.

6 When those farmers and ranchers got the
7 water that they never had before, and they got so many
8 acre-feet of water, there was no real conservation
9 methods put into place, such as settling ponds. They
10 flood irrigated.

11 If they had the water, they paid for it,
12 and it went right in the irrigation ditches, waste
13 water ditches, back into the rivers.

14 With that it carried a lot of the soil with
15 it, it silted over habitat, it carried agricultural
16 chemicals and fertilizers with it.

17 So when you look at dam breaching and you
18 look at restoring the run, I think a real important
19 component of that is when those fish have a free
20 chance to go someplace, they will need improved
21 spawning gravel.

22 And some of the places you are talking
23 about tonight doesn't include the areas that I'm
24 speaking of where the tributaries of the Snake, not
25 necessarily in that area that you are talking about

1 dam breaching, but I really believe that it needs to
2 be looked at in a larger scale to address many of
3 these issues of the destroyed habitat.

4 And I thank you for the opportunity tonight
5 to speak. I will follow up with written comments.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thank you very
8 much, Wayne.

9 Richard Schuerger, followed by Nevin May,
10 followed by Susan Walsh.

11 Richard, am I saying your name right?

12 MR. RICHARD SCHUERGER: You got it
13 right. My name is Rich Schuerger, and I am a 25 year
14 resident of Alaska here, been fishing here for 25
15 years.

16 Most of the comments of my ideas have
17 already been made.

18 Alaska has very responsibly managed
19 fishery, and we have gone through a lot of
20 conservation, and it's cost people money, some people
21 more than others, different fisheries.

22 But once again, I think the habitat is the
23 key to the answer here rather than further reductions
24 of Alaska's fisheries.

25 Unfortunately, being in Alaska here, after

1 real viable and good fishery we have got going on here
2 in Alaska, because those people don't know.

3 I know you have already been there, gotten
4 comments from them. Those folks haven't got a clue of
5 what's going on. Because they don't really know.
6 They just get their ideas from what they read in the
7 newspapers and the media, that the oceans are all
8 dead, and that's not the case in Alaska.

9 And they don't realize, like the Canadians
10 didn't, that we don't take that many of their fish,
11 compared to our whole harvest that we do.

12 Thank you.

13 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thank you
14 very much, Rich.

15 Nevin May, followed by Susan Walsh,
16 followed by Gary Souza.

17 MR. NEVIN MAY: My name is Nevin May,
18 and I am I guess a 34, 35 year resident of Ketchikan.

19 I make my living commercial fishing and
20 have all the time that I have been here. And I would
21 like to be in opposition of any option that would
22 decrease our harvest of salmon in any way.

23 We have been getting decreased here it
24 seems like every year, we have been getting cut back.
25 I think it was '95, '94 we got cut back 34,000

1 Chinook, for trying to save the Snake River fish.

2 And I don't think that we can have a viable
3 fishery if we are cut back any further. It's gotten
4 to the point now where it's pretty tough. And our
5 impact on those stocks seems to be so minimal, our
6 cutting back any further wouldn't do a great deal of
7 good.

8 And we also don't have any impact on the
9 steelhead which are in trouble there. And we have no
10 impact on the bull trout which are in trouble.

11 So I think it's time to look at the habitat
12 and some of these other things that may or may not
13 solve your problems.

14 But I don't think that anybody here thinks
15 that we can, including you guys. I just don't think
16 there's a way that we can solve those problems with
17 further reductions here.

18 And it's a shame that you're not -- you're
19 only going to four cities here, instead of some of the
20 rural communities that are a hundred percent dependent
21 on fisheries to make a living, what minimal one it may
22 be.

23 And any further cutbacks would destroy, it
24 would be just hard to tell how many people's lives and
25 livelihood.

1 So I would just like to say that I would
2 oppose in any manner that I could any further
3 reductions in our harvest rates here.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thank you for
6 your comments, Nevin.

7 Susan Walsh, followed by Gary Souza,
8 followed by Jack Lee.

9 MS. SUSAN WALSH: Good evening. My
10 name is Susan Walsh, and my comments address both the
11 Corps draft environmental statement and the Federal
12 Caucus, All-H paper.

13 And I am here to support the removal of the
14 four lower Snake River dams as the best way to restore
15 the salmon runs in the Columbia River Basin.

16 As a nurse I understand all too well that
17 we can treat a child with asthma with all the
18 state-of-the-art medicine in the emergency room, as
19 you pointed out, but until we restore the environment
20 to a healthy environment, that child will continue to
21 have problems.

22 Your own science shows that no other option
23 has as high a chance of restoring those runs as taking
24 out these dams. Current harvest and further limiting
25 Alaskan fishermen won't bring the salmon back.

1 You are asking Alaskans to limit the
2 child's exposure to a canary while the dams represent
3 a smoke filled room full of dust mites, cats and dogs.

4 It is time to look at the real problems,
5 and as our Governor has stated, the hydro system is a
6 killing field for these fish, causing more than 80
7 percent human cause mortality.

8 I would also like to applaud those efforts
9 in looking in your caucus information here, to look at
10 the recovery actions and changes in ecological
11 conditions, and thus the status of the fish and
12 wildlife.

13 Mr. White did go ahead and reiterate the
14 pesticide used in the rural Idaho area and the
15 degradation stated in here when the river returns to
16 high velocity streams, and the degradation of the
17 gravel beds for spawning.

18 And I applaud your efforts of looking at
19 all of the ramifications of human impact.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thank you very
22 much, Susan.

23 Gary Souza, followed by Jack Lee, followed
24 by Kay Andrew.

25 MR. GARY SOUZA: My name is Gary

1 Souza. I am representing Tongass Sport Fishing
2 Association. And I have been a resident of Ketchikan
3 for 15 years.

4 When the National Marine Fisheries Service
5 was in this same forum five years ago to take public
6 comment on related issues, their own documents
7 summarized in other ways clearly stated that the
8 demise of the Snake River and Columbia Basin salmonids
9 was due to dams. Up to 95 percent mortality rates on
10 some years.

11 At the same time there was a blockage of up
12 to 40 percent historic spawning habitat.

13 The dams are beyond a shadow of the doubt
14 the problem. And all night you have been hearing
15 things that we as a community are against.

16 I'm going to tell you something we're for.
17 We're for every proposal to breach those dams.

18 Secondly. Further harvest restrictions to
19 deal with this problem fly directly in the face of
20 conservation measures recently reached. In 1999 the
21 state of Alaska signed the Pacific Salmon Treaty with
22 Oregon, Washington, Canada to meet, among other
23 subjects, as well as allocation, the Endangered
24 Species Act.

25 Thirdly. Resident sport fishermen, the

1 guided sport group, and commercial fishermen, all
2 these three user groups would all suffer by the
3 potential further restrictions to harvest.

4 In conclusion, I want to say this. That
5 residents of the Northwest have clearly, historically
6 made poor sacrificial choices in favor of power and
7 agriculture to the neglect of fisheries.

8 We believe strongly that it is completely
9 unfair and inequitable to cause Alaskans and visitors
10 to Alaska to suffer more for a problem not caused by
11 anyone who fishes here.

12 Thank you.

13 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thank you
14 very much, Gary.

15 Jack Lee, followed by Kay Andrew, followed
16 by Eric Hummel.

17 MR. JACK LEE: My name is Jack Lee.
18 I am about a 20 year resident up here. I am primarily
19 a sport fisherman, although I have commercial fished
20 also.

21 Pretty much everything I had to say has
22 been said.

23 If you want my blessing to take out the
24 dams, take them out (indicating). But don't think
25 your problem is going to stop there, gentlemen.

1 I was born and raised in Northeast
2 Washington, I know the problems on those rivers start
3 on the Columbia up in Canada where you've got pulp
4 mills, refineries, continues on downstream through
5 agriculture, more mills, the fish get nuked at
6 Hanford.

7 You name it. They've got a tough road to
8 hoe there. You go up the Snake. You've got a paper
9 mill that's how many millions of gallons of heated
10 water does it dump into the Snake?

11 Take them out, but don't stop. Don't come
12 back to Alaska and ask us to quit catching fish until
13 you have taken care of all of those problems, because
14 people of the Northwest have benefited from being able
15 to have cheap power, being able to raise crops in a
16 virtual desert, which is basically what benefits your
17 agriculture.

18 That's not real wet country down there
19 without the water coming out of that river.

20 So, clean it up, get rid of the pollution,
21 get rid of the agricultural runoff.

22 And, I don't know, I've seen the Columbia
23 when they let the water down behind it. It's not the
24 same as it used to be, you know. You are going to
25 have a lot of work there to restore that habitat.

1 So, let's not just say, oh, yeah, we took
2 out the dams and we did our part, now it's up to
3 Alaska, because it's not.

4 You've got a tough road to hoe ahead of you
5 there, and it's going to take a lot more than pulling
6 those dams out before me and a lot of other Alaskans
7 are going to be willing to sacrifice our fish for
8 you.

9 Thank you.

10 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thank you,
11 Jack.

12 Kay Andrew, followed by Thomas -- no,
13 followed by Eric Hummel, followed by Thomas Fisher.

14 MS. KAY ANDREW: Good evening. My
15 name is Kay Andrew. I am a life-long resident of
16 Ketchikan.

17 In my opinion Alaska has given enough.
18 It's time the federal government held Washington and
19 Oregon responsible for their problems.

20 If they want cheap power, then they will
21 have to live and accept the fish problems that they
22 are having.

23 Our community has taken a huge economical
24 hit in the last two years in the loss of our pulp
25 mill. A lot of the side timber industries that went

1 with that.

2 We can't take another hit. We can't afford
3 it. We won't be able to live in this community. We
4 provide the pristine waters to raise the fish that
5 come from all over the Northwest. It's not up to us
6 to save the poor fishery management practices of
7 Washington and Oregon.

8 The feds. ruined the fisheries in Alaska
9 when it was a territory. When we became a state and
10 the state took over the management of the resource of
11 the fisheries, they have rebuilt the fisheries to
12 record numbers.

13 Maybe what you folks ought to do is talk to
14 our fisheries experts and see what they think, what
15 their opinions are of rebuilding your stocks.

16 Fix your habitat. Remove the dams.
17 Predator problems. And all the other problems that
18 you have. And then come and talk to Alaska if you are
19 still having problems.

20 A lot of people here tonight have a lot of
21 personal feelings on this, because this is how we make
22 our living. This is why we choose to raise our
23 families in this community.

24 So we are asking you, not to give us
25 another hit. We really can't help you.

1 Thanks.

2 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thank you
3 very much, Kay.

4 Eric Hummel, followed by Thomas Fisher,
5 followed by Tim Bristol.

6 MR. ERIC HUMMEL: My name is Eric
7 Hummel. I am the director of the Tongass Conservation
8 Society. I have lived here in Ketchikan for 20 years.

9 To me what seems very obvious is that what
10 we've got is in the Columbia Basin is an ecological
11 melt down. The fact that it has accelerated, that we
12 have had listed of four species in the Snake River, is
13 where it started and now we have 19 species that I
14 count on the handout that you gave to us.

15 It is plain that this -- the trend is very
16 definitely going in the wrong direction. And that's
17 obvious also from your presentation.

18 A catastrophe, if you want to go to that
19 extreme, is something, in this case, has happened
20 because of some decisions that were made, both by the
21 agencies and basically at a regional level, as to what
22 the priorities were.

23 The problem with that is that the situation
24 has become where the economic costs and benefits are
25 not shared equally by the same people.

1 In other words, the costs go to one party
2 and the benefit goes to somebody else. And that's
3 certainly what's driven the economic boon in the
4 Pacific Northwest.

5 The problem when we start talking about the
6 analysis of it is that the same problem happens in the
7 economic analysis. It shows the costs or the benefits
8 to -- it's very easy for example to say how much power
9 is lost by the dams.

10 But when we talk about all the different
11 people who are affected at a local level here in
12 Ketchikan and Sitka, Juneau, et cetera, it's very
13 difficult to quantify.

14 Because I'm not a fisherman, and yet this
15 has an enormous effect on me. And there are lots of
16 people in Alaska and throughout the Northwest who are
17 going to experience this.

18 But the fact is, what's happened is that
19 the costs have been dispersed out over a broad enough
20 base that until finally the economic -- until the
21 ecological system has now melted down and we can no
22 longer avoid a redistribution of those costs and
23 benefits back to where they belong.

24 And the way in which to do that is to
25 breach the dams, return the habitat for the salmon,

1 not to put further costs on the Alaska fishermen.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thanks a lot,
4 Eric.

5 Tom Fisher, Thomas Fisher, followed by Tim
6 Bristol, followed by Bruce Wallace.

7 MR. THOMAS FISHER: Hi. My name is
8 Thomas Fisher. I am a 40 year resident of Ketchikan,
9 Alaska. Yes, I am a salmon troller. I have trolled
10 my own boats since I was 13 years old. I have also
11 been on the southern southeast regional agriculture
12 Board of Directors for almost 12 years.

13 I appreciate the opportunity to testify in
14 something so vital to my very existence as the
15 Columbia River Chinook and would like to thank you for
16 your time.

17 Let's talk about the magnificent creature
18 called the Chinook for a minute. As you well know,
19 Chinooks are the largest of the salmon species, and
20 the reason that that is, is because when they enter
21 fresh water to spawn, they have a long and arduous
22 journey upriver in which they eat nothing.

23 Chinook prepare themselves all of their
24 lives for this trip up the river, and all the
25 hardships that a fast running and free river

1 generates.

2 If they were to swim up a placid canal like
3 the Columbia River has been turned into, they would be
4 the size of pink salmon.

5 They have evolved into a creature that
6 needs a wild and long running river to complete their
7 life cycles.

8 As I have thought about and watched the
9 debate over the Columbia River Chinook, I have
10 marveled at how people cannot accept responsibility
11 for choices made years ago.

12 Whether the people who built these dams on
13 the Columbia River realized it or not, they made some
14 clear choices as to what was important to the Pacific
15 Northwest.

16 These choices were cheap electrical power,
17 irrigation for farms, and a port for shipping in
18 Idaho. These choices were made over the freedom of
19 the Columbia River drainage and Chinook salmon. And
20 so we sit.

21 So here we sit, trying to act as God,
22 wanting to bring back the Chinook runs that were
23 written off years ago, whether anyone realized it or
24 not.

25 But still written off when the dams were

1 constructed.

2 There seems to be a group of people and
3 interest out there that still don't want to face up to
4 the fact that they can't have their cake and eat it,
5 too. This group would much rather point their fingers
6 at the Alaskan troll fleet and say eliminate them, not
7 the dams.

8 This seems totally idiotic. The troll
9 fleet has been in existence for a hundred years, and
10 the salmon have continued to thrive in Alaska, as long
11 as they have free rivers to swim up.

12 It is always easier to point your fingers
13 at somebody else than accept responsibilities for
14 choices made and lifestyles you live.

15 I read somewhere a year or so ago that a
16 billion dollars had been spent on the Columbia River
17 Chinook and was amazed at how foolishly money can be
18 spent.

19 I wonder why this money was not spent on
20 salmon runs that are still healthy enough that they
21 would generate some returns for the monies spent.

22 As I think about the Endangered Species
23 Act, I am amazed at man and how he thinks he can stop
24 evolution and act a God.

25 I think there comes a time when we must

1 realize that as humans, we've messed up. And not
2 throw good money after bad.

3 We should look at species that we can
4 actually do some good at protecting, whether it be
5 fish or some little bug. Spend money there and not
6 try to reverse time and eliminate lifestyles that had
7 no voices in choices made.

8 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Tom, I am
9 going to have to ask you as to wrap up.

10 MR. THOMAS FISHER: Well, I know.
11 One of the things that I really resent about this is
12 you come to town, and you give us three minutes, you
13 know, to say, talk about this, and this is the only
14 chance I'm going to get to say my piece, and I've got
15 six minutes on this testimony.

16 I tried to shorten it.

17 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Well, I will
18 tell you will what, we have allowed three minutes for
19 everybody in the region.

20 What I would like you to do is ask that you
21 turn that in for us. The written testimony is going
22 to be very important to us.

23 MR. RICHARD POLLEN: I give you my
24 three minutes. I have signed up.

25 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Does that work

1 for what you have for the Corps?

2 MR. WADDELL: It don't mess up
3 anything. We do want your testimony.

4 MR. THOMAS FISHER: I will present it
5 written, but would I like --

6 MR. WADDELL: It's on record if you
7 give us the paper.

8 MR. THOMAS FISHER: I don't believe
9 there are enough salmon in the Columbia River to
10 regenerate the runs of yesterday.

11 Even if we could turn back time and destroy
12 the dams, which is the only thing that might work.

13 I fear, though, that the easier choice is
14 to tell the Alaskan troller that he can no longer work
15 at his chosen profession; harvesting healthy salmon
16 runs.

17 I have considerable money and sweat equity
18 wrapped up in my fishing business, and a 75 percent
19 reduction in the Chinook quota in Alaska puts me out
20 of business and making my investment worthless.

21 If the federal government should decide to
22 restrict the Chinook catch in Alaska as drastically as
23 proposed to protect a few hundred Chinook, then we the
24 harvesters of this great resource should be
25 compensated.

1 people of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest in your
2 determination as to what to do about the Chinook of
3 the Columbia River.

4 Perhaps you could look at other river
5 systems and salmon runs that are not yet extinct and
6 see if they are not a better choice to concentrate
7 effort and money rather than a few hundred Chinook
8 that have no chance of surviving no matter what we
9 do.

10 It is said we have met -- It is sad we have
11 messed up something as magnificent as the Columbia
12 River Chinook. However, the reality of the situation
13 is we have. And now it is time we learn from our
14 mistakes and not allow it to happen again. We should
15 spend our money and resources in areas that will
16 actually benefit and protect what we have left of
17 healthy salmon resources.

18 Let's wake up to reality and put our
19 efforts into what we actually have left, rather than
20 destroy people's way of life over something we lost 50
21 years ago.

22 I thank you for your time.

23 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thank you
24 very much, Thomas.

25 Tim Bristol, followed by Bruce Wallace,

1 followed by F. N. Herff.

2 MR. TIM BRISTOL: My name is Tim
3 Bristol. I am here from the Save Our Wild Salmon
4 Coalition, a group made up of commercial, sport, and
5 recreational fishing interests, and conservation
6 groups and citizens from all walks of life down in the
7 Northwest and up here in Alaska.

8 I just want to thank the Federal Caucus for
9 coming here and listening to what we have to say and
10 also thank the Federal Caucus for actually coming up
11 with an issue that I think just about all southeast
12 Alaskans can agree upon. From a conservation
13 standpoint, it's not that often that that happens
14 here.

15 I would just like to reiterate the support
16 for Alternative A, which is dam removal. I think the
17 reason we are actually going through this exercise
18 right now is because authorities have spent 25 years
19 and about three billion dollars on technical fixes
20 associated with these dams, that just don't simply
21 work.

22 The dams don't make sense anymore.
23 Breaching these four dams on the Snake is clearly in
24 the best interests of Alaska, commercial, sport,
25 subsistence fisheries.

1 And one of the things I was looking at the
2 paper here tonight, breaching the four lower Snake
3 River dams, it says, is it sufficient, and then it
4 says in bold type, probably not. But if you go down
5 underneath here, one of the sub heads, it says, likely
6 to be sufficient for Snake River fall Chinook and
7 steelhead.

8 And fall Snake River Chinook is the one
9 that we are on the hook so to speak for here. I would
10 have liked to have seen that in bigger type. I think
11 that is a really important point.

12 And just to follow up on what most people
13 have said here, it is pretty clear that Alaska
14 commercial fishing interests and sport fishing
15 interests just are not the cause of the problem here,
16 and I would like to see them held harmless in this
17 process.

18 We just went through the Pacific salmon
19 treaty. A lot of tough choices were made here,
20 sacrifices were made, fish were given up. And the
21 Pacific Northwest is now facing a very difficult
22 choice, a very tough choice, but it's one that they
23 have to make, it's their problem, and the solution has
24 to be -- has to evolve down there, and clearly the
25 best first step is to breach these four dams on the

1 Snake.

2 Thanks again for coming and listening to
3 what I had to say and what everybody else had to say
4 tonight.

5 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thank you,
6 Tim.

7 Bruce Wallace, followed by F. W. Herff.

8 MR. BRUCE WALLACE: Good evening. My
9 name is Bruce Wallace. I am a commercial fisherman
10 and I have been down the road that you guys are on
11 more times than I care to think about.

12 I think I am going to speak to the Federal
13 Caucus paper, try to be a little bit specific. Except
14 that much like Jack Lee and John Burke, I think the
15 question really, you've got four elements here, but
16 you only really have one singular element, and that's
17 habitat.

18 And I've looked all the way through the
19 Path program, the rest of it. There's been a very
20 clear political structure that never elevates habitat
21 to where it should be.

22 The scientists go run the papers, and then
23 the policy and the political and the dollars that are
24 involved diminish it.

25 Quite frankly, you've got a hundred year

1 planning event in habitat. You've got something less
2 than that in hydro. You've got a five-year minimum
3 planning event in hatcheries. And then in harvest
4 you've got an immediate, you can turn it off if you
5 have to.

6 I mean, we do that here on an E.O. basis
7 regularly. I understand across jurisdictions it would
8 not be that easy. But the practical impact of harvest
9 is that you can do it very quickly.

10 I think that maybe nobody really understood
11 in the Columbia River Basin what they did, but we have
12 changed the Basin, it is not and never will be what it
13 was. The runs that were there, the systems that were
14 there are gone.

15 And I think the fact is, we have the
16 Endangered Species Act that is targeted and has
17 highlighted certain stocks, but the real clear
18 situation is that the system's failing. It's failing
19 or adjusting, you can use either term, and I think
20 under the endangered species you say failing.

21 If you look at it from a practical real
22 time, it's probably adjusting. You've got new
23 species, you've got dominances coming up that weren't
24 there at all a hundred years ago, and are only, you
25 know, now showing a real strong position in the

1 biostructure.

2 So I guess, you've heard a lot of not in my
3 own back yard. I think it's legitimate. I don't
4 think that there's a thing that quite frankly we can
5 do here that has any substantive effect. I think
6 Larry's 200 fish, you got down to 70, and I think we
7 got him down to lower than that when we did it with a
8 real calculator.

9 But the fact of the matter is, we can't
10 pass enough savings out of this fishery with anything
11 near reasonable controls to do anything for that run
12 as it stands.

13 So I guess as it relates to the caucus, I'd
14 like Alternative A, but I would take the first two in
15 harvest and hydro, and then I'd move that
16 significantly improved habitat over and put it in that
17 first Alternative A, and take the language under
18 hatcheries that say increased conservation hatchery
19 programs, move that into that column, and that would
20 be what I think might be the best road, although I
21 think, as many people have said, --

22 There's got to be a standard set. I did
23 not hear you say where we were going to, what we were
24 trying to achieve or what this group is trying to
25 achieve.

1 Where is the bench mark? Because I think
2 without that bench mark clearly identified, all the
3 decisions are somewhat moot.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thanks very
6 much, Bruce.

7 F. W. Herff. And I don't have anybody else
8 signed up, so if anybody else is going to want to
9 testify, come on up and give me your name and I will
10 get you on the list.

11 MR. F. W. HERFF: Good evening. My
12 name is Willy Herff. I have lived here 29 years, and
13 I just happened to work for Water Fall Resort.

14 I got a grin out of somebody. That's good.

15 The policies by the federal government is
16 divide and concur. This old German guy who immigrated
17 here 29 years ago could tell you something about that.

18 They done it with the timber industry.
19 There was ample opportunities, hundreds of meetings,
20 and I went to them, and we were told that our import
21 was very important, because people's livelihoods
22 depended on it.

23 And it was very important that Washington,
24 whoever was in charge, everybody said, I have nothing
25 to do with it, it was somebody above me, they will

1 listen, they will take it in consideration.

2 Excuse me. There is no more timber
3 industry.

4 They divided Alaskans. They pitted all
5 fishermen against the timber, and they achieved their
6 goal, with the help of environmentalists that
7 infiltrated the Forest Service, and that's been going
8 on since the '70s. That is how they achieved it.

9 Now you are coming to the fish.

10 Years ago I cautioned people, they are
11 going to try to divide us.

12 So here's what I would like to tell
13 everybody. If we're commercial, sport, guided,
14 whatever, canneries, native rights, if you like this
15 state, and you care about it, anybody that's
16 listening, if we don't form an organization that speak
17 with one voice, protect all of us, against the
18 predator, which is the federal government, because you
19 have no clue, you have no plan, you have a cost
20 estimate.

21 Well, that was cute. How much did it cost
22 to shoot the state of Alaska down? Your numbers are
23 nothing compared to that. More people moving out.
24 Jobs are lost. You have no numbers for that. There
25 are no numbers. It's real life.

1 So get a life, get a grip. You make your
2 own bed down there. Sleep in it. Don't take anything
3 away. We gave all we had to give.

4 Thank you very much for listening to me.

5 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thank you very
6 much, Willy.

7 We have one more signature, so George
8 Winter, would you like to come on up.

9 MR. GEORGE WINTER: Hi. I am George
10 Winter. And I have been around here a while.

11 I disagree with my brother who just spoke.
12 I don't think the environmentalists did this. And I
13 hear, we didn't do it down there.

14 I think what's being bypassed, and I think
15 with some intention, is a toxic cesspool has
16 developed.

17 We had one of my brothers -- I agree with
18 most of the people that talked about things coming
19 from the tributaries. Pulp mills and so forth further
20 up. I've got neighbors, we're getting refugees now
21 from the farm land of Washington State, Columbia
22 Basin.

23 They are making the mistake of drinking the
24 water that comes from the irrigation. It goes back in
25 their wells.

1 That's what the fish have to come through.

2 Now, I don't mind breaching the dams and
3 doing some things you are talking about. But the
4 federal government, and in particular the EPA, is
5 bypassing some of their main responsibilities.

6 And we're expected to take up for the
7 losses that the toxic waste along with the rest of the
8 habitat problems were causing for the fish.

9 And I think one of the things we need to
10 know is that we're not going to solve this problem
11 through the government. I do agree with my previous
12 brother, they listen, but not for the purposes that
13 are spoken to us.

14 And some of these people are very well
15 intentioned.

16 I think from Prince Rupert, we might learn
17 a little lesson. I am not sure it's exactly the thing
18 to do.

19 But if you want to affect what happens in
20 your life, what happens to your community, then you
21 have to come together as environmentalists, fishermen,
22 and start doing things in terms of direct action.

23 Start affecting the economy. Stop a few
24 cruise ships for a while. Do something that makes us
25 noticed. We'll be listened to, just like the labor

1 movement was listened to when there was enough people
2 who would take to the street, sit down on the jobs,
3 and then they had to legalize unions.

4 But it took that kind of thing, and it's
5 going to take it from us, it's going to take the same
6 thing from my brothers and sisters.

7 We the people who are below the business
8 level, the government level, have to come together
9 once again. And we can do it.

10 MS. DONNA SILVERBERG: Thank you,
11 George.

12 That's the last person who signed up to
13 testify. So I think with that, is there anybody else
14 who wants to testify who's not on the list?

15 All right. Then with that, I want to thank
16 you all very, very much. If you have questions you
17 want to ask folks up front, please come on up and ask
18 them.

19 Thank you so much for your attention
20 tonight and for your participation. You have been a
21 wonderful group to be with and it has been a pleasure
22 to have you testifying. Thank you for having us.

23

24

(8:30 p.m.)

25

1 STATE OF OREGON)
2 County of Umatilla) ss.
3)

4 I, William J. Bridges, do hereby certify
5 that at the time and place heretofore mentioned in the
6 caption of the foregoing matter, I was a Certified
7 Shorthand Reporter for the State of Oregon; that at
8 said time and place I reported in stenotype all
9 testimony adduced and proceedings had in the foregoing
10 matter; that thereafter my notes were reduced to
11 typewriting and that the foregoing transcript
12 consisting, of 40 typewritten pages is a true and
13 correct transcript of all such testimony adduced and
14 proceedings had and of the whole thereof.

15 Witness my hand at Pendleton, Oregon, on
16 this _____ day of April, 2000.

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William J. Bridges
Certified Shorthand Reporter
Certificate No. 91-0244
My certificate expires: 10-31-99