



PACIFIC NORTHWEST WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 26, 2022

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PNWA appreciates recognition by Senator Murray and Governor Inslee that dam breaching is not feasible

Basin-wide effort is needed for lasting salmon recovery

The [Pacific Northwest Waterways Association](#) (PNWA) has reviewed the [recommendations](#) released by U.S. Senator Patty Murray and Washington Governor Jay Inslee today regarding breaching of the four Lower Snake River dams. The recommendations recognize that more information must be known before dam breaching can truly be considered as a viable option moving forward. The recommendations also note that the services provided by the dams must be replaced or mitigated prior to any decommissioning or breaching, and that near-term actions across the basin are needed to help ensure salmon survival.

“PNWA is pleased to see that Senator Murray and Governor Inslee recognize the importance of the Lower Snake River dams to our economy and our environment,” said PNWA Executive Director Heather Stebbings. “We share their concern about the future of the salmon and agree that there are many efforts in the region that can take place outside of breaching that would have significant positive benefits for the fish. We stand ready to help where we can, and to advocate for future funding to ensure that programs like habitat and ecosystem restoration, toxics reduction, predator abatement and more can be established, and that our federal agencies can better understand ecosystem impacts on the full lifecycle of our iconic fish.”

PNWA and its members, including Northwest farmers and shippers, appreciate that the importance of agriculture to our Northwest communities was recognized by Senator Murray and Governor Inslee in their recommendation.

“The Columbia and Snake rivers are the third-largest grain export corridor in the world, the single largest corridor for U.S. wheat exports, and a critical irrigation system for nearly 300,000 acres of Washington state farmland,” said PNWA President and Washington Grain Commission CEO Glen Squires. “We appreciate Senator Murray and Governor Inslee’s recognition of the importance of our farmers, the food they produce, and the barge transportation and irrigation that many of them rely on, to our region and nation. Now is not the time to make such great changes which would hurt U.S. farmers and significantly impact U.S. competitiveness in the global market, costing us trade, jobs, and economic stability here in the Northwest.”

“The recommendations by Senator Murray and Governor Inslee are a recognition that agriculture plays an important role in our regional economy, and that a decision as consequential as dam breaching requires a thoughtful, balanced approach,” said Leslie Druffel, PNWA Inland Ports and Navigation Group Co-Chair and Outreach Director for The McGregor Company. “Farmers, and the industries that support

them, believe that salmon and dams can and do co-exist and that we can have healthy rivers and a healthy economy. We are looking forward to contributing to the conversation and to supporting a basin-wide approach to salmon recovery going forward.”

PNWA supports using the dams as a backbone of the region’s clean energy efforts, including continuing to utilize barging on the river system, which is the most efficient, least carbon-intensive way to move cargo.

“We should be using the dams as the foundation of our clean energy efforts and barging as the way to move Northwest goods to and from market in the most fuel efficient, reliable, and safest way possible,” said Stebbings. “The alternative is to have increased emissions, congestion on our roads, and more damage to the environment, which would impact our region’s efforts to recover salmon runs and to protect the environment as a whole.”

The renewable, affordable, reliable hydropower generated by the dams provides the baseload power to meet both grid reliability and our region’s aggressive decarbonization requirements. Removing the dams would likely delay the achievement of a zero-carbon grid by three to five years and add 5 million to 8.5 million metric tons of CO2 to the atmosphere. Climate impacts related to shifting from barging to rail or truck would also be significant. In 2020, 4.2 million tons of cargo moved on the Snake River by barge. It would take 42,160 rail cars or 162,153 semi-trucks to carry that same amount of cargo. This means an increase in 5 million gallons of diesel consumption each year, bringing with it 1.2 million tons of CO2 and other harmful emissions.

PNWA remains committed to a basin-wide solution to salmon recovery that balances the energy, transportation, and agricultural benefits of the system while addressing the many threats to salmon. These include pollution, habitat degradation, predation, and importantly, ocean conditions, which the scientific community generally agrees is one of the largest drivers of salmonid mortality.

“For years Senator Murray and Governor Inslee have provided funding for salmon recovery, including ecosystem restoration, toxics cleanup, infrastructure improvements, and much more,” said Stebbings. “These are the kinds of investments that are delivering the results salmon need as we continue developing and implementing comprehensive solutions that improve salmon runs for our generation and for those after.”

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The Pacific Northwest Waterways Association is a non-profit, non-partisan trade association of ports, businesses, public agencies and individuals who support navigation, energy, trade and economic development throughout the region. Learn more at www.pnwa.net.