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Corps of Engineers announces plans for 14-week Columbia Snake River System lock closure

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has announced a 14-week extended lock closure on the Columbia Snake River System. The planned outage will take place from Dec 12, 2016 through March 20, 2017. PNWA is pleased that the federal government continues to make targeted investments in the Columbia Snake River System, a vital transportation highway for the region and the nation. With grain and other cargo volumes in the Northwest expected to increase considerably over the next decade, these repairs will allow our region to handle growth for many years to come.

The Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA) is working closely with the Corps to ensure key river system stakeholders are updated throughout the planning process. “The successful 2011 coordinated maintenance closure of our river system is now viewed as a national model. There was a high level of communication between the Corps and river users, and the end result was a very smooth process which helped reduce the impacts to growers and shippers,” stated Kristin Meira, Executive Director of PNWA. “This type of planned and coordinated event is very different from an emergency or permanent closure. Early notice and advance planning of this kind allows grain growers, shippers and buyers overseas to coordinate the most ideal time to move cargo. During the 2011 event we saw that many folks chose to barge their goods prior to the closure, or hold product until the barge system reopened. When the locks went back in service, there was a flurry of activity and we saw the cargo return to barge transportation – the most efficient, lowest cost, most environmentally friendly way to move goods.”

The Columbia Snake River System is the top wheat export gateway in the United States, and our inland barging system plays a significant role in supporting this trade. PNWA looks forward to working with the Corps, our growers, and shippers, to help ensure another successful outcome for our river system.

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About PNWA. PNWA is a non-profit trade association that advocates for federal policies and funding in support of regional economic development. Members include over 130 public ports, navigation, transportation, trade, tourism, agriculture, forest products, energy and local government interests in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.