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NORTHWEST POWER AND CONSERVATION COUNCIL DRAFT 2026
COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM
PUBLIC HEARING

TRANSCRIPT OF NORTHWEST POWER AND CONSERVATION
COUNCIL DRAFT 2026 COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN FISH AND
WILDLIFE PROGRAM
PUBLIC HEARING

HELD ON

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026

4:32 P.M.

YAKIMA, WASHINGTON

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1 APPEARANCES

2
3 NORTHWEST POWER AND CONSERVATION COUNCIL:

4 Les Purce, Washington Council Vice Chair, NWPCC

5 KC Golden, Washington Council Member, NWPCC

6 Kym Buzdygon, Public Affairs Director, NWPCC

7 Sara Mounts, Executive Assistant, NWPCC

8 Stacy Horton, Policy Analyst/Biologist, NWPCC

9 Peter Cogswell, Executive Director, NWPCC

10 Rudy Salakory, Policy Analyst, NWPCC

11 Kate Self, Fish and Wildlife Scientist, NWPCC

12
13 PUBLIC ATTENDEES:

14 Aileen Kane, Self

15 Thomas Creasap, Self

16 Edward Lisowski, Self

17 Margie Van Cleve, Sierra Club

18 Suki Smaglik, Self

19 Cindy Olivas, League of Women Voters

20 David Van Cleve, Cascadioms

21 John Littell, Self

22 Yvonne Colfax, Self

23 Josh Lozano, Benton REA

24 Larry Pryor, NW Fisheries

25 Matt Fairbank, Self

APPEARANCES (CONTINUED)

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Michael Barrow, The Center for Transboundary Marine
Resource Policy
Leland Bill, Yakima Nation
Urban Eberhart, Kittitas Reclamation District
Athena Tambarillo, YUC
AJ Cooper, Self
Karina Solorio WCA
Victor Valerio, NWRP
Lottie Sam, Yakima Nation
Jamaica Zogelman, Self
Susan Fleming, League of Women Voters
David Fast, Retired Yakima

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7
8 MR. GOLDEN: Welcome everyone and thank
9 you for being here. My name is KC Golden, I'm a
10 Washington member of the Northwest Power Planning
11 Council. My counterpart, the other Washington
12 member, Les Purce is Vice Chair of the Council and
13 is here with us, and this is the Yakima hearing to
14 collect your comments and guidance on the Draft 2026
15 Fish and Wildlife Program.

16 I'm going to read a formal statement that
17 needs to be read into the record about what we're
18 doing here in just a second, but before I do that,
19 we have many of the staff who have helped craft this
20 program and put their very hard work and
21 considerable skill and talent to the wheel to
22 produce this draft and they're here with us tonight,
23 and I want you to -- to note them as well.

24 We have Rudy Salakory visiting from the
25 great State of Oregon, staff to the Oregon Council

1 Members. Kym Buzdygon, our Public Affairs Director,
2 is in the back. Stacy Horton, Washington staff is
3 here. Kate Self, who you'll hear from in just a
4 moment about what we're up to, and who am I missing?

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sara. Peter and
6 Sara.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sara.

8 MR. GOLDEN: Peter Cogswell, Executive
9 Director, is here, and Sara Mounts from the
10 Washington Staff. So that's us, and here's the --
11 the formal business, the little bit of formal
12 business for tonight.

13 I would like to call this public hearing
14 to order. I already told you who I am. And the way
15 we're going to do this tonight is that anyone
16 wishing to provide public comment should sign up on
17 the list provided at the back of the room. We have
18 the first few signup sheets here already. When the
19 time comes to hear your comments, I'll call people
20 up to testify in the order in which you're signed
21 up. Each person will have four minutes to speak.
22 Sara will help us keep time and make sure we -- we
23 stay within limits.

24 We have a court reporter recording
25 everything. She is right there. And if you have

1 any written comments, it's -- with you physically
2 here today, it's important you leave those with her.
3 It's also important to spell your name when you come
4 up to make your comments, and I'll help you remember
5 that, so the court reporter gets them right. And
6 here is our statement for the administrative record.

7 Under the Northwest Power Act, the
8 Northwest Power and Conservation Council adopts and
9 periodically amends a program to protect, mitigate,
10 and enhance fish and wildlife affected by the
11 development and operation of hydroelectric
12 facilities on the Columbia River and its
13 tributaries. The current version of the program is
14 the 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife
15 Program with a 2020 addendum.

16 The Council's in the process of amending
17 this Fish and Wildlife Program in a formal amendment
18 process under the Act. We recently released the
19 Draft of the 2026 Fish and Wildlife Program. The
20 Council's now at the stage of the amendment process
21 where we're -- we're receiving public comment on
22 that Draft Program. The formal comment period
23 extends until March 2, 2026.

24 Council's conducting public hearings like
25 this one to receive oral comments on the draft. We

1 have the court reporter in attendance. The
2 transcript of this hearing will be circulated to all
3 Council members and staff and will be included in
4 the administrative record for this program amendment
5 process. The Council is all -- also accepting
6 written comments on the Draft Fish and Wildlife
7 Program until March 2nd, Instructions for how to
8 comment in writing are on the Council's website, and
9 you can also ask any of the staff in the room about
10 how to do that.

11 And just to conclude the formal part of
12 this to say, you know, that's the -- that's the --
13 that's the formal thing. Public participation,
14 public comment, public transparency, public guidance
15 on what the Council does is not just a formality.
16 It is a legal requirement, but it's also much more
17 than that.

18 The Council was created in significant
19 part to get broader participation in these decisions
20 that affect us all, and I know that you all --
21 there's a lot going on out there, and there's a lot
22 of demands on us as citizens right now, and so the
23 fact that you're here tonight and putting the car
24 and thought and attention into these important
25 decisions is very well appreciated, I know, by the

1 Council members and staff, and really truly is an
2 important part of how we -- how we get to the final
3 program, not just a formality.

4 So thank you so much for being here. And
5 now I want to turn it over to Kate to describe the
6 program a little bit.

7 MS. SELF: Thank you, Chair Golden. And
8 good evening, everyone, and welcome to this public
9 hearing on the Northwest Power and Conservation
10 Council's Draft 2026 Columbia River Basin Fish and
11 Wildlife Program. My name is Kate Self, and I am a
12 Fish and Wildlife Program scientist with the
13 Council. I am going to give a short presentation on
14 the Council and the Fish and Wildlife Program, and
15 then we'll open it up to you for public comment.

16 Who we are. The Council was created by
17 Congress under the Northwest Power Act of 1980 to
18 give the Pacific Northwest a greater voice in power
19 planning and protecting fish and wildlife. The
20 Council is an interstate compact agency representing
21 the basin states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and
22 Washington. The governors of each state appoints
23 two members, and we've got our great Washington
24 members here tonight as you just heard.

25 The Northwest Power Act requires the

1 Council to develop with public participation a
2 regional power plan and a fish and wildlife program.
3 Federal agencies including the Bonneville Power
4 Administration, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Army
5 Corps of Engineers, and the Federal Energy
6 Regulatory Commission all have legal
7 responsibilities under the Act.

8 First, I'll briefly touch on our role in
9 power planning. The Council must develop a 20-year
10 regional power plan to ensure an adequate,
11 efficient, economical, and reliable power supply for
12 the Pacific Northwest. The Council considers how
13 much energy the region will need and what resources
14 are available to meet that need beginning with
15 energy efficiency.

16 The Council's power plan guides Bonneville
17 Power Administration's acquisition of cost-effective
18 resources. It also serves as an important technical
19 resource for the region. The power plan is reviewed
20 and revised every five years as well, and the draft
21 of the next power plan called the 9th Power Plan is
22 expected in mid-2026, so this year. As with the
23 Fish and Wildlife Program, there will be multiple
24 opportunities for public comment on the power plan,
25 and we also hope to hear from you at that time.

1 The Council's Fish and Wildlife Program is
2 updated about every five years as -- as you heard
3 based primarily on the recommendations from the
4 state and federal fish and wildlife agencies and
5 tribes along with other partners as directed by the
6 Northwest Power Act. The Fish and Wildlife Program
7 is intended to protect, mitigate, and enhance all
8 fish and wildlife impacted by the hydropower system.
9 This includes onsite mitigation measures at the dams
10 like changes to flow and passage, and offsite
11 mitigation measures like habitat restoration and
12 artificial production or hatcheries.

13 The Council's Fish and Wildlife Program
14 has been in place for over 40 years. It is one of
15 the largest mitigation efforts in the world,
16 covering an area roughly the size of France. It has
17 grown and evolved over time based on the best
18 available science, and while progress is evident,
19 the Council recognizes that more work remains to be
20 done.

21 Over the 40-year life of the Program,
22 there have been significant accomplishments.
23 Changes to how the hydro system operates as well as
24 improved passage at dams has benefited both adult
25 and juvenile migration. Habitat work has protected,

1 restored, or improved hundreds of thousands of acres
2 of land across the region.

3 The Columbia Basin Water Transactions
4 Program has collaborated with willing landowners and
5 irrigation districts to keep water in streams when
6 fish need it, and artificial production programs
7 support both conservation and harvest objectives.
8 Over 1,800 fish screens have been installed and
9 maintained to keep fish out of irrigation systems,
10 and that's just to name a few.

11 Next, I'll talk about how the Fish and
12 Wildlife Program gets updated. There are many steps
13 that we have to take to amend the Fish and Wildlife
14 Program beginning with the call for recommendations
15 that went out to the region in January of 2025 and
16 the subsequent public comment period. We released a
17 Draft Program in December of 2025, and we are now
18 accepting comments on that Draft until March 2nd of
19 this year. The Council's goal is to release a final
20 Fish and Wildlife Program in May of 2026.

21 We received hundreds of recommendations
22 and thousands of comments during this amendment
23 process, and the Council has considered them very
24 carefully over the last six months. Over the course
25 of this review, some topics seemed to be of

1 particular urgency or importance to the region.

2 Priorities identified for the Draft
3 Program include making sure that assets and projects
4 have the funding they need to continue to function
5 and benefit fish and wildlife, having consistent and
6 stable hydro operations over a longer period of time
7 that keeps water moving, increases velocities, and
8 minimizes fluctuations, assessing and managing
9 predation in the areas most likely to increase
10 salmon and steelhead survival, and continuing the
11 crucial habitat work that is a cornerstone of the
12 Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. The Council is
13 also placing particular emphasis at this time on
14 coordinating with other relevant agencies to
15 identify sources of non-rate payer funding.

16 And with that, I just have a few reminders
17 about tonight, and Member Golden, chair of this
18 hearing, already mentioned the sign-up sheets are
19 right back here when you entered the room.

20 Bathrooms are in the hallway, there is a water
21 cooler in the back with cups on the right if anybody
22 needs water.

23 And just a note, the court reporter here
24 is positioned in the middle of the room, so in order
25 to get up to the front microphone, it's probably

1 easiest if you step out and walk around the outside
2 and up through the front just to avoid the middle --
3 the -- the court -- yeah. The -- the labyrinth of
4 cords and the court reporter. Give her her space.

5 And just one more time, can the staff in
6 the room please raise our hands just so if anybody
7 has questions at any time, feel free to get up and
8 bend our ears. And a reminder to be courteous to
9 both members, staff, and everybody else in the room
10 tonight. We're really looking forward to hearing
11 your comments.

12 I know a lot of people might have filtered
13 in after Member Golden started, and so I just wanted
14 to reiterate that there is a four-minute comment
15 period for each comment. If you don't feel like
16 getting up in front of people and speaking tonight
17 but you do have something to say, there's also these
18 comment -- written comment sheets in the back that
19 you're welcome to fill out and hand to us or, again,
20 we take comments online anytime that you feel like
21 submitting them.

22 So I'll hand it back to you now.

23 MR. GOLDEN: Thanks. And -- and as we
24 call our first people up, at the risk of saying this
25 one too many times, I just want to tell you how

1 important your role in this process is. The -- the
2 Council was created at a moment in our region's
3 history when we were experiencing a lot of problems
4 associated with the fact that the decisions that are
5 in front of the Council now were not being made in a
6 way that was accountable to the states, accountable
7 to the sovereign tribes of the region, accountable
8 to -- to you, the people. And that is very much a
9 purpose of the Act.

10 Kate -- Kate had the -- the two slides
11 that said what we do, one was the Fish and Wildlife
12 Program, one was the Power Plan. This really is the
13 third and co-equal thing that we do is to engage all
14 of you in helping us craft the Fish and Wildlife
15 Program and -- and a plan that we can all be proud
16 of, be part of, and that genuinely serves our
17 interests, not just the interests of sort of the
18 professionals who -- who are paid to -- to make
19 these decisions.

20 So very important part of the role. I
21 also want to before I turn to our first commenter,
22 extend special thanks to the Yakima Nation. We are
23 on their homeland. We are glad to have many of you
24 here, and we very much appreciate what you bring to
25 this table, too.

1 Les, anything before we start?

2 MR. PURCE: No, Mr. Chair. Thank you all
3 for being here. This is what our work is all about.
4 Thank you.

5 MR. GOLDEN: And our first commenter, is
6 -- is it Aileen Kane?

7 MS. KANE: Aileen.

8 MR. GOLDEN: Aileen Kane.

9 MS. KANE: What do you call -- what --
10 what name do you give a one-legged Irishman?

11 MR. GOLDEN: Whatever name you tell us.

12 MS. KANE: Whatever name she likes.

13 MR. GOLDEN: Yeah. Kane's not bad.

14 MS. KANE: Okay. Well, I have to begin
15 with the fact that I am -- my name is Aileen Kane,
16 I'm from Yakima, Washington. Have lived here for
17 close to 30 years. One of the nicest things about
18 Yakima and Washington -- thank you, sir -- is
19 salmon. I love to eat salmon, and I love to cook
20 salmon, and my kids got sick of the stuff when they
21 were little.

22 But we need the salmon to be abundant.
23 They are a key species. Everything that can be done
24 to help them, everything that can be done to keep
25 the process accountable to the stakeholders such as

1 the Yakima Nation and their people needs to happen.
2 I'm not an expert on how it happens. This is the
3 first time I've ever spoken in front of the body,
4 but it's important we're -- not only is it
5 important, it's important that it's done right.

6 And just basically salmon need to not only
7 be saved, they to be abundant. They were abundant
8 before white people came up here, and they need to
9 be abundant again. Thank you very much, have a good
10 evening.

11 MR. GOLDEN: Aileen, can I ask you to
12 spell your name for the court reporter?

13 MS. KANE: Yes. A-I-L-E-E-N. Kane, K-A-
14 N-E.

15 MR. GOLDEN: Thank -- thank you so much
16 for being with us.

17 MS. KANE: Thank you, too.

18 MR. GOLDEN: There's a few people signed
19 up who are signed up on the list but not as
20 testifying. If anybody changes their mind or gets
21 inspired to say anything, you -- we -- we can call
22 you up later, let me know. But our next person who
23 is signed up to testify is a familiar sounding name,
24 Margie Van Cleve.

25 MS. VAN CLEVE: Hi, there.

1 MR. GOLDEN: And -- and please do spell
2 your name for us.

3 MS. VAN CLEVE: M-A-R-G-I-E, V-A-N C-L-E-
4 V-E.

5 Hi, my name is Margie Van Cleve. Thank
6 you for this opportunity to give testimony. I live
7 here in Yakima County. I'm a rate payer as well as
8 the conservation chair for the Washington chapter of
9 the Sierra Club. I get my power from Pacific Power.

10 Salmon and steelhead recovery in the
11 Columbia and Snake River Basins are important to me,
12 which is why I support a very strong fish and
13 wildlife program. The electric rates I pay are part
14 of the harm to the salmon and steelhead in the
15 Columbia and Snake River Basins. So I also want
16 these rates to help mitigate that harm by making
17 investments in both the hydropower system and
18 prioritizing clean energy outside of the hydropower
19 system.

20 I want BPA and our utility companies to --
21 to treat fish friendly power generation and
22 sustainable, abundant salmon and steelhead
23 populations equally. The Council needs to achieve,
24 not just have a goal, of five million fish. We've
25 had that goal for decades, and we're pretty far from

1 achieving it. I think we're further now than we
2 were when we started.

3 Towards that end, I urge you to adopt all
4 of the recommendations made by the state and tribal
5 fishery managers throughout the region whom the
6 Council must pay deference as required by the
7 Northwest Power Act. Especially the following three
8 priorities. I know you guys have heard this, and
9 you're going to hear it some more.

10 Elevated levels of spill through August
11 31st is a priority hydropower operations measure.
12 The wild juvenile salmon and steelhead that out
13 migrate through August make up a disproportionately
14 large share of wild adults that return to the
15 Columbia and Snake Rivers. Increased spill is
16 necessary to protect the genetic diversity of these
17 wild and natural stocks and allow the generational
18 population growth that's necessary to recover
19 healthy and abundant fisheries.

20 We really need detailed and explicit
21 accountability measures especially linked to the
22 Bonneville Power Administration's responsibility to
23 achieve program goals with a whole of government
24 approach and to address all necessary hydropower
25 measures in the 9th Power Plan. These must be

1 detailed and explicit accountability measures that
2 are necessary due to BPA's failures both now and in
3 many years past regarding salmon and steelhead
4 recovery.

5 Please acknowledge the Lower Snake River
6 Dam removal is a necessary measure in the final 2026
7 Fish and Wildlife Program. The inclusion of the dam
8 breached scenario with accompanying analysis must be
9 part of the 9th Power Plan. Established science
10 clearly demonstrates that removing those four Lower
11 Snake River Dams is a necessary action to -- to
12 achieve the five million fish goal and will have the
13 single largest impact on the recovery of salmon and
14 steelhead stocks in the Columbia and Snake Rivers.

15 Thank you for your time and patience.

16 MR. GOLDEN: Thank you so much, Margie.

17 MS. VAN CLEVE: Thank you.

18 MR. GOLDEN: And thanks to the Club for
19 all your'e doing. Would you leave your written
20 comments with the court reporter?

21 MS. VAN CLEVE: They're scribbly, but I
22 can do that.

23 MR. GOLDEN: That's fine. That -- that --
24 that works.

25 THE REPORTER: That's okay. Thanks so

1 much.

2 MR. GOLDEN: She's used to it.

3 Suki Smaglik. And in addition to spelling
4 your name, you can correct my mispronunciation
5 before you come up.

6 MS. SMAGLIK: Oh you pronounced it well,
7 but I will spell it for you. And I forgot to grab
8 mine out of the printer, so I'm trying to do it from
9 the notes I just made here. So, yeah, my name is
10 spelled S-U-K-I, S M A G L I K. So Suki Smaglik.

11 I'm here to share why salmon recovery and
12 a strong fish and wildlife program matter to me. I
13 live in Estes. I moved here about nine years ago
14 from Wyoming. I'm a rate payer and -- well, I'm a
15 taxpayer too, but a rate payer and utility customer
16 of Pacific Power. I and many other rate payers in
17 our community want the Bonneville Power Authority
18 and our utility companies to prioritize fish
19 friendly power generation and sustainable, abundant
20 salmon and steelhead populations.

21 So I have lived along the Snake River and
22 its tributaries for several decades. From the
23 headwaters in Wyoming through Idaho Falls and now in
24 Yakima. I'm an independent environmental educator
25 with over 40 years of experience, and this is always

1 a subject presented in my classes.

2 As an earth scientist, I support
3 hydroelectric power, in other words, gravity power,
4 as a clean energy source next to that of wind and
5 solar energies. However, in the hundred years that
6 we have been building these big dams in this
7 country, we've learned a lot. And we've learned how
8 much we have damaged the environment with them.

9 So what I would like to see is some new
10 ideas, some new engineering, some new dams that can
11 provide us with power and not destroy the habitat
12 that they're placed in. So there are a couple
13 things that happen when we haul back water that
14 happen in the riparian area of -- and change the
15 ecology of the river.

16 The increases in the amount of silt held
17 back increases the elevation of the reservoirs
18 therefore decreasing the oxygen flow and -- and
19 decreasing the temperature, and they decrease the
20 amount of new material that is essential for
21 downstream river health leading to less fish, less
22 wildlife habitat, and potentially more flood events.

23 These dams also serve as a barrier to fish
24 and wildlife migration and in some cases destroy the
25 fish and the wildlife trying to navigate through

1 that dam environment. It's time to take a look for
2 new technological and -- excuse me, and engineering
3 solutions to the damage caused by large river dams
4 and hydroelectric plans, to find a way to generate
5 clean energy while maintaining healthy habitats and
6 cultural life of the rivers.

7 To achieve the Council's five million fish
8 goal, I urge you to adopt all of the recommendations
9 by the state and tribal fishery managers in the
10 region. Use the science. To whom the Council must
11 pay deference to requiring -- required by the
12 Northwest Power Act including the three priorities.
13 And, yes, you've heard these before, but they're
14 important to get in the record as many times as
15 possible.

16 Keep the elevated levels of the spill
17 through August 31st as a priority and hydropower
18 operations. Wild juvenile salmon and steelhead that
19 out migrate throughout August make up a
20 disproportionately large share of the wild adults
21 that return to the Columbia and Snake Rivers.
22 Increased spill is necessary to protect the genetic
23 diversity of wild and natural stocks and allow the
24 generational population growth that is necessary to
25 recover healthy and abundant fisheries. Detailed

1 and explicit --

2 MR. GOLDEN: 30 seconds, Suki. Sorry.

3 MS. SMAGLIK: Oh that's it? Okay.

4 MR. GOLDEN: No. No. 30 seconds.

5 MS. SMAGLIK: Oh, okay. Detailed and
6 explicit accountability measures especially linked
7 to the BPA responsible to achieve the program goals
8 and acknowledge the Lower Snake River Dam removal as
9 a necessary measure in the final 2026 Fish and
10 Wildlife Program include an analysis of breached
11 dams scenario and in the 9th Power Plan.

12 And thank you very much for us being
13 allowed to speak out.

14 MR. GOLDEN: Thanks so much, Suki. You
15 can just leave your phone with the court reporter.

16 MS. SMAGLIK: Yeah, right. I submitted
17 this online, so we're good.

18 MR. GOLDEN: Susan Fleming is up next.

19 MS. FLEMING: Oh. I'm Susan Fleming, but
20 I didn't sign up.

21 MR. GOLDEN: Oh, I see. Not to testify.
22 Let me know if you change your mind.

23 Another Van Cleve, David Van Cleve.

24 MR. VAN CLEVE: Hello. My name's David
25 Van Cleve, and I live in Selah. My -- my public

1 utility is Pacific Power. I'm a -- I outdoor --
2 lifelong outdoor recreationist and canoeist. When I
3 came to Pacific Northwest almost 35 years ago, first
4 river I ran had hundreds of salmon every day.
5 Hundreds. I mean, all day. I could spend all day
6 looking at fish.

7 Now, I haven't been able to do that again
8 ever. I remember that day fondly, it's burned into
9 my memory. I -- therefore, I care about salmon and
10 all actions necessary to recover the fish. And I
11 want BPA and utilities to prioritize fish-friendly
12 power to get abundant salmon. I trust the state and
13 tribal fishery managers more than the federal
14 process which tends to sacrifice fish for power.

15 These managers -- these managers, the
16 tribal and state fishery managers, say that
17 significant spill is needed to continue until August
18 31st. The spills are needed to preserve the genetic
19 diversity of the fish. The -- it doesn't make sense
20 to not plan for removal of the Snake River Dams.
21 We've been -- the six sovereigns have been working
22 on removing the Snake River Dams for 35 year -- plus
23 years. The Sierra Club has been working on it for
24 35 plus years.

25 This administration totally reversed

1 themselves. The next administration is going to
2 reverse it again, and you should get ahead of the
3 process and plan for it. And the power from the
4 Snake River Dams can easily be replaced by solar,
5 wind, and energy efficiency. I built my house 26
6 years ago. I'm an engineer and energy nerd. I've
7 reduced my power usage by half in 26 years. 22,000
8 kilowatt hours per year to 12,000 kilowatt hours per
9 year.

10 Every time I replace an appliance, my
11 energy use goes down. The last thing I did was put
12 a hybrid heat pump in it and it saved me 2,000
13 kilowatt hours per year, and it didn't even cost me
14 anymore. Pacific Power gave me a rebate that made
15 it equal. So you need to plan for the removal of
16 the Snake River Dams.

17 I urge you prioritize the recovery of fish
18 in this plan. We need to have a choice or have an
19 alternative. Please choose the alternative that is
20 best for fish.

21 MR. GOLDEN: David, thank so much. Could
22 you spell your name and -- for the court reporter?

23 MR. VAN CLEVE: David, D-A-V-I-D, V-A-N C
24 L E V E.

25 MR. GOLDEN: And if you would leave those

1 notes too that'd be great.

2 Thanks so much. And I missed John Littel.
3 How could I do that? Good evening, John.

4 MR. LITTEL: My name is John Littel. J-O-
5 H-N, L I T T E L.

6 Good evening. My name's John Littel. I'm
7 a resident of Ellensburg in Kittitas County and I'm
8 here to share why salmon recovery and strong fish
9 and wildlife program matter to me. I'm a rate payer
10 and I get my power from Puget Sound Energy, and I
11 want BPA and our utilities to prioritize fish
12 friendly power generation and sustainable, abundant
13 salmon and steelhead populations.

14 I love alongside the Yakima River, and I'm
15 a river rafter and fisherman. I'm also a volunteer
16 in the river restoration work happening on the
17 Teanaway River, a tributary of the Yakima in the
18 upper Kittitas County. Working alongside dedicated
19 people from the Yakima Nation, Washington State Fish
20 and Wildlife, and the mid-Columbia fisheries
21 enhancement group, I have learned how simple,
22 concrete strategies like building large, log traffic
23 structures and beaver dam analogues help to recharge
24 the floodplain, and grade new gravel bins, and
25 create new channels for the river.

1 Of consequence then is recovered and
2 expanded salmon and bull trout habitat and newly
3 established cottonwood riparian zone landscapes in
4 the floodplain. It's remarkable landscape changing
5 work, and I encourage you to visit the Teanaway and
6 see it for yourselves. The Teanaway along with Gold
7 Creek, the Kachess River, and the Cle Elum River are
8 the headwaters of the majestic Yaikma River, itself
9 a tributary of the Columbia.

10 And right now, just a short distance
11 downriver from where we are meeting tonight at the
12 confluence of the Yakima and the Columbia, a
13 historic restoration project is nearing completion.
14 The deconstruction of the Bateman Island Causeway
15 freeing a major channel in the Columbia and
16 restoring a significant piece of salmon habitat.

17 So it's especially important today that
18 we're meeting to advocate for the adoption of your
19 new Fish and Wildlife Plan. To achieve the
20 Council's five million fish goal, I urge you to
21 adopt all of the recommendations by the state tribal
22 fisheries managers throughout the region including
23 the following three priorities:

24 One, elevated levels of spill through
25 August 31 as a priority hydropower operations

1 measure. Increased spill is necessary to protect
2 the genetic diversity of wild and natural stocks
3 that allow generational population growth that is
4 necessary to recover healthy and abundant fisheries.

5 Two, detailed and explicit accountability
6 measures, especially linked to BPA's responsibility
7 to achieve program goals. And three, acknowledge
8 Lower Snake River Dam removal as a necessary measure
9 in the final '26 Fish and Wildlife Program and
10 include an analysis of dam breached scenarios in the
11 9th Power Plan.

12 Removing the Lower Snake River Dams will
13 have the single largest impact on the recovery of
14 salmon and steelhead stocks in the Columbia and
15 Snake Rivers. Thank you.

16 MR. GOLDEN: Thanks so much, John. It's
17 great to see you.

18 MR. LITTEL: You too.

19 MR. GOLDEN: Okay. Josh Lozano is it?
20 I'm sorry. Just one second. What's your
21 name?

22 MS. COLFAX: Yvonne. You want -- I'll go
23 first.

24 MR. GOLDEN: Okay. Yvonne, you're up.

25 MS. COLFAX: Good evening. My name's

1 Yvonne Colfax. Y-V-O-N-N-E, C-O-L-F-A-X. I'm a
2 member of Yakima Nation. I'm a treaty fisherman and
3 a rate payer. I was born in Dalles Oregon, lived in
4 Celilo Village. It is always called my home. And
5 the child was able to see the ancient fishing falls
6 where the fish traveled to.

7 I'll remember the people's faces that
8 fished and lived in Celilo. I'll remember the roar
9 of Celilo Falls and the echoes of the water. I'll
10 remember the mist, the sweet smell of vegetation
11 that the water helped grow. At night, it was a
12 sight to see a number of bats flying around. All
13 this is a memory. It's all gone today.

14 We as Indian people thrive by our
15 religion, religious beliefs, customs, and culture.
16 As a people, we still rely on nature to provide all
17 we need. We are fortunate that our ancestors
18 reserved our rights to fish, hunt, gather, and raise
19 our animals. Our way of life and our paths are not
20 told very well in history. In fact, we were deemed
21 as Indian problems by the federal government and
22 others.

23 We were portrayed as less than human who
24 got in the way of progress all across the country.
25 Indian removal came in many forms to make way for

1 progress, removal being the worst of all. Another
2 way was to take away our food source, being the
3 salmon and wildlife we depend on. If one studies
4 the history, the creation of the Northwest Power
5 Act, there is no description of the Indian in there
6 except the need to flood Celilo Falls. It's a
7 history of formation and the establishment of PUD
8 and co-ops.

9 Our water was seen as profitable, and the
10 water needed to be tamed and controlled. Our river
11 has made politicians, developers, financiers,
12 businessmen millionaires off the Pacific Northwest
13 resources. We as people have thrived and are still
14 here and we have nothing left. Our water is scarce
15 as well as the fish and wildlife. We depend on
16 nature for us to thrive.

17 I can never abandon the Columbia River,
18 because all my ancestors are buried along the river
19 and under the waters. I'm going to review the
20 Draft. I'm here today just to give a general
21 comment, but I want to look at the Draft document as
22 I find that the English language has many meanings,
23 and they can be interpreted in many ways, and I
24 somehow just don't trust things.

25 And I'd like to say thank you for hearing

1 my comments. Thank you.

2 MR. GOLDEN: Thank you for all of your
3 powerful words.

4 Josh Lozano, Benton REA. Thanks for being
5 with us, Josh.

6 MR. LOZANO: That's going to be a tough
7 act to follow. Josh Lozano, J-O-S-H, L-O-Z-A-N-O.

8 Mr. Chairman, Vice Chairman, members of
9 the committee, my name is Josh Lozano. I serve as
10 the Director of Energy Policy for Benton REA. We're
11 an electric co op, we're a nonprofit. We've got
12 about 12,000 members, many of those here in Yakima
13 County. We used to serve the Yakima Reservation as
14 well, and we sold that part of the service territory
15 to Yakima Power years ago. And so we recognize and
16 appreciate serving the tribal nations.

17 As a consumer owned electric co-op, I
18 think we provide a little bit of a unique
19 perspective on this particular matter. We get about
20 60 percent of our power from hydro in the State of
21 Washington. Benton REA, our -- our fuel mix is 80
22 percent to 85 percent hydro. And so we value that
23 resource very much.

24 And as power public entities through the
25 rates we pay to the Bonneville Power Administration,

1 those rates also go for fish mitigation. So 60
2 cents of every dollar that -- that we bring in
3 through power revenues is used for purchasing power,
4 transmission services. And 16 cents of every dollar
5 that Bonneville spends goes towards fish mitigation,
6 fish ladders, fish friendly turbines, trucking
7 salmon from one dam to the next.

8 And so -- and I've seen firsthand some of
9 the research that has gone into fish mitigation
10 practices, U.S. tax dollars through the Department
11 of Energy. And science there says that about 90 to
12 95 percent fish survivability from one dam to the
13 next. And so I recognize that you have a challenge
14 ahead of you, and it's that balance of this
15 biological, important work, but balancing the
16 affordability and power in the State of Washington.
17 The reliability of power in the State of Washington.

18 And so I would caution against prematurely
19 looking at the removal or breaching of the Lower
20 Snake River Dams. You're talking about 1,000
21 average megawatts of power that we get from those
22 facilities. 3,000 megawatts in capacity that we
23 need in the winter and in the summer. And so we
24 should be very cautious about studying breaching
25 prematurely.

1 And so I appreciate the work that you've
2 done and -- and I would just offer that from -- from
3 a -- a customer of Bonneville who utilizes that
4 resource fairly heavily. Energy reliability remains
5 a core public interest for rural communities, for
6 our families, for our farmers, for our businesses,
7 they depend on power from the Columbia River power
8 system, and in -- as an electric co-op, it is our
9 job to make sure the we provide that power in a way
10 that is reliable and affordable and clean.

11 The State of Washington has a mandate to
12 be 100 percent clean by 2045, and so evaluating
13 taking megawatts out of the system that are clean
14 energy megawatts puts us in jeopardy of not meeting
15 our climate -- Clean Energy Transformation Act
16 commitment of being 100 percent clean. And so again
17 I would caution about looking at anything that we do
18 that would remove megawatts from the system. And,
19 again, I recognize that there has to be a balance,
20 and part of that balance is the -- the dollars that
21 public power puts into fish mitigation.

22 And so I would encourage the Council as
23 well to evaluate future recommendations with a
24 comprehensive system wide context in mind looking at
25 all external drivers such as ocean conditions,

1 predation, and harvest levels. Recognizing both the
2 progress that has been made and the multiple
3 influence -- influence and factors that are
4 involved.

5 MR. GOLDEN: And 30 seconds, Josh.

6 MR. LOZANO: Thank you. I appreciate --
7 appreciate the time. Thank you.

8 MR. GOLDEN: Thanks. Thanks for turning
9 out, Josh.

10 THE REPORTER: Can I get that statement
11 from you? And then Yvonne, can I get that statement
12 from you too, please?

13 MR. GOLDEN: And next up is Larry Pryor.

14 THE REPORTER: Hold on just one moment.

15 MR. GOLDEN: Welcome, Larry.

16 MR. PRYOR: Thank you. Hi. My name's
17 Larry Pryor. I live here in Yakima, Washington. I
18 wear a number of different hats. Today I want to
19 briefly to an introduction of a new system we have
20 that's pertinent to the long term planning. I want
21 to speak as a recreational fisherman and as an
22 advocate.

23 First, briefly I can only but a few
24 minutes, we've been developing a prototype
25 independent hatchery system that has applications

1 for a number of your different partners, whether it
2 tribal. The second thing I want to talk about is
3 NGO and that I don't have enough time to really
4 introduce it, but it -- but it is pretty
5 substantial.

6 MR. GOLDEN: Do give it to us in written
7 comments.

8 MR. PRYOR: Right. And that -- you can
9 look at it at nwf.fish.

10 Secondly, I want to talk about most -- so
11 I want to compliment the Northwest Power Council
12 over the years of your -- your efforts in fisheries.
13 That's mostly what I want to speak on is fisheries.
14 I -- and that are your partners here, a lot of
15 Yakima tribes, Nec Perce tribes, and that I get
16 around to a number of different hatcheries
17 throughout through my learning curve.

18 One of the things I'm going to comment on
19 here quickly is when I get into tribal hatcheries, I
20 will ask -- I have a number of different key
21 questions. One of the questions I ask is what are
22 your terms, goals. When I get into tribal
23 hatcheries like Yakima, Nec Perce, I get clear,
24 distinct answers in that as a matter of fact,
25 everything -- if I had to comment, everything that

1 they do is about managing towards adult returns. I
2 get into other state and federal hatcheries and
3 utility hatcheries, and I get a blank look that we
4 only -- but the answer is, well, we produce X amount
5 of fish, not towards adult returns.

6 One of my comments in reviewing your
7 Draft, you have set long-term standards of SARs that
8 you -- the 2 to 6 percent goals that you promote
9 with. However, a number -- one of the things
10 looking through the Draft is is that you talk about
11 a lot of other not partners but other participants
12 in the Columbia River fisheries. They don't hold
13 those same standards and that that needs to change,
14 you know, that -- that their standard is a
15 production model and not an adult return model, and
16 that that standard needs to change.

17 Lastly, I'm -- I'm a advocate. I'm a pain
18 in the butt, but I -- I fish over on the Cowlitz
19 River which is a mitigated hatchery from Tacoma
20 Power, and that -- while it's in the lower basin
21 below Bonneville, it still contributes to the lower
22 river fisheries. I'll tell you that their SARs are
23 terrible, and when I talk to them, and just
24 yesterday, I was bringing this up, if the Northwest
25 Power -- at their FDC meeting that the Northwest

1 Power Council has long-term sets of standards of 2
2 to 6 percent SARs, why aren't you doing that, why
3 aren't you defining success that way, and why aren't
4 you setting those goals.

5 They will tell me time after time again
6 that -- we just have to meet our -- for licensure
7 settlement agreement. My point in this is that you
8 have leverage over groups like that. It's not just
9 Tacoma Power, but it is other utilities that are up
10 and down the Columbia River. Tacoma Power purchases
11 70 percent of their power that they resell to their
12 -- their rate payers, while the Cowlitz is probably
13 mostly paid for by their fisheries -- their -- their
14 -- their dams and the power generated there.

15 But -- but they're still buying 70 percent
16 power from Bonneville Power. Why aren't they held
17 to the same standard that you are holding yourself
18 to? You have that leverage here about saying, no,
19 wait a minute here. And the same with the other
20 utilities here. Those -- you know, getting those
21 folks to change to an adult return goal here and
22 setting the standards what yours -- you've been
23 setting for long-term of 2 to 6 percent SARs.

24 So their -- their SAR goals should be
25 substantially higher, the same that your tribal

1 members are beating and exceeded.

2 MR. GOLDEN: Time's -- time's up there
3 Larry. You --

4 MR. PRYOR: Funding -- funding for NGOs is
5 one thing I didn't get the chance to touch on. Non
6 -- non governmental organizations, that's why that
7 primarily have been doing habitat, but there are a
8 number of people that want to do supplementation
9 programs, but funding is always an issue for that.
10 There used to be quite a few of them around. They
11 have vanished, but there are some that want to come
12 back and do programs, and we'd like to do one here
13 in the future here with a similar program here on
14 the Yakima, but that's in the future. Thanks.

15 MR. GOLDEN: Thank you, Larry, for sharing
16 your expertise. Please do give us the rest in
17 written comments.

18 And next up is Matt Fairbank. And that
19 will be followed by Michael Barrow.

20 Welcome, Matt.

21 MR. FAIRBANK: Thank you. Thank you for
22 the opportunity to give public testimony. It's
23 great to be --

24 MR. GOLDEN: Spell your name for us.

25 MR. FAIRBANK: Matt, M-A-T-T, F-A-I-R-B-A-

1 N-K.

2 So I'm Matt Fairbank, I live here in
3 Yakima, and I'm a Sierra Club member. I am a rate
4 payer with Pacific Power, and I support salmon
5 recovery. The U.S. Federal Government and states
6 have important obligations to protect and boost
7 salmon runs to keep salmon available for native
8 fisheries and forest health. The vehicle for the
9 obligations to be met include the Northwest Power
10 and Conservation Council.

11 The nutrients on our ocean only make it
12 back -- only make their way back to our forest
13 through salmon bodies which feed the animals and
14 plants that keep our forests strong and diverse.
15 Having rivers that support salmon and steelhead are
16 essential to keeping this viable, natural resource
17 and tasty dinner option vibrant and plentiful.

18 Great successes with removal of dams in
19 the Northwest, the -- along the Elwha, White Salmon
20 River, and Klamath Rivers, and habitat recovery with
21 -- such as wood fiestas in our local creeks, the Cle
22 Elum River helix outflow tower, the Tieton River
23 site channel building that just took place last
24 spring, culvert removal, and beaver encouragement
25 are -- and so many efforts are great steps to that

1 recovery effort.

2 But the work that you do with the Council
3 is essential, and I really strongly encourage you to
4 keep that five million salmon return goal, keep the
5 water flowing at the higher rates needed for the
6 outflowing juvenile salmon until August 31st,
7 following the -- and the recommendations of state
8 and tribal fisheries are really important to making
9 that salmon recovery possible.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to speak
11 today.

12 MR. GOLDEN: Thanks so much for coming
13 out, Matt.

14 And next up's Michael Barrow. Welcome,
15 Michael. Please spell your name for us.

16 MR. BARROW: Sure. It's Michael Barrow.
17 That's B as in boy, A-R-R-O-W. And I'm from
18 Ellensburg. I'm with the Center for Transboundary
19 Marine Resource Management. And I'm here to talk
20 about and bring attention to the fact that there's
21 some major omissions in your plan, and that has to
22 do with offshore takings of salmon, at-sea takings
23 of salmon.

24 The king salmon, steelhead, Chum salmon
25 from this system all migrate into the Russian zone.

1 They migrate -- the kings go up the coast through
2 Alaska, and then to Russia. The steelheads go
3 straight across to Northern Japan and work their way
4 back and as well as the Chums, they're the longest
5 migrating salmon in the world. They go straight
6 across and Northern Japan, Kimchaek, then come
7 around.

8 In that migration, they're very vulnerable
9 to being taken by at-sea trawlers, specifically
10 Russian trawlers. And even though we have
11 anadromous agreements with them that -- anadromous
12 fish agreements, currently since the war in Ukraine,
13 they have not been compliant with those. We have no
14 transparency, we have no enforcement. Major
15 takings. We have major leakage of these valuable
16 resources.

17 And but there will be a solution. The
18 solution when the war in Ukraine is ended, we can
19 negotiate with the Russians to go back so we can
20 protect our fish. We have incentives. They want
21 our market, we have leverage to get them compliant
22 to protect our fish. I would urge you to
23 participate in that process. We work -- we're
24 working with the White House, the Department of
25 State, Department of Commerce, and Congress to put

1 this issue on the table to -- to say, hey, we have
2 to protect our salmon.

3 Eventually, we're looking at potentially
4 co management with the Russians on these
5 transboundary fish. There is a precedent for that
6 currently. That's with the Norwegians. They co-
7 manage with the Russians on cod that go from Norway
8 to the White Sea. We have a lot more species that
9 we have to co-manage with them.

10 But, we there is major leakage and loss
11 going on because of this, from this system, and I
12 would urge you to start participating in that
13 process and protecting your fish at sea. Thank you
14 very much.

15 MR. GOLDEN: Thanks so much for joining
16 us, Michael. Much appreciated.

17 MR. BARROW: You bet.

18 MR. GOLDEN: And Leland Bill is with us I
19 think. Thanks, Leland.

20 MR. BILL: Hello, can -- can you hear me?
21 Sorry. Thank you for this time, Power
22 Council.

23 Hello, my name is Leland H. Bill, and I am
24 an enrolled member of the Yakima Nation. I
25 currently reside in Harrah, which is in the heart of

1 our reservation. I lived, fished along the Columbia
2 River for 11 years. I am an energy rate payer to
3 Pacific Power. I'm trying to get into Yakima Power
4 as the Benton REA guy said.

5 Interested in having healthy and abundant
6 salmon and steelhead populations in the Columbia and
7 Yakima Basins. I currently serve as our Yakima
8 Nation General Council Chairman for the people. I
9 understand that it may increase our electricity
10 rates. I understand that Pacific Northwest is lower
11 than the rest of the country, and we do not do
12 enough for the salmon.

13 I believe Yakima Nation and this Power
14 Council have been working together for years on
15 healthy and abundant salmon runs in the Columbia and
16 Yakima Basins. Our Yakima Nations fishery programs
17 have developed some of our hatcheries and natural
18 habitat projects for years. Our council works on
19 funding for these projects to happen, and we are in
20 agreement in many local agencies restoring the fish
21 for better returns.

22 This plan is not only a benefit to us as a
23 nation. It also benefits the state too. I am here
24 to support the Northwest Power and Conservation
25 Council as a deeply concerned member of Yakima

1 Nation hoping that the Northwest Power and
2 Conservation Council adopts a final 2026 Fish and
3 Wildlife Program that includes the full range of
4 robust, actionable, and accountable measures
5 necessary to achieve the Council's legal obligation
6 of five million fish returning to the Columbia River
7 in the next five to ten years and make an account --
8 actionable progress for rebuilding salmon and
9 steelhead stocks.

10 It is my hope that the Yakima Nation and
11 the Northwest Power Council -- or Conservation
12 Council continue to support the fish managers'
13 comprehensive recommendations to help achieve this
14 goal of five million salmon returned to Columbia
15 River. I hope they both keep the inclusion of all
16 of the state and tribal recommendations in the final
17 program.

18 I thank you for hearing me on this matter,
19 and however I can assist you, please reach out.
20 Thank you for your time.

21 MR. GOLDEN: Thank you so much for being
22 with us. It's an easy name to spell, but would you
23 spell for her? Oh, okay, is it on there? Go ahead.

24 MR. BILL: It's -- it's on there.

25 THE REPORTER: I'm typing it.

1 MR. BILL: Thank you.

2 MR. GOLDEN: Thank you so much.

3 And that brings us to Urban Eberhart.

4 Unclear whether you wanted to testify. Welcome.

5 MR. EBERHART: I always bring a stopwatch.

6 MR. GOLDEN: The conscious commentor.

7 MR. EBERHART: Thank you. My name is
8 Urban Eberhart. That's, U-R-B-A-N, E-B-E-R-H-A-R-T.
9 I manage the Kittitas Reclamation District in the
10 upper Yakima Basin. Thank you all for making the
11 trip here to the Yakima Basin which was historically
12 the second largest contributor of salmon and
13 steelhead to the Columbia River system annually just
14 behind the Snake River system.

15 I have been working on water issues here
16 in the Yakima Basin for more than the past 40 years.
17 Tom Clune from BPA, way back then we were working
18 with him. We first were -- we passed our Yakima
19 River Basin Water Enhancement Project Act in 1979,
20 and the very first thing we did was go in and
21 rebuild the major fish screens on the main stem of
22 the Yakima in close partnership with the -- with BPA
23 then under the Fish and Wildlife Program.

24 Then -- that was phase one, and phase two,
25 under the same program, this program, previous

1 versions, we were able to screen the smaller
2 diversions throughout the Yakima Basin and have done
3 really tremendous things together with our
4 partnerships with multiple federal agencies, also
5 BPA and state agencies, the tribes, local
6 governments, and NGOs, irrigation districts. You
7 know, it's -- it's a really broad group, and we're
8 all working together here.

9 And this Fish and Wildlife Program is a --
10 is -- has been and continues -- is and continues to
11 be a key part of it. The great work that was done
12 in Manastash with BPA assistance through the Power
13 Council and multiple different tributaries. We are
14 now working to achieve the goals of a healthy
15 ecosystem and a healthy economy into the next
16 hundreds of years for those folks that were from
17 before, those of us that are here now, and those
18 that are in the future.

19 So we have irrigation districts, tribes,
20 fisheries, agencies, everybody working together, and
21 this program has and will continue to help us do it.
22 I -- our we were also -- we're part of the
23 Columbia Basin collaborative process which is now
24 the Columbia Basin partnership process, and we
25 really appreciate you including the collaborative

1 goals in this. That is really what we're doing here
2 in the Yakima Basin, and many of us are trying to do
3 throughout the Columbia River Basin together.

4 So thank you for being here, and many
5 pieces of this draft will be able to help us
6 continue to succeed into the future. So thank you
7 very much. Good to meet you.

8 MR. GOLDEN: Thank you very much. And
9 thanks for your great work.

10 MR. EBERHART: Oh, and my timer.

11 MR. GOLDEN: Oh, yeah.

12 MR. EBERHART: Ha. Axed the timer.

13 MR. GOLDEN: Athena Tambarillo. Here,
14 right? Athena, are you with us? Hi. Welcome,
15 Athena.

16 MS. TAMBANILLO: Thank you.

17 MR. GOLDEN: Spell your name for us,
18 please.

19 MS. TAMBANILLO: My name is Athena
20 Tambarillo. That's A-T-H-E-N-A, T-A-M-B-A-N-I-L-L-
21 O. This doesn't go down? Maybe? It's fine.

22 Hi. So I'm here -- I wanted to represent
23 a youthful perspective. Sorry, I feel a little bit
24 underprepared.

25 MR. GOLDEN: No, not at all.

1 MS. TAMBARNILLO: Thank you.

2 So I'm here with Yakima Valley Colleges
3 Climate Club. I'm a second-year student. Yeah. I
4 thought it was important to be here, because I
5 wanted to represent my generation. Yeah. So my
6 generation think it's really important to have our
7 voices heard that -- to -- sorry -- to protect our
8 native wildlife populations to make all the right
9 decisions now so I won't be here again in 30 years
10 advocating for the same thing.

11 And I also think it's important to be
12 here, because I'm studying to be an environmental
13 engineer right now, so I'm really interested in the
14 -- in areas concerning renewable energy and also
15 protecting our wildlife populations. So I feel a
16 little under -- under prepared. I'm not as well
17 researched about this stuff.

18 MR. GOLDEN: No worries.

19 MR. PURCE: You're doing great.

20 MS. TAMBARNILLO: Thank you. But yeah, I
21 wanted to be here to say it's important to listen to
22 the scientists now, to listen to the researchers
23 now, to all the teachers, all the people who are
24 well-read on -- on all these topics that -- yeah.
25 They're -- that -- but, yeah, we have the ability to

1 provide affordable hydroelectric power now and we
2 also have the ability to protect our -- our wildlife
3 populations, our salmon populations.

4 So yeah. I just wanted to be here to say
5 to make the right decisions now that I don't want to
6 be here again in -- later on in my career advocating
7 for these populations and be like, wow, I was there
8 10 years ago and when were trying to protect --
9 protect the salmon. So please listen to them and
10 reaching our goal of five million salmon. So thank
11 you for your time.

12 MR. PURCE: Thank you.

13 MR. GOLDEN: Thank you for being with us,
14 Athena. I hope you are here 30 years from now with
15 lots of -- with lots of victories to celebrate.

16 MR. PURCE: Yes.

17 MS. TAMBARILLO: Thanks.

18 MR. GOLDEN: Your generation is well-
19 represented. Thanks so much.

20 And AJ Cooper is next. And then AJ will
21 be followed by Kana --

22 MS. SOLORIO: Karina. Sorry.

23 MR. GOLDEN: Columbia?

24 MS. SOLORIO: Karina.

25 MR. GOLDEN: Karina. Got it.

1 Welcome, AJ.

2 MS. COOPER: Thank you. My name is AJ
3 Cooper.

4 MR. GOLDEN: And spell your name.

5 MS. COOPER: And it -- A-J, C-O-O-P-E-R.

6 MR. GOLDEN: Great. Thank you.

7 MS. COOPER: So I moved here in 2012 to
8 Washington State, and I was very excited to be
9 moving to the Pacific Northwest just because of all
10 of what it has to offer, the hiking, the kayaking,
11 the oceans, the -- the -- you know, the Puget Sound,
12 you know, the streams, the desert. You know, there
13 -- we have so many different climates, and so many
14 different environments here.

15 And so to me, protecting these
16 environments is very important, and I care about
17 salmon and support the actions necessary to recover
18 them. So I do want Bonneville Power Administration
19 and our utility companies, my utility company is
20 Pacific Power, to prioritize fish-friendly
21 generations -- or power generation.

22 So the spill -- you know, increasing the
23 spill all the way until August 31st, you've heard
24 all of the reasons for that. I'm also here to talk
25 about removing the Lower -- the four Lower Snake

1 Dams. You know, we hear hydropower described as
2 clean energy. It is a lower carbon emission, but it
3 does not necessarily mean that it is environmentally
4 friendly. It does have a negative impact on our
5 salmon populations and other populations like the
6 lamprey eels.

7 And as you know, the salmon are a keystone
8 species. So they are not only an important food
9 source to people or orcas, but they also provide
10 nutrients to lands and to our to our forests with
11 the nutrients that they bring back from the oceans.
12 And we are in an area -- era right now where we are
13 losing -- you know, losing species at an alarming
14 rate.

15 You know, we have warming of our rivers,
16 warming of our oceans. So I feel like we should
17 give the salmon a fighting chance. And when they
18 have these barriers in their way, I do feel we need
19 to be removing those barriers. And maybe kind of
20 changing our mindset, you know? Our dams were built
21 at a time where it felt like our -- our idea -- our
22 ideology was a little more about dominating nature.
23 Maybe changing our mindset so that we're not
24 dominating nature -- mother nature, but we're
25 actually working with mother nature.

1 And I know that -- understand that this is
2 going to be an easy task removing these dams. You
3 know, that is going to take into consideration, you
4 know, the -- what they do offer, you know? But I
5 would like to see investments in -- you know, we've
6 done studies, we know that they impact the salmon.
7 But also -- but I'd like to see investments in maybe
8 changing our power from more environmentally
9 friendly higher -- hydropower or maybe supplementing
10 with solar or wind or maybe other types of energies
11 that we invest in, discovering along the way.

12 You know, and of course finding those
13 differences for, you know, the replacement for the
14 irrigation and of course the traveling for our
15 products down the river. But, you know, salmon,
16 they are important to us, especially here in the
17 Pacific Northwest. We have a very special place
18 here and I would like to keep it. Thank you.

19 MR. GOLDEN: Thanks so much, AJ.

20 Okay, Karina. I'm not even going to try
21 on the last name. Please enlighten us and spell it
22 for us. Welcome.

23 MS. SOLORIO: Sorry. My handwriting's
24 bad. Hi. I'm Karina, K-A-R-I-N-A. Solorio, S-O-L-
25 O-R-I-O. So I'm here as a community member of

1 Yakima, a taxpayer, and a Northwest Energy customer.
2 I'm also an environmental justice organizer with the
3 Washington Conservation Action, and I'm also
4 pescatarian, so I rely a lot on fish to -- for my
5 nutrients.

6 And I'm -- have just a very short
7 statement to make. I'm here on behalf of our salmon
8 and our steelhead population. This is important not
9 just for the wellbeing of our fish and wildlife, but
10 also to honor what the salmon mean to our native
11 community. I urge the Northwest Pacific the
12 Northwest Power and Conservation Council to adopt
13 all the recommendations from the state and most
14 importantly from tribal fish managers throughout our
15 region.

16 These demands which you've heard already
17 include elevated levels of spill through August 31st
18 as a priority measure to help protect migrating
19 juvenile salmon and steelhead. Include explicit
20 accountability measures for achieving program goals,
21 especially with regards to ensuring Bonneville Power
22 Administration. And lastly, to acknowledge the
23 Lower Snake River Dam removal as a necessary action
24 for the future of our -- our community and just in
25 general of our country.

1 Yeah. That's about it for me. Thank you
2 for your time.

3 MR. GOLDEN: Thanks for your words,
4 Karina, and for your work. Much appreciate.

5 Yvonne Colfax?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She spoke already.

7 MR. GOLDEN: I'm sorry. And then -- oh,
8 is it Victor Valerio? I met you yesterday, didn't
9 I?

10 MR. VALERIO: Close enough. Yes, we did
11 meet yesterday. You did a lot of driving this week.

12 MR. GOLDEN: Yeah.

13 MR. VALERIO: How is everyone?

14 MR. GOLDEN: Welcome.

15 MR. VALERIO: Just -- sorry. I had to --
16 and I forgot to print it out.

17 My name is Victor, V-I-C-T-O-R. Last name
18 Valerio, V-A-L-E-R-I-O.

19 Well, first of all, thank you Council
20 Members for the opportunity to provide public -- for
21 the public hearing today. Again, my name is Victor
22 Valerio. I am here to represent Northwest River
23 Partners. We are a not for profit organization that
24 -- we focus on education and advocacy for the
25 hydroelectric system. I am the new reach and

1 research manager, so nice to meet you guys.

2 Well, first of all, our organization
3 appreciates the work that the Council has done to
4 draft the 2026 Fish and Wildlife Program. We are
5 especially pleased to see the Council prioritizing
6 priority management and investments in critical
7 infrastructure which are necessary to help sustain
8 the trend of increasing salmon runs that we have
9 seen in recent decades.

10 As you know, average returns of salmon and
11 steelhead above Bonneville Dam, the first federal
12 dam in the Columbia Basin, have nearly tripled in
13 the last few years when compared to the first return
14 recorded in 1938. We are also glad to see the
15 Council continue to include the reintroduction of
16 salmon above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dam.

17 Northwest River Partners is actively
18 supporting this vital initiative led by these tribal
19 nations. I actually had the opportunity last summer
20 to attend a first salmon ceremony up at Chief
21 Joseph. To be honest, it was an eye-opening
22 experience. I did not know how much of an impact
23 the salmon had as far as a cultural importance, so
24 it was a really great opportunity for me.

25 Our greatest concern with the Draft

1 Program lies with the main stem hydro system
2 operations section. The margins for energy
3 affordability and reliability are already razor
4 thin. The latest example is from the electric-
5 published North American Electric Reliability
6 Corporation 2025 long term reliability assessment
7 which warns the Northwest is projected to move into
8 a high-risk category by 2029 as demand growth
9 outpaces new generation.

10 NERC also cautions the traditional
11 resource -- the traditional resource adequacy
12 metrics may understate real-time operating risk,
13 reinforcing the growing importance of reserving
14 operational flexibility. And as we and as we've
15 previously shared, Washington's residential electric
16 customers are feeling the weight of an 8.4 percent
17 rate increase between 2023 and 2024, at least double
18 the rate of inflation.

19 Even modest operational changes that
20 increase reliance on high-cost emergency power are
21 especially hard on low- and fixed-income households.
22 The Council's rationale calls for consistent, agreed
23 upon hydropower operations over multiple years. We
24 concur but ask that they are agreed upon by all
25 relevant stakeholders and that Bonneville, the U.S.

1 Army Corps of Engineers, and the Bureau of
2 Reclamation are consulted before any hydro system
3 measures are finalized.

4 Thank you again for the time to comment,
5 and we look forward to continuing our dialogue with
6 the Council in the next few meetings. Thank you.

7 MR. GOLDEN: Thanks for being here,
8 Victor. Congrats on the new job.

9 MR. VALERIO: Thank you.

10 MR. GOLDEN: And next up is Lottie S-A --
11 is Lottie here? Welcome, Lottie. I wish everyone's
12 handwriting was as good as -- as beautiful as their
13 words tonight. Thanks for being with us, Lottie.

14 MS. SAM: Well, good evening. Thank you
15 for this opportunity to provide comment on behalf of
16 -- for myself and my family. I'm a --

17 MR. GOLDEN: Lottie, if you could just
18 spell your name for us. Sorry.

19 MS. SAM: Lottie Sam. L-O-T-T-I-E. Last
20 name Sam, S-A-M.

21 So I wanted to speak a little bit about
22 myself and my family. My name is Lottie, and I'm
23 here to talk about salmon recovery and a strong fish
24 and wildlife program, because it matters to me and
25 my children and my grandchildren. And it was good

1 to hear the few words that we have from our youth
2 here, because I'm a education and outreach
3 specialist for Yakima Nation, but also been a
4 lifelong educator from pre-K all the way to
5 elementary and eighth grade.

6 So I teach about our practices with our
7 traditional foods, and salmon is our -- is our
8 staple. It is a staple food for my family. We rely
9 upon it, and my family is a fishing family from the
10 Columbia River down by White Salmon and Bingen. And
11 I've traveled there many years of life. Our family,
12 like I said, is traditional, so my brothers fish for
13 us, and I -- I get to haul fish, clean fish, cut
14 fish, dry it, can it, because I want that food
15 source to take care of me as we're taught.

16 I live in Wapato in Harrah area, and I am
17 a Yakima Nation -- or Yakima Power recipient, but I
18 also in my time growing up and becoming an adult did
19 have a -- was a rate payer for Pacific Power and
20 Benton REA. I just wanted to share that to achieve
21 the Council's five million fish goal, I urge you to
22 adopt all the recommendations by state and tribal
23 fishery managers throughout the region to whom the
24 Council paid deference required by the North --
25 Northwest Power Act including the -- the few

1 priorities I'm going to mention.

2 One, elevate the levels of spill through
3 August 31st as a priority hydropower operations
4 measure. While juvenile salmon and steelhead that
5 out migrate throughout August make up a
6 disproportionally large share of the wild adults
7 that return to the Columbia and the Snake Rivers.
8 Increased spill is necessary to protect the genetic
9 diversity of wild and natural stocks and allow the
10 generational population growth that is necessary to
11 recover healthy and abundant fisheries.

12 Number two, detailed and explicit
13 accountability measures, especially linked to
14 Bonneville Power Administration's responsibility to
15 achieve program goals with a whole of government
16 approach and to address all necessary hydropower
17 measures in the 9th Power Plan.

18 Also just a little bit in regards to the
19 Lower Snake River Dams removal. It's been talked
20 about. We've heard the -- the benefits, the pros
21 and cons of it, but we do want to adhere and still
22 hope to see that five million fish goal and maybe
23 even more. And I know our programs are working hard
24 to establish and to work with a plan that hopefully
25 will -- will work towards that five million and

1 and more.

2 So I thank you for this opportunity again,
3 and, you know, hope that this will be met on and in
4 a good way.

5 MR. GOLDEN: Thank you so much, Lottie.
6 We -- we hear a lot of expert testimony and a lot of
7 expert witnesses, which is great and important, but
8 it's also great to hear about your families and
9 community too. Thank you for bringing that.

10 Jamaica Zoglman? And this is the last
11 person I think we have signed up to testify. If
12 someone else who signed up wanted to testify or
13 changed their mind, want to testify now, please we
14 can do another sheet back there. Let us know. And
15 okay. We will have on more, and then we will take a
16 little break.

17 Jamaica?

18 MS. ZOGLMAN: Okay. Hi. I'm Jamaica
19 Zoglman. That's J A-M-A-I-C-A, Z-O-G-L-M-A-N. And
20 I am from Yakima, Washington. I use Pacific Power.
21 I'd like to acknowledge the Paiute, Nez Perce,
22 Umatilla, Colville, Wanapum, Coeur D'Alene,
23 Kalispel, Kootenai, Warm Springs, Shoshone, Spokane,
24 and Yakama Tribes. These cultures are linked
25 inextricably to the Columbia and Snake Rivers and

1 who have been stewards of these waterways for
2 countless generations.

3 I'm not an expert. The statement I'm
4 making is just my own experience. But it's not
5 really about me, it's about the cultural legacies of
6 Washington's rivers. As other speakers have done
7 more eloquently, I want to talk about Celilo Falls,
8 which was flooded with the damming of the Columbia
9 River on March 10, 1957. I remember the day that I
10 learned about Celilo Falls. I was 18 and taking
11 classes toward my degree in anthropology.

12 I remember the absolute shock that I felt,
13 first that one of the major trading hubs of the
14 globe had existed for 11,000 years just a couple
15 hours from where I grew up. Second, that it had
16 been deliberately obliterated within living memory.
17 And finally, that I had lived my whole life without
18 knowing any of this. It was like learning that my
19 grandparents had burned down the Library of
20 Alexandria 200 miles from my house.

21 And that day changed my life. It altered
22 my understanding of the world, and I'm here to hold
23 the Council accountable for answering the questions
24 that I started asking on that day. Who was in the
25 room making decisions about how best to care for the

1 animals, plants, air, water, and earth that has
2 sustained people here for many thousands of years.
3 Whose voice is being excluded and why. Who benefits
4 from those decisions, and who loses, and what is the
5 story we tell ourselves about why that loss was
6 justified.

7 I believe we have a responsibility to
8 prioritize the wellbeing of our rivers and the
9 creatures that depend on their waters. We also have
10 a responsibility to prioritize the voices of tribal
11 members who are uniquely able to guide policy and
12 care for rivers that have the -- been the lifeblood
13 of native people from the beginning.

14 The government has a long history of
15 getting it wrong and telling a story that justifies
16 it. We must do better today. And that's why I'm
17 elevating the voices of state and tribal fishery
18 members, managers, and asking for elevated levels of
19 spill through August 31st as a priority hydropower
20 operations measure.

21 Detailed and explicit accountability
22 measures, especially linked to Bonneville Power
23 Administration's responsibility to achieve program
24 goals. An acknowledgement of Lower Snake River Dam
25 removal as a necessary measure in the final 2026

1 Fish and Wildlife Program. Thank you.

2 MR. GOLDEN: Thank you so much, Jamaica.

3 And next we have David Fast.

4 MR. FAST: Not David.

5 MR. GOLDEN: Nope? No?

6 MR. FAST: Just signed up as an attendee.

7 MR. GOLDEN: Oh. Got you. Okay.

8 Susan Fleming has been inspired by the
9 rest of you to offer a few words.

10 MS. FLEMING: That is true.

11 MR. GOLDEN: And we're glad for it.

12 Welcome, Susan.

13 MS. FLEMING: That is true. Susan
14 Fleming. S U S-A-N, Fleming, like it sounds, F-L-E-
15 M-I-N-G. I have some appreciation for the
16 difficulty of what you do here. There's a law that
17 you have to abide by. There are probably a hundred
18 organizations you need to try to coordinate, and you
19 have goals that seem to me to be contradictory.
20 Save the fish and make sure the power's good.
21 That's really hard stuff.

22 So I thank you for trying to do it. I'm
23 glad we have such law. I don't know how you are
24 able to negotiate all this. But I just wanted to
25 say something about the Snake River Dams. People

1 need to be compensated for what they lose if the
2 dams are taken down. I can't see any other
3 reasonable way to do this.

4 Clearly, from the science I know about,
5 which isn't all of it, taking those dams down is the
6 best chance we have for improving the number of
7 salmon that comes through. But, it's not right to
8 take away people's livelihoods, or it's not white --
9 it's not right to cause them financial damages for
10 something that -- that wasn't their fault and will
11 benefit all of us and that actually has to do with a
12 law.

13 So I would like you to go -- I would love
14 the dams to come down, but I think it ought to be
15 done in a way that seems fair to -- to the
16 stakeholders.

17 MR. GOLDEN: Fair enough. Thank you so
18 much, Susan.

19 That concludes our list. We are going to
20 keep the hearing open until 6:30; is that right?
21 Yeah? And I -- I guess we'll take a little break
22 now. We'll reconvene in a little while. Staff and
23 Les will be back, and I'm here and we -- we can keep
24 it informal for a little while, and if someone wants
25 to provide formal testimony a little later, we'll be

1 there for that too. Thank you so much, everyone.

2 (WHEREUPON, a recess was taken.)

3 MR. GOLDEN: And with that, we will
4 conclude the Yakima hearing for the 2026 Draft Fish
5 and Wildlife Program.

6 (WHEREUPON, the meeting concluded at 6:30
7 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I, Jacqueline Barretta, do hereby certify that I reported all proceedings adduced in the foregoing matter and that the foregoing transcript pages constitutes a full, true and accurate record of said proceedings to the best of my ability.

I further certify that I am neither related to counsel or any party to the proceedings nor have any interest in the outcome of the proceedings.

IN WITNESS HEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 19th day of February, 2026.



Jacqueline Barretta

Certificate No. 24026958

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