

Contact: Scott Clemans, Communications Director, PNWA
503-234-8551 or scott.clemans@pnwa.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 17, 2020

PNWA reacts to Oregon governor's Snake River dams letter

PORTLAND, Ore. – The Pacific Northwest Waterways Association reacted today to Oregon Governor Kate Brown's Feb. 11 letter to Washington Governor Jay Inslee, expressing Brown's support for breaching the four lower Snake River dams.

"We share Governor Brown's passion for the recovery of the three southern resident orca pods that frequent Puget Sound, and the Snake River salmon runs that make up a portion of those orcas' diet. But the timing of the governor's letter is surprising. The federal agencies that operate the lower Snake River dams and others in the Columbia Basin are currently conducting a comprehensive science-based evaluation of salmon and the river system, and will issue a draft report and recommendations at the end of February. That report is being developed in collaboration with and input from a variety of Oregon and Washington state agencies," said PNWA Executive Director Kristin Meira.

"The States of Oregon and Washington, like all other partners and stakeholders of these federal projects, will have an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the draft environmental impact statement in just a few weeks. Indeed, Governor Inslee's office commissioned a \$750,000 stakeholder engagement process to inform his review and feedback. It is surprising to see a letter of this nature, expressing a position for the State of Oregon for an extreme approach on the river system, prior to the release of the federal agencies' proposed operations," Meira said.

"PNWA is also concerned about the scientifically inaccurate information in the letter. Its portrayal of the role and importance of the lower Snake River dams in the survival of the southern resident orcas is at odds with information available from NOAA Fisheries, the federal agency responsible for the recovery of both orcas and Chinook salmon," Meira said.

"The lower Snake River dams are federal projects. Since their construction in the 1960s and 1970s, every presidential administration and every Congress has recognized the immense benefits to the region those projects provide, and funded their continued operation accordingly and without interruption," Meira said.

As conversations continue in the region and the federal study process moves forward, PNWA will continue to support clean renewable hydropower, efficient barge transportation, and science-based salmon recovery.

The [Pacific Northwest Waterways Association](#) is a non-profit trade association of ports, businesses, public agencies and individuals who support navigation, energy, trade and economic development throughout the Pacific Northwest.