



October 29, 2015

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**In Memoriam: Dr. Fred Bennett, retired Port of Walla Walla Commissioner**

We are saddened to report the passing of retired Port of Walla Walla Commissioner Dr. Fred Bennett on October 24th. Dr. Bennett served as a Port Commissioner from 1980-1991 and again from 1998 to 2009. He retired in 2009, leaving a legacy of service, leadership and progress.

Fred Bennett graduated from Walla Walla College in 1955. After working for the U.S. Navy Bureau of Ships in Washington, D. C. and the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, he returned to his alma mater in 1961 as a faculty member, becoming a Professor of Engineering. In addition to his teaching duties at Walla Walla College, Dr. Bennett was involved in the design and construction of the Walla Walla General Hospital building in 1975-1976, as well as many construction projects on the college campus. He also designed a highway bridge in the Tri Cities and was named "Tri City Engineer of the Year" by the Washington Society of Professional Engineers.

Dr. Bennett was a recognized leader in advocating for regional transportation investment, including the four-laning of U.S. Highway 12 from Burbank to Walla Walla, and strongly supported navigation on the Columbia Snake River System. He was a longtime friend of the PNWA staff and membership for decades. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Dr. Bennett's family and friends.



## **Committee on the Maritime Transportation System releases federal funding handbook**

On October 26th, the U.S. Committee on the Maritime Transportation System (CMTS) and the White House Build America Initiative released a handbook outlining over 85 federal programs supporting the Marine Transportation System (MTS). These programs provide grants, loans, or direct funding for infrastructure investments related to the MTS and intermodal connections. The handbook includes detailed information for each program including criteria for implementation and points of contact. For more information and to view this comprehensive resource, click [here](#)

## **FY2015 TIGER Grants announced**

Today, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced the 2015 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recover (TIGER) grant recipients. The Department received 627 applications earlier this year, and awarded 39 transportation projects funding. Highlights in the Northwest include [\\$2 million for the Port of Newport's international deep water marine terminal](#) , and \$10 million for the Washington State Department of Transportation to replace the Mukilteo ferry terminal. For more information on the TIGER grant program and to see a list of 2015 recipients, click [here](#).

## **House passes surface transportation extension, Ex-Im Bank reauthorization bills**

Earlier this week, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a [short-term surface transportation extension](#) through November 20th. Meanwhile, the House's six-year reauthorization bill titled the [Surface Transportation Reauthorization & Reform Act of 2015 \(STRR\)](#), was passed out of the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee last week and is expected to be on the House floor

shortly. The Senate passed their transportation bill, the [DRIVE Act](#), in July and Congressional leaders are hopeful that a conference committee will agree on a final bill for the President to sign in December.

This week, the House also passed [Export-Import \(Ex-Im\) Bank reauthorization](#). The Ex-Im Bank's authorization expired in June of this year, prohibiting new financing for U.S. exporters. The Senate included Ex-Im reauthorization in their DRIVE Act, so it is anticipated that the Ex-Im Bank legislation could be rolled into the greater surface transportation reauthorization bill when the House and Senate go to conference.

## Seattle energy group releases report on dams

The Northwest Energy Coalition, a Seattle-based environmental group, recently released a study looking at impacts to ratepayers if the Snake River dams were breached. The study, "Restoring wild salmon: power system costs and benefits of lower Snake River dam removal", argues that removing the Snake River dams would only add \$1-2 per month to the average Northwest utility bill. The study's authors did not take into consideration the navigation, irrigation, or flood control benefits provided by the dams.

Conclusions in the study are based largely from the flawed study by former Corps employee Jim Waddell. Nor'wester readers will remember Mr. Waddell is part of the latest round of attacks on the Snake River dams, and regularly puts out articles with incorrect data overestimating the cost of maintaining this infrastructure. This new study uses Mr. Waddell's claims as the baseline for the report.

Earlier this summer, the Center for Economic Development Education and Research (CEDER) released a [study](#) which highlighted the numerous flaws in Mr. Waddell's methodology for calculating the costs associated with running the dams.

Additionally, the Coalition's study also cites "RevenueStream", a study released by Save Our Wild Salmon in 2006, which was [subsequently refuted](#) by the Independent Economic Analysis Board in 2007.

## Snake River dams press - Claims vs. Facts

A recent [Associated Press story](#) on the Snake River contains some good information, but also includes several erroneous statements made by dam opponents. These statements have formed the backbone of the case for removing the Snake River dams.

Below are some of these claims, followed by rebuttals for the statements used by the activists.

Claim: "Migrating fish died by the thousands this summer because higher than normal water temperatures in the reservoirs."

Fact: The water behind the dams actually heated up at a slower rate than undammed rivers, giving the fish a better chance at survival, according to the Corps of Engineers.

Claim: "Young fish have trouble negotiating the reservoirs and can get lost and die. Longer spawning journeys also leave fish exhausted when they finally reach the ocean."

Fact: There is no scientific evidence that the Snake River dams have any impact on fish mortality in the ocean. In fact, scientists monitored both fish from the Yakima River, which traverse only four Columbia River dams on their way to the sea, and fish migrating through all eight Snake and Columbia River dams. They tracked the two groups all the way to Willapa Bay on the Washington Coast, and observed no difference in survival.

Claim: "Killer whales in the Pacific Ocean depend on Chinook salmon as a mainstay of their diets, and would be helped if the dams were breached"

Fact: Puget Sound orca populations were decimated by the "live-capture" practices for aquarium display in the late 1960s and into the early 1970s. Since the penning and removal of orcas from Northwest waters ceased in the mid-1970s, their numbers have very slowly begun to increase. Depending on the time of year, their diet consists of Fraser River, Puget Sound, and Columbia River salmon. Columbia Snake River fish runs have logged some of their highest numbers to date in recent years.

The story behind the Snake River dams is one of successful partnerships between tribes, federal and state agencies, utilities, and navigation. The dams are among the most advanced, fish-friendly projects in the entire country. They provide a balanced portfolio of energy and trade benefits that is vital to our region. For more information check out [www.snakeriverdams.com](http://www.snakeriverdams.com).