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

TRANSCRIPT OF DRAFT 2026 COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN FISH
AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM

HELD ON
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026
4:30 P.M.

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY
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APPEARANCES

Patty O'Toole, Fish and Wildlife Division Director,
NWPCC
Kimberly Buzdygon, Public Affairs Division Director,
NWPCC
Ed Schriever, Idaho Council Member, NWPCC
Les Purce, Washington Council Member, NWPCC
KC Golden, Washington Council Member, NWPCC
John Shurts, General Counsel, NWPCC
Peter Jensen, Communications Specialist, NWPCC
Kate Self, Fish and Wildlife Scientist, NWPCC
Heather Hendrixson, Fish and Wildlife Scientist,
NWPCC
Rudy Salakory, Policy Analyst Oregon, NWPCC
Stacy Horton, Policy Analyst / Biologist, NWPCC
Kris Homel, Biologist, NWPCC
Kendra Coles, Northwest Power and Conservation
Council

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7 LES PURCE: Good afternoon, everyone. I
8 want to welcome you all to this opportunity for
9 public comment on the Northwest Power and
10 Conservation Council's 2026 Fish and Wildlife Plan.
11 It's wonderful to see so many interested people here
12 today.

13 My name is Les Purce. And I'll chair the
14 meeting this evening. I'm from the state of
15 Washington and I'd like to introduce my two
16 colleagues.

17 We are really grateful to have Ed
18 Schriever from the state of Idaho visiting here with
19 us to represent the state and to be a part of the
20 hearing. Ed has a long history in Fish and
21 Wildlife, having served for 39 years of the Fish and
22 Wildlife Department in the State of Idaho, and
23 serving as the executive director in these last
24 years.

25 A knowledgeable person, Fish and Wildlife,

1 starting out in the fish hatcheries of the
2 Clearwater River. It's been a real delight to have
3 him as one of our colleagues and to have his
4 knowledge in this very important area.

5 My colleague from the state of Washington,
6 KC Golden. It's been a delight to spend the last
7 three years working with him. As many of you know,
8 KC has been a leader in state government in the
9 areas, the concerns of -- of energy and programs
10 that advocate for the people as it relates to energy
11 policy and green energy both in private sector and
12 in the public sector. And I've learned so much in
13 the time I've been on the Council, from him, in
14 regard to these very important issues.

15 I also want to have an opportunity to
16 introduce our staff because they're the ones that
17 really make this happen, and we have a bunch of
18 people with us.

19 I'd like to probably start with the -- our
20 colleagues from our head office in Portland, Patty
21 O'Toole. Is the director of Fish and Wildlife.
22 She's there in the back and her staff with her is
23 Kate Self from Fish and Wildlife. Kris Homel, who
24 will be making a presentation for us tonight, and
25 Heather Hendrixson, both Fish and Wildlife.

1 And our Director of Public Affairs, Kim
2 Buzdygon, and her assistant Peter Jensen is with us
3 as well tonight.

4 We have Barry Richardson from our IT
5 operation.

6 And we have John Shurts who has been with
7 us for over 30 years as the wisdom in regard to this
8 wonderful law that we all have that's so unique to
9 the Northwest.

10 I also want to recognize our friend Rudy
11 Salakory, who is a staff member from the state of
12 Oregon, a staff member for our Council members here.
13 Rudy, thank you for coming all the way up from
14 Oregon and participating today as well.

15 We have Sarah Mounts over here, one of our
16 staff members from Washington.

17 We have Stacy Horton, one of our staff
18 members here as well.

19 And we're all pleased to be able to be
20 here. We'll start this process with a legal
21 statement about why in this wonderful act that we
22 have these public meetings to get your feedback in
23 regard to the Fish and Wildlife Plan. I think
24 that's a unique kind of opportunity to consider the
25 democratic process, everyone, that we're involved

1 with.

2 I've had the privilege and KC's had the
3 privilege and Ed's had the privilege to move through
4 our states to hear the citizens speak and give their
5 feedback on this draft plan, from Spokane to Yakima
6 with consultations with the Yakima people in
7 Washington, culminating here for us, the Council
8 members in Washington.

9 Last week we were in Boise, KC, and I,
10 with Ed and Jeff Allen, the Council member from
11 there to -- to participate in a hearing like this as
12 well as a consultation with the Upper Snake River
13 tribes to hear their concerns and their
14 recommendations, and then a consultation with Fish
15 and Wildlife.

16 So I want to give you a sense of how this
17 process works and why we look -- why we're so
18 encouraged to hear you all this evening.

19 I also want to recognize Rachel Gezymalla,
20 who will be doing -- I hope I did that fairly well,
21 Rachel.

22 THE REPORTER: You did.

23 LES PURCE: Who will be our court
24 reporter. In this process when you come up, if
25 you'll be sure to spell your name so she has it.

1 And to make sure any written testimony that you have
2 is delivered here, it would be -- it would be
3 perfect.

4 So with that, I would like to read the
5 formal statement that we have in order to start the
6 meeting, and then we'll have a presentation.

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 hydroelectric facilities
12 on the Columbia River and its tributaries.

13 The current version of the program is the
14 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Plan
15 with a 2020 amendment. The Council is in the
16 process of amending this Fish and Wildlife Program
17 in a formal amendment process under the act. We
18 recently released a draft of the 2026 Fish and
19 Wildlife Program, which we're receiving comment on
20 this evening.

21 The Council is now at the stage of the
22 amendment process where we are receiving public
23 comment on the Draft Fish and Wildlife Program. The
24 formal comment period is extended to March 2nd,
25 2026. The Council is conducting public hearings

1 like this one to receive oral comments on the draft.

2 We have a court reporter that we've
3 introduced that is in attendance to record your
4 comments. The transcript of this hearing will be
5 circulated to all Council members and the staff, and
6 will be included in the administrative record for
7 the program amendment process.

8 The Council is also accepting written
9 comments on the Draft Fish and Wildlife Program
10 until March 2nd, 2026. Instructions on how to
11 comment in writing are on the Council's website.
12 You can also ask any one of our staff members. The
13 Council will consider all oral and written comments
14 on the draft program when making a final decision on
15 the 2026 Fish and Wildlife Program, the Council is
16 expected to make a decision on the final program in
17 May of this year.

18 So those are the steps, and that is the
19 process.

20 Next, I would like to invite our staff
21 member from Fish and Wildlife staff, Kris Homel, to
22 give us an introduction and review of the program.

23 KRIS HOMEL: Thank you, Chair Purce.

24 Thank you, Members Golden and Schriever.

25 Can everybody hear me okay? Oh, lots of

1 thumbs up. Great.

2 So good evening, everyone, and welcome to
3 this public hearing on the Northwest Power and
4 Conservation Council's Draft 2026 Columbia River
5 Basin Fish and Wildlife Program.

6 My name is Kris Homel. I am a biologist
7 out of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council
8 Central Office.

9 I have a short presentation for you here
10 today about the Council, the Fish and Wildlife
11 Program, and then we'll open it up for public
12 comment.

13 The Council was created by Congress under
14 the Northwest Power Act of 1980 to give the Pacific
15 Northwest a greater voice in power planning and
16 protecting fish and wildlife. The Council is an
17 interstate compact agency representing the basin
18 states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.
19 The governor of each state appoints two members.

20 The Northwest Power Act requires the
21 Council to develop with public participation, a
22 regional power plan, and the Fish and Wildlife
23 Program. Federal agencies, including Bonneville
24 Power Administration, Bureau of Reclamation, and the
25 Army Corps of Engineers and the FERC Energy

1 Regulatory Commission all have legal
2 responsibilities under the Act.

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

11 The Council's power plan guides Bonneville
12 Power Administration's acquisition of cost-effective
13 resources. It also serves as an important technical
14 resource for the region. The power plan is reviewed
15 and revised every five years. The draft of the next
16 Power plan, which we call the Ninth Power Plan, is
17 expected mid-2026.

18 As with the Fish and Wildlife Program,
19 there will be multiple opportunities for public
20 comment on the power plan, and we do hope to hear
21 from you.

22 As you heard from Chair Purce's comments,
23 the Council develops through an extensive public
24 process, a program to protect, mitigate, and enhance
25 fish and wildlife affected by hydropower in the

1 Columbia Basin. So this means all hydropower, not
2 just federal facilities and all fish and wildlife
3 affected by that hydropower, not only endangered
4 species, ESA-listed species, but salmon and
5 steelhead have a very special significance under the
6 act.

7 The Council's Fish and Wildlife Program is
8 updated about every five years, based primarily on
9 the recommendations from state and federal fish and
10 wildlife agencies and tribes, along with other
11 partners, as directed by the Northwest Power Act.
12 This program includes onsite mitigation measures of
13 the dams. So these are things like changes to flow
14 or fish passage and offsite mitigation like habitat
15 restoration or artificial production.

16 The Council's Fish and Wildlife Program
17 has been in place for over 40 years. It is one of
18 the largest mitigation efforts in the world,
19 covering an area roughly equivalent to France. And
20 it's grown and evolved over time based on the best
21 available science. This makes the program steady
22 and dependable.

23 Its durability, decades-long history, and
24 long-term scope for future planning are well suited
25 for Columbia Basin fish and wildlife whose complex

1 life history span years and decades, and cover vast
2 swaths of fresh water and salt water territories and
3 progress is evident. The Council completed an
4 extensive scientific assessment and staff-led review
5 between 2021 to 2024 that covered the program's
6 entire history.

7 The review found that Fish and Wildlife --
8 the Fish and Wildlife Program, has made crucial
9 strides in protecting and increasing the numbers of
10 salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon of Pacific land
11 prey, among other species, including some ESA-listed
12 stocks, yet significant work remains.

13 The Council recognizes that some stocks
14 are currently struggling and understands the urgency
15 of continuing to take action to prevent further
16 declines like in the Snake Basin. Over the 40-year
17 life of the program, there have been significant
18 accomplishments, changes to the hydro system,
19 changes to how the hydro system operates, as well as
20 improved passage at dams has benefited both adult
21 and juvenile migration.

22 Habitat work has protected, restored, or
23 improved hundreds of thousands of acres of land
24 across the region. The Columbia Basin Water
25 Transactions Program has collaborated with willing

1 landowners and irrigation districts to keep water in
2 the streams when fish need it. Artificial
3 production programs support both conservation and
4 harvest objectives.

5 Over 1,800 fish screens have been
6 installed and maintained to keep fish out of
7 irrigation systems. And substantial progress has
8 been made toward addressing wildlife losses from
9 hydro system construction and inundation. And
10 that's just to name a few.

11 So now we'll talk about how the Fish and
12 Wildlife Program gets updated.

13 There are many steps that we have to take
14 to amend the Fish and Wildlife Program, beginning
15 with the call for recommendations that went out in
16 January, 2025 and the subsequent public comment
17 period. We released our draft program in December
18 of 2025, and we're now in the phase where we're
19 accepting comments on that draft until March 2nd.

20 The Council's goal is to release a final
21 Fish and Wildlife Program in May of 2026. We
22 received hundreds of recommendations and thousands
23 of comments during this amendment process, and the
24 Council has considered them carefully over the last
25 six months. Over the course of this review, some

1 topics seem to be of particular urgency or
2 importance to the region.

3 Priorities identified for the draft
4 program include making sure that assets and projects
5 have the funding they need to continue to function
6 and benefit fish. Having consistent and stable
7 hydro operations over a longer period of time keeps
8 water moving, increases velocities, and minimizes
9 fluctuations.

10 Assessing and managing predation in the
11 areas most likely to increase salmon and steelhead
12 survival and continuing the crucial habitat work
13 that is a cornerstone of the Council's Fish and
14 Wildlife Program. The Council is also placing
15 particular emphasis at this time on coordinating
16 with other relevant agencies to identify sources of
17 non-rate payer funding.

18 So a few logistics here. You'll -- you
19 saw the sign-in sheets. Those are at the back of
20 the room. If you wish to give comment, check that
21 little box. If you head out this door and go to the
22 right or left, you'll see bathrooms. There's water
23 fountains to the left as well. If you have any
24 questions, you were already introduced, but just
25 look for the staff wearing badges, would be happy to

1 help you out.

2 And I know you all will, but please do be
3 courteous to Council members, staff, and other
4 people in the room. When you give your comments,
5 please keep them brief and on topic. If the person
6 before you has said something that is exactly what
7 you want to say, you might say that you agree with
8 them and add on anything different. Your comments
9 are part of the official record.

10 And if you have brought a written copy of
11 your comments, please leave it up here with Rachel.
12 She'll be using those to help with the notes.
13 You're also able to submit your comments online and
14 I will show you that code here. So if you can
15 either go to the website.

16 This is our webpage here, you can see the
17 link to the Draft Fish and Wildlife Program and the
18 amendments page, or you can scan that QR code.
19 It'll take you there and you can give your comments
20 online if you wish.

21 All right. We're very excited that you're
22 all here. We're very ready to hear from you all.
23 And just remember, say, and spell your name and
24 we'll begin calling you all up for comments. Thank
25 you.

1 LES PURCE: Thank you so much, Kris.
2 We'll -- we'll start with three minutes
3 and at one minute you'll see a sign here that will
4 indicate that you have a minute left. Appreciate
5 your cooperation so we move along. We also will
6 have sign -- sign-ups online and their names will
7 come up at the end of the presentations and comments
8 of people here in the room. We are prepared to go
9 till 7 o'clock to try to ensure that everyone has an
10 opportunity to communicate with us if they have
11 something to say.

12 I also want to say that how much, again,
13 we appreciate having Ed with us. He'll have to get
14 out of here a little early in order to catch a plane
15 back home. So I want everyone to know that.

16 And why don't we go ahead and get started.
17 We're going to start with Kathleen Calloghy.

18 KATHLEEN CALLAGHY: Callaghy.

19 LES PURCE: Callaghy. Thank you.
20 Welcome, Kathleen.

21 And Marc Sullivan will be up -- in follow
22 up, please.

23 KATHLEEN CALLAGHY: Good evening,
24 Councilors. No pressure being first, right?

25 LES PURCE: Oh, you're great.

1 KATHLEEN CALLAGHY: Okay. My last name is
2 spelled C-A-L-L-A-G-H-Y. First name Kathleen with a
3 K.

4 Greetings, Council Members. My name is
5 Kathleen Callaghy. I'm the campaign manager for the
6 Columbia Snake River Campaign. We're a coalition of
7 the Nez Perce Tribe and various nonprofits.

8 I'm also a Seattle resident and rate payer
9 with Seattle City Light, which I believe is one of
10 Bonneville Power's largest utility customers in the
11 region. So thank you for holding this hearing here
12 in Seattle with us.

13 For the record, I support the extension of
14 spill through August 31st in the 2026 Fish and
15 Wildlife Plan, along with greater accountability
16 measures for meeting recovery goals, and an
17 acknowledgement that Lower Snake River Dam breaching
18 will eventually be necessary to recover salmon and
19 steelhead in the basin.

20 And it's a measure that should be modeled
21 and planned for in the Ninth Power Plan. But rather
22 than elaborating on those points, I'll leave that to
23 my colleagues. I want to use my time to address a
24 repeated claim that we keep hearing about salmon
25 runs having tripled since federal dams were built.

1 This is a deeply misleading statement that
2 is being used to justify arguments for not changing
3 hydropower operations in the basin. So I think it's
4 important that we address it head on. So here's a
5 hypothetical. If all of my wealth in the world
6 consists of one penny and someone gives me two more
7 pennies, I have technically tripled my money. That
8 doesn't make me a rich woman.

9 So I brought some visual aids, which I
10 promise will be brief. Federal dams were built
11 between 1933 and 1975. Here around 1980, we see
12 some of the lowest numbers on records. So to say
13 that salmon runs have tripled from such a low number
14 isn't actually that meaningful for numbers,
15 especially when you consider that the recovery
16 target over 40 years ago was here, around five
17 million, and we've gotten to even less than half
18 that.

19 This is even less meaningful when you
20 consider that most of the runs that we have right
21 now are hatchery fish, which is not a -- is not a
22 bad thing, but it's -- it's less meaningful for wild
23 fish returns, which is really important for
24 recovery. Thank you.

25 And then finally, as you acknowledged in

1 your presentation, we have seven threatened and
2 endangered runs that in the red here are their
3 current levels as of 2022. Nowhere near their
4 recovery targets in yellow for the most part and way
5 below their historic abundance. So I imagine some
6 of this data is familiar.

7 I apologize for repeating it to you, but I
8 don't think we will reach workable solutions while
9 we have key stakeholders continuing to insist there
10 -- that there is no problem. I just want to
11 conclude by saying that nobody disputes we have
12 significant energy challenges ahead of us, but there
13 are many ways to generate energy. There are many
14 ways to off -- to offset increase costs.

15 These fish come from one place and one
16 place only, and that is this region. So thank you
17 for doing your important work and that I appreciate
18 my time. And I have copies of these if you would
19 like them.

20 LES PURCE: Thank you. You'll provide
21 those.

22 Marc -- Marc -- Marc, please.

23 Everyone, I appreciate the enthusiasm, but
24 if we could all just listen to them, I'd really
25 appreciate it. So we can get through with one.

1 Thanks.

2 MARC SULLIVAN: Gentlemen, my name is Marc
3 Sullivan. First name is spelled M-A-R-C. Common
4 spelling of Sullivan. I live over on the Olympic
5 Peninsula a few miles outside of Sequim where I --
6 my electricity is supplied by Clallam County, PUD.
7 A full requirements customer of the Bonneville Power
8 Administration.

9 I'll also note that Bonneville PUD, is on
10 record as supporting replacement of the services
11 presently provided by the lower state dams and then
12 breaching those dams to restore free-flowing lower
13 Snake River. I appreciate the opportunity to
14 comment on the plan -- on the program. And there's
15 a lot to like in it.

16 I'm encouraged that the Council is
17 plunging back into hydro operations, has been
18 supporting a total dissolved gas standard of 125
19 percent. That's all good. I do think you need to
20 take a hard look at how extended temporally that
21 spill needs to be.

22 I'm especially delighted that you have
23 reaffirmed the goal of seeing five million fish
24 return annually. That goal was first promulgated in
25 1987. And I want to mention a couple of associated

1 findings by the Council at that time. As you all, I
2 think, well-know, the Council concluded that
3 historically predevelopment runs and ranged from 10
4 to 16 million fish a year.

5 Council also concluded that in the then
6 recent years, runs had only been about two and a
7 half million. So the five million goal aimed at
8 doubling the then present runs. The Council also
9 found that losses of fish, specifically attributed
10 -- attributable to development and operation of
11 hydroelectric dams were 5 to 11 million fish
12 annually.

13 In other words, the -- the -- the goal of
14 doubling from two and a half to five was intended to
15 mitigate only half of the low-end of the range of
16 losses and less than 25 percent of the high-end of
17 the range of losses. That's one of the reasons it
18 was described as an interim goal because there was a
19 feeling that we needed to go further beyond that.

20 The Council also aimed for 2025 to reach
21 that goal, and here we are a little after 2025. By
22 way of context, I will mention that in 1987, I was
23 38 years old. My age has doubled in the interim.
24 The fish runs have not doubled. We are about where
25 we were in 1987, about two and a half million fish.

1 To me, that argues that the Council needs
2 to take more active and aggressive measures. The
3 hydro operations thing is one example. And I -- I
4 think that independent scientists who are not paid
5 to believe otherwise have widely concluded that the
6 single biggest thing we can do to get progress
7 towards that goal is to breach those lower Snake
8 River dams.

9 They are a declining resource. Their
10 production is -- is dropping every year. Back in
11 2017 Bonneville estimated 1,100 average megawatts
12 per production. Today that number is 696. They're
13 being less valuable every year. Need to take a hard
14 look at the lower state river dams, both in the
15 program and in the power plan. Thank you all very
16 much.

17 LES PURCE: Thank you very much.

18 And we'll now have Lucia Davids and
19 Christine Reid, please. Both of you come up and
20 we'll start with Lucia.

21 Welcome.

22 LUCIA DAVIDS: Good afternoon. My name is
23 Lucia Davids, L-U-C-I-A.

24 SPEAKER 6: Please speak up.

25 LUCIA DAVIDS: Speak up.

1 Good afternoon. My name is Lucia Davids,
2 L-U-C-I-A D-A-V-I-D-S. I'm a King County resident
3 and I'm here today to speak on behalf of the Seattle
4 Aquarium as the conservation program's
5 administrative specialist. Here to speak for the
6 salmon of course.

7 Salmon recovery is a core part of a
8 conservation work and is critical to the survival of
9 Southern Resident orcas as a species dependent
10 example.

11 I'd like to emphasize today that juvenile
12 salmon and steelhead need dam spill over to support
13 completion of their migration, keeping high spill
14 levels all the way through October, or excuse me,
15 August 31st is imperative for salmons migrating
16 later in the month and is crucial for maintaining
17 genetic diversity, which I understand to already be
18 highlighted in one of the guiding scientific
19 principles of this 2026 draft.

20 Healthy and diverse salmon populations,
21 along with systems that support their entire
22 lifecycle are critical for the health and
23 biodiversity of the environments they call home and
24 for those that rely upon them, both including people
25 and Southern Resident orcas.

1 I implore you today to give deference to
2 or to continue to give deference to the
3 recommendations provided by state and tribal
4 fisheries managers to restore annual returns of at
5 least five million adult salmon and steelhead, to
6 honor treaties with tribal nations and to honor, and
7 utilize the immense and expert knowledge of
8 practitioners working directly with these species in
9 their day to day.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

11 LES PURCE: Thank you.

12 CHRISTINE REID: For the record, my name
13 is Christine Reid, C-H-R-I-S-T-I-N-E. Last name
14 Reid, R-E-I-D. All right.

15 Chair Purce, Members Golden and Schriever,
16 thank you so much for the opportunity to testify
17 today. My name is Christine Reid and I am both a
18 proud union member and the political director of the
19 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
20 Local Union 77, representing nearly 9,000 highly
21 skilled professionals responsible for our
22 generation, transmission, and delivery to meet our
23 Northwest energy needs.

24 Our members are the backbone of the
25 hydropower system. We operate, maintain, repair --

1 and repair the facilities that keep power flowing
2 safely and reliably to every corner of the region.
3 For us, this work is more than just a job. It's a
4 commitment to our families, our neighbors, and the
5 future of the northwest.

6 As to the day-to-day stewards of the hydro
7 power operations, we bring firsthand experience
8 about what it takes to keep the system running
9 efficiently and safely in all conditions. Our work
10 ensures that when extreme weather hits, the lights
11 stay on and the homes are heated or cooled, and
12 critical services aren't interrupted.

13 Hydropower also provides thousands of
14 quality family jobs, jobs that support local
15 communities and helps sustain a solid middle class
16 here in the Northwest. For many of us, this has
17 meant generational careers and stability for our
18 families.

19 We recognize the importance of strong fish
20 and wildlife protections, and our members live and
21 care deeply about the river communities that depend
22 on healthy ecosystems. But we also see every day
23 how changes to operations can directly impact not
24 only electricity costs and grid reliability for rate
25 payers, but our own ability to do our job safely and

1 effectively.

2 When proposals reduce the reflexivity
3 and output of our hydro system, it puts added strain
4 on our workforce, making routine maintenance riskier
5 and increasing overtime and stress and exposing both
6 workers and the public to increased risk during the
7 peak events.

8 The draft hydro system operations under --
9 under -- the draft's hydro systems operation under
10 consideration would heighten these challenges. We
11 worry about these changes would drive up utility
12 bills for working families who are already stretched
13 thin, threaten job security for our members, and
14 compromise reliable services at the moment it's
15 needed most.

16 These are not abstract concerns. They are
17 the realities we face in the front lines. That's
18 why we call on the Council to seek solutions that
19 reflect both environmental and worker expertise. We
20 urge you to reject the operational changes that
21 would undermine grid stability and affordability,
22 and instead prioritize measures with clear
23 biological benefits and minimal impacts on the
24 everyday lives of our workers communities we serve.

25 It's worth remembering the system has made

1 real progress in our fish recovery. While
2 supporting good jobs, reliable, affordable power,
3 our workforce is ready and eager to help and find
4 practical solutions to honor both people and the
5 planet. We believe that protecting the Northwest
6 future means supporting a balanced approach.

7 When we're strong unions -- when we're
8 strong unions, healthy rivers, thriving salmon, and
9 dependable power can coexist. We stand ready to be
10 part of that conversation. Thank you for your
11 leadership and for listening to our concerns of the
12 workers who keep the region running. Thank you.

13 LES PURCE: Thank you, Christine.

14 Up next, Adam Ratliff and Julia Reitan.

15 Adam.

16 ADAM RATLIFF: Thank you so much.

17 Appreciate the opportunity. My name is Adam
18 Ratliff, A-D-A-M R-A-T-L-I-F-F. And I am here
19 representing just myself, but I'm calling on
20 Washingtonians, Oregonians, and Idahoans to return
21 to sanity and reality on this issue.

22 For the past 20 years a lot of money has
23 been spent by NGOs, have been pouring millions into
24 convincing the people of our region that their lives
25 would be better off if we didn't have dams. Of

1 course, reality is much different. We live in a
2 world that was built by the hydro system. The
3 cities we live in and the communities that sustain
4 us wouldn't be possible without the clean, renewable
5 and dispatchable energy that these dams provide.

6 Meanwhile, there's a fight to return to an
7 earlier time when salmon were abundant, orca were
8 healthy, and every river ran free. And we can all
9 picture that and we all yearn for that. And then I
10 do too. But you see, this is the founding myth of
11 the issue, this idea that we once had abundant
12 salmon and then the dams were built and the salmon
13 went away.

14 Therefore, if we remove the dams, the
15 salmon will come back. And this narrative ignores
16 the fact that the historic salmon runs have all
17 collapsed well before the damage were ever built,
18 largely due to pollution and overharvest.

19 We know this for certain that the decline
20 of historic abundance started as early as the 1880s
21 and fell off a cliff during the World War I with the
22 first dams being built on the Columbia, not until
23 the 1930s. We need to walk in reality on this
24 issue.

25 The fact of the matter is that if you want

1 precolonization salmon runs, you need a
2 precolonization built environment. The land that
3 we're standing on right now, the ancestral home of
4 so many Salish-speaking first peoples, is within
5 walking distance of some of the best original salmon
6 habitat in the state. But no one here is advocating
7 for filling in the Montlake Cut or restoring Lake
8 Washington to its natural state.

9 No one's suggesting demolishing the
10 Ballard Locks, eliminating all that infrastructure,
11 just push salmon, steelhead to extinction right here
12 in the Seattle city limits. No one's suggesting
13 that we dig up the Port of Seattle and Elliott Bay
14 or return Duwamish to the prime salmon habitat that
15 it used to be. I could go on and on and on.

16 We know that this is -- that's not what
17 this is about. We're here to talk about the Snake
18 River dams. Even here in Western Washington, major
19 dam removal is showing underwhelming results.
20 Fifteen years ago, the dams of the Elwha River came
21 down, opened up a third of the Olympic Peninsula to
22 -- to spawning habitat. And yet despite this
23 habitat being in the Southern Resident orcas
24 backyard, their numbers remain the same with no sign
25 of major improvement.

1 And so if taking a totally blocked
2 watershed and opening up the spawning habitat
3 doesn't help the orcas, what do you think
4 demolishing dams that don't block habitat 400 miles
5 away will do.

6 And so if you believe that I do, like I do
7 -- if you believe like I do, that manmade climate
8 change is real, that additional CO2 in the
9 atmosphere is bad, that it's the responsibility of
10 the people and our government to make practical
11 decisions around the environment, energy, and
12 climate, then by default you need to be in favor of
13 the lower Snake River dams.

14 Thank you very much.

15 LES PURCE: Thank you.

16 Julia.

17 JULIA REITAN: Hello. My name is Julia
18 Reitan, R-E-I-T-A-N J-U-L-I-A.

19 I am speaking for myself. I live here in
20 Seattle. I'm a Seattle City Light rate payer. And
21 so I have a stake in what happens with the Snake
22 River dam. I want to thank you all and I really do
23 want to comment on the Fish and Wildlife Plan that
24 we are here to talk about and that you put forward.
25 Thank you so much.

1 I would urge you to keep the goal of five
2 million salmon and also to look very carefully at
3 the recommendations of the tribal and state
4 fisheries agencies and implement them all as they
5 have -- they are bringing the knowledge that I
6 believe the Council looks for with the Fish and
7 Wildlife Plan.

8 I would encourage you again to extend
9 spill all the way through August. Not cut it off
10 too early. The salmon and steelhead that migrate
11 late in August are important to genetic diversity
12 and they need that water as well.

13 I will -- would encourage you to include
14 breaching the four lower Snake River dams as an
15 action for fish that must be considered in the next
16 power plan so that those are analyzed and we can
17 figure out what the cost would really be.

18 And finally, to really hold the Bonneville
19 Power Administration accountable to the plan and to
20 the -- to a 20 -- about 35 timeline for those five
21 million fish. You are really the only people that
22 I'm aware of, the eight of you, who can hold the
23 Bonneville Power Administration accountable to --
24 for their obligations to Fish and Wildlife.

25 You really are salmon's only hope in the

1 near term for sure. And since I've said that, I
2 want to continue on and for the salmon help me Obi-
3 Wan Kenobi, you are our only hope.

4 Thank you so much.

5 LES PURCE: Thank you so much.

6 JULIA REITAN: May the force be with you.

7 LES PURCE: Janet Way and Holly Hughes
8 please.

9 JANET WAY: Good evening. My name's Janet
10 Way, W-A-Y.

11 I am from Shoreline, Washington. And I
12 happen to be -- I'm a rate payer and I happen to be
13 president of a small nonprofit called Shoreline
14 Preservation Society. I live in the Thornton Creek
15 Watershed, which is the largest watershed in Seattle
16 and shoreline and home to five species of salmon.

17 Salmon are important to me recently
18 because of our critically endangered orca whales,
19 which are dependent upon them. So I'm in favor of
20 the goal of this plan must be to restore five
21 million salmon. That sounds like a great idea to
22 me. State and tribal fishery managers have
23 recommended that, so I'm in favor of that.

24 Salmon and steelhead need extra water
25 spill over the dams to help them migrate and -- and

1 must include breaching the four Snake River dams as
2 an action for fish that must be considered. And to
3 say that the Elwha and Klamath restoration has made
4 no difference is preposterous because those were
5 incredibly successful dam removal projects.

6 And they set -- they set a standard that
7 we can follow going forward. So I believe you
8 should hold the Bonneville Power Administration
9 accountable for reaching the goals that you have
10 set.

11 And to finalize my comments, the wellbeing
12 of all who live in the Northwest depends on salmon
13 species thriving and our endangered orca whales
14 survival also depends upon abundant salmon. And so
15 please take -- take the actions that are recommended
16 and I appreciate all that you do. Thank you.

17 LES PURCE: Thank you, Janet.

18 Holly.

19 HOLLY HUGHES: Thank you.

20 Thank you. My name is Holly Hughes, H-U-
21 G-H-E-S. First name Holly. And I live in Chimacum,
22 Washington in Jefferson County, and I'm speaking
23 here for myself.

24 And I -- what I'd like to do is just echo
25 what some of the folks before me have said so

1 eloquently, the importance of the -- the goal of
2 five million salmon, the -- the target of five
3 million salmon, the importance of listening to the
4 state and tribal recommendations, the importance of
5 enforcing the Bonneville -- holding the Bonneville
6 Power Administration accountable and also
7 maintaining the spill levels through August 31st.

8 And I want to speak a little bit
9 personally about my connection with salmon. When I
10 graduated from college in Minnesota, I went up to
11 Alaska to make money for graduate school. And I
12 bought a salmon gillnetter, and I went fishing for
13 four years, gillnetting, and then ran tenders up
14 there.

15 And I fell in love with salmon during that
16 time. Just what an amazing heroic species. And
17 fishing in Alaska, there were no dams up there. And
18 I was able to see the abundance of the salmon runs.
19 And I lived in the Northwest. And since I've left
20 fishing, I've committed myself to trying to preserve
21 the salmon runs.

22 I've worked on salmon restoration. I've
23 taught at the college level teaching about salmon.
24 And right now I'm co-publisher of a small press and
25 people press and we published a number of books

1 about salmon. And the one I want to highlight is
2 called I Sing the Salmon Home.

3 It was edited by Rena Priest, a member of
4 the Lummi Nation. And it's a wonderful collection.
5 The reason I'm -- I'm not -- this isn't just self-
6 promotion, but the wonderful thing about it is that
7 it -- people responded to the call for submissions
8 from 8 years old to 80. And everybody who sent in
9 work demonstrated their love and appreciation of
10 salmon.

11 So I just wanted to kind of conclude with
12 that, the importance of salmon to our bio region.
13 And that also, I guess just to go back to the
14 breaching of the -- of the lower Snake Rivers,
15 living in the Olympic -- on the Olympic Peninsula,
16 I've been able to see what the restoration of the
17 Elwha River Dam has meant to the Olympic Peninsula.
18 And that the salmon knew exactly what to do, they
19 came back.

20 So thank you for your good work on this
21 project. I appreciate the -- the chance to express
22 my opinion.

23 LES PURCE: Thank you very much, you all.

24 I'd like to invite Tim Stearns and Joseph
25 Boggard out, please.

1 TIM STEARNS: Good afternoon, Members of
2 the Council.

3 My name is Tim Stearns, T-I-M S-T-E-A-R-N-
4 S. I am -- I'm retired, but I've -- will say that
5 the Power Act has roughly paralleled my career. I
6 wrote papers on it in college before it passed and
7 it was monumental of -- first starting off a -- a
8 document to save five nuclear plants and ended up
9 having a hierarchy of resources, a -- some different
10 priorities, treating conservation as a resource.

11 It proved to be a monumental draft, and
12 one of the reasons it passed and was added to it was
13 the Fish and Wildlife Program. And the Fish and
14 Wildlife Program was an attempt to avoid the
15 Endangered Species Act from taking over the river.
16 And I will say unfortunately, in 1991, we discovered
17 that frankly, the Fish and Wildlife Program was not
18 robust enough.

19 We made some progress on fish screens. We
20 made some progress on habitat. We made some
21 progress on a number of things, but we had a number
22 of failures. Frankly, hatcheries have never been
23 the option -- the best mitigation, and they never
24 will be.

25 I worked on a task force under the Power

1 Council with Jim Waldo, a brilliant attorney to try
2 to improve hatcheries. We improved them modestly,
3 but still modestly. We couldn't increase the
4 robustness of them much. And even though we're
5 getting two and a half million fish back, most of
6 them are hatcheries and they don't cover the whole
7 Columbia Basin, which is equivalent to the size of
8 France.

9 And the single biggest stumbling block has
10 been those lower Snake River dams. Unlike someone
11 who spoke earlier, the region has made mistakes. We
12 have dramatically improved streamside buffers
13 through the -- between the Spotted Owl and the
14 Columbia Basin project. We have taken out some dams
15 and they have improved salmon.

16 Now, have we improved water quality in
17 Lake Washington? We have. So it's -- you know,
18 when I first moved to Seattle in 1984, I moved out
19 from Montana. Lake Washington was unswimmable
20 because we directly poured sewage into it. Okay.

21 It's not what it should be, but we have
22 made progress. You know, we have made progress in a
23 whole number of ways. I have to admit that when the
24 Council established that interim goal of five
25 million, it was criticized as being not ambitious

1 enough, and we're still not close to it because
2 frankly, we have failed to take on some of the most
3 biggest challenges.

4 None of us are talking about taking out
5 the whole hydro system. It just turns out that the
6 lower Snake River dams seem to be the biggest
7 stumbling block. Just in contrast, when I started
8 on this work, the Hanford Reach did not produce
9 mini-salmon.

10 To Hanford Reach, that side of the
11 Columbia produces way more than the Snake River
12 side, which was the most robust part of -- of the
13 system. So we have to take on the biggest
14 challenge, and that's flow and spill until we can
15 take out those dams. And finally, we have
16 diversified the region.

17 I helped set up the framework in Oregon
18 and Washington to do rooftop solar from planning,
19 zoning, siding, interconnection standards. We did
20 the shuttle diplomacy to get utilities across both
21 states to agree to common standards, and we are
22 getting robust solar development. I also worked on
23 the standards so that we would minimize bird damage
24 with -- with wind.

25 And with that, I will close. Just it's --

1 you guys are our hope and we've made huge progress
2 on the energy side. We haven't made the progress
3 that we need to make on the fish side. Thank you.

4 LES PURCE: Thank you.

5 Joseph.

6 TIM STEARNS: You can have my mic.

7 JOSEPH BOGAARD: Thanks, Tim.

8 Good afternoon. I appreciate the
9 opportunity to share feedback with you today.

10 My name is Joseph Boggard. I'm the
11 executive director of the Save Wild Salmon
12 Coalition. We're a coalition of over 50-member
13 groups and organizations representing salmon
14 fishing, you know, clean energy, and orca advocates,
15 working together to protect and restore abundant
16 fishable wild salmon and steelhead population.

17 LES PURCE: Would you spell your name for
18 the record please?

19 JOSEPH BOGAARD: Oh, I'm sorry.

20 LES PURCE: That's fine --

21 JOSEPH BOGAARD: In the Columbia Basin
22 Pacific Northwest. My name is Joseph Boggard, B-O-
23 G-A-A-R-D. Joseph, J-O-S-E-P-H. Sorry about that.

24 LES PURCE: All right.

25 JOSEPH BOGAARD: And I want to thank the

1 Council and its staff for your work on the Draft
2 Fish and Wildlife Program. Right now is a critical
3 time for the basins made of fish and -- and it's a
4 real leadership opportunity for the Council. The
5 decisions you make regarding the Fish and Wildlife
6 Program and the -- and the Ninth Energy Plan will
7 have important implications for our region for years
8 to come.

9 In summary, SOS supports the
10 recommendations and priorities of our region's,
11 state, and tribal fisheries managers, and we urge
12 the Council to adopt them in full. The basin's fish
13 populations are in deep trouble today. Many are
14 literally declining towards extinction before our
15 eyes.

16 The Council has the opportunity to make
17 good policy that can buy time and give these fish a
18 fighting chance. Now I have three linked requests
19 today.

20 First, the Council should include a
21 deadline of 2035 for meeting as longstanding, but
22 still unmet five million fish goal. We appreciate
23 the draft program maintains this numerical goal, but
24 it loses any sense of urgency and -- or meaning if
25 it doesn't have a specific timeline to achieve it.

1 Second, in order to make meaningful
2 progress towards this goal, these fee -- these fish
3 need maximum spill at the dams on the lower snake in
4 the lower Columbia River from spring through the end
5 of August. Max spill through August 31st is an
6 essential piece of the larger puzzle to reverse
7 these declines and begin to rebuild these
8 populations.

9 Third, restoring the lower Snake River is
10 critical for avoiding extinction, for restoring
11 imperiled populations and for meeting the Council's
12 five million fish goal, the Fish and Wildlife
13 Program should recognize the importance of dam
14 removal and lay the groundwork for the Ninth Power
15 Plan to analyze it.

16 The Council's leadership and its expertise
17 can help our region better understand our options
18 and the costs and benefits associated with replacing
19 the small power block -- small block of power these
20 dams provide today.

21 Finally, I am a rate payer, as -- as are
22 all or nearly all those testifying today, SOS -- SOS
23 supporters and our coalition member organization
24 supporters number in the millions here in the
25 Pacific Northwest. Virtually all of them are rate

1 payers that benefit from the Federal Hydro system.

2 They, we support reliable and affordable
3 energy system and real salmon recovery in order to
4 prevent extinction, in order to uphold our nation's
5 promises to Northwest tribes, to rebuild the
6 irreplaceable, ecological, economic, and cultural
7 gifts that wild salmon and steelhead bring to the
8 Northwest and the nation.

9 Clean and -- clean and affordable energy
10 and real salmon recovery. We need the Council's
11 leadership and expertise, working closely with
12 others in the region to get us there. Thank you.

13 LES PURCE: Thank you so much.

14 Nancy Hirsh and Bill Arthur, please, up
15 next.

16 NANCY HIRSH: Good afternoon, Council
17 Members, Staff.

18 My name is Nancy Hirsh, N-A-N-C-Y H-I-R-S-
19 H. I am here representing myself but I have 30
20 years of experience in the utility, power and
21 regulatory sectors focusing on resource planning,
22 clean energy development, and environmental and fish
23 and wildlife impacts.

24 I really appreciate the work that the
25 Council has done and the staff has done to put

1 forward such a substantive proposal in Fish and
2 Wildlife Amendment. I'm particularly interested in
3 the balance between fish and wildlife protection and
4 enhancement and power system reliability.

5 A key issue for the Council is when the
6 balance is applied. I attended and listened to
7 several Council discussions on the Fish and Wildlife
8 Program, and it was clear that there were concerns
9 about reliability and cost. I certainly agree with
10 those concerns, and it is vitally important to
11 maintain an adequate and reliable power system.

12 However, at this particular point in time
13 in deciding on the Fish and Wildlife Program, the
14 Council should be singularly focused on what is the
15 best comprehensive program to meet the Fish and
16 Wildlife goals and targets. That includes what is
17 biologically best for the fish in the basin.

18 I urge the Council to adopt in the final
19 plan the recommendations from the state and
20 fisheries -- state and tribal fisheries managers.
21 That includes the five million fish goal and spill
22 throughout August.

23 Now, back to balance. As you know, the
24 power division team will take the hydro system
25 operations provisions as well as additional hydro

1 operations scenarios and sensitivities and
2 incorporate them into the power modeling just as
3 they build in baseline system operations with load
4 forecasts, state law requirements, technology,
5 supply curves, market price forecasts, et cetera,
6 many other things.

7 The end result will be a portfolio power
8 plan that meets reliability requirements and all of
9 the constraints or requirements from the region. To
10 put power and cost needs as a factor in the
11 development of Fish and Wildlife Program is a bit
12 like saying that the Council will choose to only
13 partially meet state law requirements as it -- in
14 order to meet reliability when it's putting the
15 power plant together.

16 And -- and I don't think you're going to
17 do that. The power system modeling is specifically
18 designed to optimize the system. After all the
19 constraints and obligations and projections have
20 been factored in, in order to meet reliability
21 issues, that's when the balance -- that's where the
22 balance needs to be. Now you're focused on fish.

23 And it's also clear from the early stages
24 of the power division's work in developing the Ninth
25 Plan that growth in electricity demand is the

1 dominant factor influencing significant resource
2 needs, reliability, and affordability. The impacts
3 of hydro system operations that protect and enhance
4 fish are dwarfed by the rise in demand and the other
5 power system changes.

6 And finally, I urge the Council to do --
7 to determine what is best for the fish in this plan,
8 and then turn it over to the power side to address
9 reliability, affordability, and an efficient system.
10 Thank you.

11 LES PURCE: Thank you.

12 Bill.

13 BILL ARTHUR: Great. Thank you.

14 My name is Bill Arthur. Last name A-R-T-
15 H-U-R. And Members of the Council, thank you for
16 the opportunity to speak and testify on the Fish and
17 Wildlife Program.

18 I live in Shoreline, Washington. I'm a
19 rate payer of Seattle City Light. I contribute to
20 the problem and I think it's important that we
21 contribute to the solution.

22 I'm here representing the Sierra Club. I
23 chair the Sierra Club Snake and Columbia River
24 Salmon Recovery Campaign. The Sierra Club has a
25 long history of working to protect and restore the

1 salmon, the steelhead, and other native fish of the
2 Columbia Basin.

3 We have participated in many of the
4 Council's processes over the years, both the energy
5 and the Fish and Wildlife Plans. I testified at the
6 first hearing on the Northwest Electric Power
7 Planning and Conservation Act in 1977, before it
8 included the Fish and Wildlife Program and before
9 there was such a thing as the Council.

10 The update of the Fish and Wildlife
11 Program comes at a critical time. Our salmon and
12 steelhead runs remain in serious trouble. Many are
13 -- remain in danger. Thirty-five years after the
14 Snake River sockeye were listed under the ESA and 40
15 years after the Council's first Fish and Wildlife
16 Program are endangered fish, still struggle for
17 survival. We can and must do better.

18 The recent promising plan that was forged
19 with the Biden administration, the resilient
20 Columbia Basin Agreement, provided a positive and
21 strong path forward. The Trump administration
22 unilaterally abandoned this agreement. The
23 Council's Fish and Wildlife Program can and should
24 play a critical role to advance key measures and
25 actions to protect, mitigate, and enhance the Native

1 fish as the act calls for.

2 The action is back in the region. The
3 Council's mission under the Regional Act has never
4 been more important. Folks, we're aware of the buck
5 stops now. As you well know, the Regional Act
6 charges the Council to protect, mitigate, and
7 enhance the salmon and steelhead impacted by the
8 hydro system.

9 I applaud the Council for keeping the five
10 million goal. Marc and others have spoken, you
11 know, to that. However, we are a long ways from
12 achieving this important goal. We strongly
13 encourage the Council to adopt measurable standards
14 to achieve this goal, including a 2035 deadline so
15 that we have something to gauge against, adopt all
16 the recommendations that have been made by the state
17 and tribal fish managers.

18 They are the experts. Include specific
19 milestones to hold BPA accountable for effective and
20 timely implementation of the actions and measures,
21 including extending the spill which is I think one
22 of the important parts of the program to August
23 31st. If you're a salmon, BPA stands for the Big
24 Predator Administration.

25 We are doubling down on predator control

1 for sea lions, for birds, and for other fish. And
2 no, I'm not suggesting we should harass or kill BPA,
3 though I've thought about it. I am saying we need
4 strong specific direction and accountability for BPA
5 to make sure that we actually implement the plan
6 effectively.

7 You've heard some argue that adopting
8 these measures will impact system reliability and
9 energy rates. It will do neither. Nancy has spoke
10 eloquently to why that is. I would just simply note
11 that in the unlikely chance that we face real
12 emergencies and real decisions, the protocols allow
13 for the -- for the measures to be either
14 temporarily, you know, suspended as necessary to
15 deal with that.

16 So we're not locked in a box and the
17 likelihood of anything serious happening is small.
18 When it comes to rates, I would just note that the
19 resilient Columbia Basin Agreement is very similar
20 to the recommendations that have been made by the
21 state and tribal, you know, fish managers.

22 In January of 2024, Administrator John
23 Hairston testified at the House Energy and Commerce
24 Committee in Washington, DC, basically saying that
25 the impact of implementing the resilient Columbia

1 Basin Agreement would have very little impact on
2 rates in the Northwest. In fact, the estimate was
3 0.05 percent a year over the 10 years of the
4 projected agreement.

5 So the likelihood of impact is very small.
6 Honestly, I find it a little hard to accept the BPA
7 and utility wailing over rates. BPA has committed
8 to join the Southwest Power Pool, a western regional
9 energy market that is much more expensive than the
10 alternative CAISO Energy Pool. They've committed up
11 to \$40 million already in advance of that.

12 All of the economic analysis show that the
13 cost of -- of joining the -- the more expensive
14 Western energy market is 60 to \$140 million a year.
15 So apparently, we only worry about rate increases if
16 it means salmon investments, not if we're worried
17 about which energy market to join.

18 I would join with others and -- and asking
19 that the Council evaluate a wide range of potential
20 hydro operations, including removal of the lower
21 Snake River dams and make sure that we have done the
22 kind of research, the kind of analysis that will
23 assure that we can take whatever measures are
24 necessary.

25 And so I will once again just simply thank

1 you for the opportunity to speak to these important
2 issues and very much appreciate the Council's early
3 work and the fact that we have adopted a lot of good
4 measures. Let's finish the job.

5 LES PURCE: Thank you.

6 Renee Fredrickson and Jennifer Godfrey,
7 please.

8 RENEE FREDRICKSON: Hi. My name is Renee
9 Fredrickson, R-E-N-E-E F-R-E-D-R-I-C-K-S-O-N.

10 Thanks.

11 Thank you to the Council. I'm amazed we
12 even have such a Council and for all the work you
13 do, it's -- thank you. Thank you so much.

14 The work of my life has been as a high
15 school science teacher. And -- and I have decades
16 of experience taking teenagers out into all areas of
17 the Pacific Northwest to learn about the natural
18 world.

19 And the thing that concerns me a great
20 deal when I watch what's going on in a lot of venues
21 here is, and same thing I tried to -- have always
22 tried to teach them, is the connectedness of every
23 living thing in the Pacific Northwest. As I can
24 read this, the salmon are essential to the forests.
25 I mean, there's DNA from the salmon in the trees.

1 The forests are essential to the
2 indigenous cultures that have always been here. And
3 -- and they are also essential to our own wellbeing
4 in terms of weather and mitigating climate and
5 beauty and all of the things that forests do.

6 And the indigenous cultures here are
7 essential to all of our survival, I think, because
8 they are the ones we can look to, to teach us how to
9 take care of this place because they didn't screw it
10 up over thousands of years of being here, and we had
11 screwed it up over very less -- very much less time
12 than that.

13 They are the wisdom keepers of this, and
14 salmon are one of the basis -- basis for their
15 culture. I don't want to be seen as part of the --
16 as -- as part of the time and generation who could
17 have done something about keeping salmon from going
18 extinct, but we didn't do it. And from what I can
19 glean -- I'm not a dam expert.

20 What I can glean from the reading and
21 research is that those four dams on the lower Snake
22 are really inconsistent with the ability of salmon
23 to survive. And I won't go on into that because
24 Marc and Joseph said eloquently everything, I think.
25 So I agree with them.

1 And that's all I have to say, except thank
2 you very much.

3 LES PURCE: Thank you.

4 Jennifer.

5 JENNIFER GODFREY: Thank you.

6 My name is Jennifer Godfrey, J-E-N-N-I-F-
7 E-R G-O-D-F-R-E-Y.

8 And I agree wholeheartedly with what you
9 just said and also with the first speaker, Kathleen
10 Callaghy. So we know that the lack of prey
11 availability is one of the leading threats
12 preventing recovery of the critically endangered
13 Southern Resident killer whales.

14 The last official census from Center for
15 Whale Research falls at 74 individuals, a
16 dangerously low number for genetic diversity. The
17 top threats in the Federal Recovery Plan were
18 recently reconfirmed by a transboundary panel of
19 scientists. As you know, these orcas almost
20 exclusively eat chinook salmon.

21 So I would ask that you please implement
22 summer spill through August 31st, which will
23 especially benefit the return of wild chinook runs,
24 providing the increased prey availability needed for
25 orca recovery efforts, or to give them their best

1 chance.

2 At a time when the federal government is
3 rapidly dismantling environmental protections and
4 the city of Seattle is wrongly claiming that
5 deregulation for extreme increases in water
6 polluting impervious surfaces is necessary, it's
7 more important than ever to take every measure to
8 increase salmon runs within the habitat range of the
9 74 Southern Resident killer whales.

10 And according to Dr. Deborah -- Dr.
11 Deborah Giles of the SeaDoc Society, we've got to
12 try something massively different if even just on a
13 trial basis.

14 So thank you so much for your work.

15 LES PURCE: Thank you.

16 Collin Deverell and Alison Longley,
17 please.

18 ALISON LONGLEY: I am Alison Longley.
19 That's with one L, A-L-I-S-O-N L-O-N-G-L-E-Y. And
20 I'm from San Juan Island. I'm San Juan.

21 We're very much invested in our orca
22 whales, which as pointed out, they live on salmon.
23 The whales are starving because they lack large
24 fish. The hatchery fishing -- fish are small. You
25 can count lots of them, but they're not big enough.

1 They're too much work to count -- to catch.

2 If you look at the draft, and I have
3 looked at it, it talks about hatcheries. It talks
4 about predator management, i.e. killing. The
5 predator problem is in part because of the dams.
6 The -- the fish gather in certain parts of the
7 things like the tailrace and so on. And it makes it
8 easier for the predators to simply eat up the salmon
9 instead of, you know, getting them in the ocean.

10 It's been suggested in the draft that
11 salmon carcasses -- carcasses could be beneficially
12 distributed in some of the riparian forests to give
13 them fertilizer, which they don't currently get
14 because the salmon are not dying up there and
15 creating fertilizer for those forests, which also
16 are part of our bulwark against climate change.

17 And when you consider all the things that
18 have been done, things like increased bill and so
19 on, it reminds me of a Rube Goldberg apparatus. I
20 don't know if you've seen one recently, but it's a
21 comic that shows a great complicated system for
22 doing something simple -- potentially simple. And I
23 think instead we need to look at what the cause of
24 our problem is and deal with that.

25 And that is those four lower Snake River

1 dams are simply in the way and we need to breach
2 them. So that's what I would recommend. We do have
3 excellent alternatives for the transport that we
4 could get currently from the barging. And you can
5 look at solutionaryrail.org for a lot of
6 information.

7 The electricity that those dams produce is
8 less than 3 percent of our total from the Columbia
9 basin system. And maintaining those dams is
10 expensive. It's going to get worse because the
11 turbines need replacement. They are good for about
12 50 years and it's been about 50 years and they cost
13 a lot. So let's just be sensible about these things
14 and, you know, improve it.

15 LES PURCE: Thank you.

16 ALISON LONGLEY: Thank you very much.

17 LES PURCE: Collin.

18 COLLIN DEVERELL: All right. Good
19 evening, Chair, Vice Chair Purce, and Members of the
20 Council.

21 For the record, my name is Collin
22 Deverell, C-O-L-I-N D-E-V-E-R-E-L-L.

23 I am a Seattle City Light rate payer third
24 generation North Westerner, and in a professional
25 capacity here tonight on behalf of the National

1 Parks Conservation Association, which is the
2 National Advocacy Group for America's National
3 Parks. Specifically here on behalf of our 86,000
4 members here in the Pacific Northwest.

5 As you all are keenly aware, salmon are
6 connected not just to our rivers, but our national
7 parks and public lands across the northwest, whether
8 those are the high desert plains of the John Day
9 Fossil Beds, the creeks at Nez Perce National
10 Historical Park, and the Columbia River itself as
11 part of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail
12 and Park in Warrenton.

13 And on behalf of our members, NPCA urges
14 this Council to stand up for wildlife and defend
15 both our economic and environmental futures by
16 taking four steps that you've heard some others
17 share this evening. And I'll just briefly reiterate
18 those. One, continue to retain the five million
19 salmon goal and -- and implement the recommendations
20 of state and tribal fisheries managers and to pursue
21 that goal.

22 Continue to hold the Bonneville Power
23 Administration accountable for this goal with a 10-
24 year timeline to make meaningful progress on that
25 goal. Third, again, maintain those high levels of

1 spill for juvenile salmon to make sure that those
2 salmon have a chance to reach some of our most
3 pristine habitat.

4 And then lastly, include as a potential
5 for analysis, the removal of the four lower Snake
6 River dams is a potential action for consideration.

7 And I'm going to speak sort of off the
8 cuff a little bit as a North Westerner. And my
9 grandfather took me to the Bonneville Dam when I was
10 a very young boy. And as a World War II veteran, it
11 was a really important opportunity for him to talk
12 about his history and being a part of the northwest
13 and what it meant to him and as somebody who ended
14 up working for PGE for a long time after -- after
15 the war. And his lesson to me was never to shy away
16 from big ideas or big challenges.

17 And I think here we are, as we've made
18 such meaningful progress to restore salmon, to think
19 about what's the next big challenge and not accept
20 no for an answer. So I really encourage this
21 Council to take those meaningful steps in amending
22 the program especially as we're in an historic era
23 of disinvestment in our natural resources.

24 Just as an example, Olympic National Park
25 where I spend a lot of my time, one of the greatest

1 wild places for salmon has seen an 80 percent
2 decline in its staffing and resources to manage its
3 fisheries. Again on the tail of the very successful
4 Elwha Restoration Project.

5 So with that in mind, again, this program
6 is a great opportunity to make sure we protect our
7 imperial salmon and steelhead run for future
8 generations.

9 Thank you so much for your time this
10 evening.

11 LES PURCE: Thank you.

12 Rein, you're up next, along with Rebecca.

13 REIN ATTEMANN: Hello, Council Members.

14 My name is Rein. First name R-E-I-N.
15 Last name Attemann, A-T-T-E-M-A-N-N, and I'm here
16 representing Washington Conservation Action.

17 Thank you for having a public hearing here
18 in Seattle where I'm a resident and rate payer of
19 Seattle City Light. Your presence here today to
20 gather input is appropriate given that Seattle City
21 Light is one of two utilities that purchases most of
22 their electricity from Bonneville Power
23 Administration.

24 WCA believes that including aggressive
25 fish operations in the Council's 2026 Fish and

1 Wildlife Program will be critical for their survival
2 of endangered salmon and steelhead in the Columbia
3 and Snake River Basin and will not impact BPA's
4 rates.

5 The program will help the region identify
6 appropriate energy sources in the Ninth Power Plan
7 that can keep power rates lower in the future while
8 providing sufficient river operations to achieve the
9 program's goal to restore five million salmon.

10 Fortunately for me and other Seattle City Light
11 customers, BPA rates are significantly lower than
12 rates elsewhere in the country.

13 According to BPA's own current power rates
14 fiscal year 2026 to 2028, the average Tier 1 rate is
15 \$37.70 per megawatt hour for 2026. This compares
16 favorably to the wholesale electricity prices that
17 the US Energy Information Administration projected
18 for other regions, which for 2026 was \$51.45 per
19 megawatt hour on average.

20 Even if BPA's rates did increase, the
21 region's power supply would still be more affordable
22 than in other regions of this country. Like others
23 who have testified this evening on the Fish and
24 Wildlife Program, we support keeping a high level of
25 hydro dam systems operation spill all the way

1 through August 31st for the benefit of salmon
2 survival.

3 We support, including the recommendations
4 of the state and tribal fisheries managers. We
5 support holding BPA accountable for reaching salmon
6 and steelhead recovery goals that you set with
7 specific deadlines as mentioned earlier by Bill and
8 Joseph. And we support breaching of the four lower
9 Snake River dams as an action for salmon and
10 steelhead recovery that must be considered and
11 analyzed as the Ninth Power Plant.

12 With a resilient Columbia Basin agreement
13 abandoned by the federal government with the six
14 sovereigns that includes state of Washington, state
15 of Oregon, and the four Columbia Basin tribes, the
16 Council's Fish and Wildlife Program is the best
17 regional opportunity and path we have to mitigate
18 further harm to Columbia and Snake River salmon,
19 steelhead populations from hydro operations while
20 honoring our -- that means yours, mine, everybody
21 else's -- treaty obligations for tribal nations.

22 Thank you for your work, your leadership,
23 perseverance for fish and wildlife recurrence in the
24 Northwest.

25 LES PURCE: Thank you.

1 REBECCA SAYRE: Hi, there. Thank you so
2 much for this opportunity to testify today.

3 My name is Rebecca Sayre, S-A-Y-R-E, and
4 I'm going to keep my comments fairly brief today.

5 I am a Seattle City Light rate payer. And
6 I am here to speak in support of the Council,
7 listening to the state and tribal recommendations to
8 increase the spill over the dams through the end of
9 August and to support the goal of five million fish
10 returning annually.

11 And I'll just leave with kind of my bigger
12 thoughts on this, is that these -- the Snake River
13 dams provide a small block of power. As many
14 speakers have spoken today more eloquently and, in
15 more detail, than I am able to at this point in
16 time. There are a lot of solutions out there that
17 -- that we are working towards to that can replace
18 that power.

19 There are a lot of -- from conservation to
20 solar to other, you know, other electrical sources
21 to conservation. We -- we can do this. We can --
22 we should work towards removing the dams on Lower
23 Snake River. We know that the mouth of the Columbia
24 River is a primary food source for the Southern
25 Resident orcas to feed in the spring.

1 It is the -- pretty much the main arterial
2 of the Pacific Northwest riparian system. And I
3 just ask you as you think about all this, what --
4 what is your legacy? You have an opportunity here
5 to do something extraordinary and something really
6 incredible is in your hands.

7 So I just encourage you to think about
8 what you might be able to accomplish and we have
9 seen when we removed other dams and other river
10 systems that fish return.

11 And just thank you so much for your work
12 and thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

13 LES PURCE: Thank you very much.

14 Up next it's Tommi or Tammy Adams and Sage
15 Fox.

16 TOMMI ADAMS: Hi, guys.

17 LES PURCE: Welcome.

18 TOMMI ADAMS: Tommi Tistar, Tomi Lipchard
19 (phonetic). Good evening. My name is Tommi. I am
20 representing myself, but also to Tahltan (phonetic).

21 And I'd like to ask if anyone sitting up
22 here today is indigenous at all. Great. Okay. I
23 just want to put -- yes.

24 ED SCHRIEVER: Could you spell your name
25 please?

1 TOMMI ADAMS: T-O-M-M-I. All right.

2 ED SCHRIEVER: Last name please.

3 TOMMI ADAMS: Adams, A-D-A-M-S.

4 ED SCHRIEVER: Thanks, Tommi.

5 TOMMI ADAMS: Mm-hmm.

6 Salmon are more than food or a part of our
7 economy. They're a part of who we are. They are
8 relatives and have sustained us since time
9 immemorial. We carry a responsibility to protect
10 them. The Northwest Power Council must confront the
11 real impacts of the hydropower on the Columbia and
12 Snake Rivers and take actions that truly restore
13 salmon and steelhead.

14 This is about honoring treaty rights,
15 protecting endangered salmon and the 75 orcas that
16 are dependent on them, ensuring future generations
17 inherit living rivers and not just memories. I'm
18 here to make sure that our relative voices are
19 heard. The Klamath River Dam removal shows what
20 unity and shared purpose can accomplish when we work
21 together to restore a river and protect our salmon.

22 The system isn't fully healed, but these
23 gains show what's possible when science, indigenous
24 leadership, and better river management comes
25 together, that the salmon do respond because when

1 the salmon go, we all go.

2 Without indigenous people and tribal-led
3 restoration, climate action will always be complete.

4 Thank you.

5 LES PURCE: Thank you.

6 SAGE FOX: Good evening, Council members.

7 I'm a sixth generation resident of the Columbia
8 River Basin and I spent a lot of my life exploring
9 many tributaries to the Columbia River, including
10 the Metolius, Deschutes, Clearwater up in Idaho,
11 Payette, Mackenzie. So this system is very dear to
12 me as it is to many others in this room.

13 I'm representing myself today, but I spent
14 the past seven years working for state and federal
15 agencies in monitoring population declines of
16 notably the wild runs that are often lumped together
17 with the hatchery runs. We talked about these
18 numbers.

19 And I have three simple points to add
20 tonight. The first one has been said many times
21 before, and it's that no plan for recovering our
22 fisheries in this region is complete without at
23 least a thorough consideration of what it would look
24 like to breach the Snake River dams.

25 My second point, I already into that, is

1 that hatchery fish should not be counted towards
2 these totals, and that one is a little bit more
3 contentious. While the five million goal is seen by
4 some as overly ambitious, others is not nearly
5 enough.

6 I won't even comment on that except to say
7 that we all agree we need stronger salmon runs.
8 What is seldom talked about is that we should not be
9 counting hatchery fish towards our runs because a
10 population estimate that includes hatchery fish is
11 no indication of the vibrance of our system, the
12 productivity of our rivers.

13 Its sustainability in the long run. If
14 something were to happen to our hatcheries, the
15 entire system goes down the drain. And for what?
16 All our millions of dollars spent on recovery.

17 My final point relates to this, which is
18 that when considering any decision between investing
19 in hatchery production to meet short-term goals
20 versus investing in long-term recovery through
21 either moderate -- modifying the flow through our
22 dam system or through habitat restoration, I always
23 would advocate for you to favor the ladder, favor
24 the long-term viability of the system as a whole,
25 knowing that climate change will put unprecedented

1 stresses on it, that our hatcheries will never keep
2 up with.

3 And even if they do, a farmed or at best a
4 ranched fish simply is not the same as a wild
5 produced fish. And I think sometimes we lose sight
6 of the goal here. The goal is to return to a
7 vibrant, productive system that was unparalleled in
8 the world and sustained people from millennia.

9 Thank you.

10 LES PURCE: Thank you very.

11 THE REPORTER: You can spell your name for
12 me please.

13 SAGE FOX: Sage Fox, like the herb and the
14 fox.

15 LES PURCE: Anneke Podsome -- Padmos, I
16 don't know if you're -- no. We don't have an
17 indication that you are a yes or no to testify.

18 ANNEKE PADMOS: Hey.

19 LES PURCE: You are?

20 ANNEKE PADMOS: I didn't put my name on
21 there to speak, but --

22 LES PURCE: Okay.

23 ANNEKE PADMOS: -- I was going to maybe
24 write a comment.

25 LES PURCE: And now that you are up, I

1 want -- please have a seat.

2 ANNEKE PADMOS: Yeah, I'm happy to speak.

3 LES PURCE: Thank you for coming.

4 This is the last of the testimony that we
5 have here in the room. We're going to be -- is
6 there -- is there an additional one?

7 KENDRA COLES: No.

8 LES PURCE: Okay. I'm sorry.

9 KENDRA COLES: Thumb ups.

10 LES PURCE: So we will be going to online
11 after that. We'll need a few minutes to be able to
12 make that adjustment for the lag, so if you work
13 with us at the end.

14 Before you get started, I also want to
15 take the opportunity to thank Ed for coming from
16 Idaho to join us this evening. He has to catch a
17 plane at 6:00 as we complete this portion of the
18 program.

19 Thank you, Ed.

20 ED SCHRIEVER: Thank you, all. Appreciate
21 it.

22 Anneke, thank you.

23 ANNEKE PADMOS: Hi, Council. My name is
24 Anneke Padmos, A-N-N-E-K-E P-A-D-M-O-S. And I am a
25 new community member here in Seattle. And I am also

1 a river guide on the middle fork of the Salmon River
2 in Idaho. And it's an incredible place.

3 LES PURCE: It is.

4 ANNEKE PADMOS: Our salmon that make it
5 home there have come 900 miles and through eight
6 dams and up 7,000-some feet. It's an incredible
7 journey. And what this Council has the power to do
8 and through this Fish and Wildlife Program is a
9 really awesome thing. And you guys have the ability
10 to take some serious action to support our fish.

11 And like as -- as humans, we are dependent
12 on power for our lifestyle that we've built and
13 we're also dependent on these fish and the ecosystem
14 that they powerfully support that we are also
15 reliant on as animals on this planet.

16 So I'm here to encourage you guys to take
17 strong action in your Fish and Wildlife Program to
18 support these fish for the entire power program.

19 And like -- like everybody's been saying,
20 like with the -- with great job keeping the goal of
21 fish, but set a -- like set a requirement for when
22 -- when we want to reach that by, set like serious
23 deadlines for these goals, keep those spillways
24 spilling through the end of August so that our fish
25 all the way up in Idaho who get there like can come

1 -- come down through that huge bottleneck of those
2 lower Snake dams.

3 And let's start figuring out how we can
4 get those dams out. Like I really believe that
5 those dams are going to come out in my lifetime and
6 that's a really exciting prospect to be able to have
7 the -- our middle fork salmon filled with fish
8 again. It's super exciting.

9 And yeah, listen to everything that both
10 the tribal and state fisheries folks have to say.
11 Like they're -- they're the folks who have been
12 really paying attention to the creatures that call
13 these rivers homes and they know what they're
14 talking about.

15 I'm super excited for what you guys are
16 doing and really hope that we can start something
17 good and have our salmon populations as healthy as
18 possible so that when these dams come out, they can
19 take over again.

20 Thank you.

21 LES PURCE: Thank you so much.

22 So the names will start coming up and KC
23 will call on the individuals as they come up on the
24 screen. For those that are participating, have an
25 opportunity to hear the rest of the testimony.

1 KC GOLDEN: Magic. There they are. And
2 all these folks are signed up to testify. Yeah.
3 Okay. Great.

4 Welcome everybody online. Let's start
5 with Lisa Dekker.

6 LISA DEKKER: Hi, can you hear me?

7 KC GOLDEN: Yes, we can.

8 LISA DEKKER: Thank you. My name is Lisa
9 Dekker. That's L-I-S-A, D David, E-K-K-E-R.

10 I'm a rate payer through the Clallam
11 County PUD, here in Port Angeles, Washington. And I
12 thank you for the opportunity to comment.

13 I speak here as an individual, but I care
14 about this issue, partly because I am a longtime
15 member of the North Olympic Orca Pod. We're a group
16 that educates the public about our amazing, unique
17 Southern Residents who depend on a diet of salmon,
18 especially Chinook.

19 Starting 27 years ago with the 1999 book,
20 Salmon Nation: People and Fish on the Edge, I have
21 learned a lot about the life -- excuse me --
22 lifecycle and resilience of salmon and why they are
23 a cultural and ecological keystone of the Pacific
24 Northwest.

25 Therefore, I agree that the plan must be

1 dedicated to restoring annual returns of five
2 million fish and that the young salmon and steelhead
3 will need high levels of spill right through August
4 31. And I strongly agree that the BPA must finally
5 be accountable for reaching the goal set.

6 And if the number one goal is to have five
7 million returning adult salmon and steelhead, then
8 the number one solution toward achieving that goal
9 is to breach the four lower Snake River dams.

10 Over the years, people in both Washington
11 and Idaho have voiced support for specifically
12 breaching these inefficient, costly, soon to need
13 millions of dollars in maintenance dams. The facts
14 are in, and I know you've heard all of them before I
15 was on here. They're great.

16 So here we are today, back in what seems
17 to feel like the Groundhog Day of all issues, as we
18 wake up and hear over and over and year after year,
19 the same discussions.

20 We've heard biologists voices. We've
21 heard the tribe's voices, and we've heard the voices
22 of thousands who follow the Southern Residents
23 because they do not want the orca to starve.

24 But the creatures whose lives are at
25 stake, the Chinook salmon and the Southern

1 Residents, their only voice that they possess is the
2 data. That is, their tragic, dwindling numbers, all
3 pointing straight downwards toward extinction.

4 LES PURCE: Thirty seconds.

5 LISA DEKKER: While it seems that powers
6 the -- powers they stall, delay, and spend millions
7 on well meaning, but surplus mitigation efforts.

8 Bottom line, if you give the salmon a fighting
9 chance, they may be able to rebound.

10 However, it certainly seems that the BPA
11 has known for a long time the undeniable fact that
12 salmon have no fighting chance of this recovery,
13 zero, unless those four dams come down and that that
14 stretch of the river flows free once again.

15 So thank you to the Council for all of
16 your work and for holding the BPA accountable.
17 Thank you.

18 LES PURCE: Thank you as well.

19 Our next person will be Michael Shurgot.

20 MICHAEL SHURGOT: Yes. Hello? Can you
21 hear me?

22 LES PURCE: We can hear you, Michael. Go
23 ahead.

24 MICHAEL SHURGOT: Okay. Thank you very
25 much. I am Michael Shurgot, M-I-C-H-A-E-L, and the

1 last name is S-H-U-R-G-O-T.

2 I live here in Seattle and I'm speaking as
3 an active member of Snake River Savers, an
4 organization devoted to wild salmon and steelhead.

5 On Saturday, February 7th, the Everett
6 Herald published my editorial on the Trump
7 administration's decision to cancel the Federal
8 Roadless Rule.

9 My principal argument there was not about
10 how many trees would be cut, though that is
11 significant, but rather about what this decision
12 says about our collective relationship to the
13 natural world. Do we see ourselves as part of and
14 reliant upon, or superior to and independent of our
15 floral and fauna?

16 That issue, like the one we are discussing
17 today, is about -- is about an entire ecosystem. In
18 this case the Columbia Snake River Basin and its
19 connections to our larger Northwest homelands in
20 waters.

21 The specific issue today is the legal duty
22 of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council to,
23 "Protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife
24 impacted by Columbia Basin dams."

25 Sadly, the Council has a history of

1 neglecting this responsibility. In 1987, the
2 Council estimated that of the 7 to 14 million fish
3 lost annually in the basin, 5 to 11 million were due
4 to the, "Construction, inundation and operation of
5 the hydropower system."

6 Despite federal agencies declaring since
7 1992, several species of salmon is either threatened
8 or endangered, fish populations have continued to
9 plummet. Further, the Southern Resident orcas of
10 the Salish Sea and Pacific Northwest coastal waters,
11 which were millennia, have relied on Chinook salmon
12 as the primary food are starving and failing to
13 reproduce consistently.

14 LES PURCE: One minute, Michael. Thank
15 you.

16 MICHAEL SHURGOT: Thank you.

17 The obvious conclusion is that the entire
18 Columbia basin ecosystem, and that's my main point,
19 is in danger and we must begin restoration now. The
20 good news is that the Council has an opportunity
21 right now in this challenging moment to step forward
22 and contribute to the solutions our native fish
23 urgently need today.

24 I ask you to take this step and strengthen
25 the Draft Fish and Wildlife Program before you

1 finalize it this --

2 LES PURCE: Thirty seconds.

3 MICHAEL SHURGOT: Thank you for this
4 opportunity and for coming to Seattle.

5 KC GOLDEN: Thanks so much, Michael.
6 Next up is Rosario Viera.

7 ROSARIO VIERA: Good evening. Can you
8 hear me?

9 KC GOLDEN: Yes, we can.

10 ROSARIO VIERA: Wonderful.

11 Good evening, Chairperson and Members of
12 the Council. My name is Rosario Viera, R-O-S-A-R-I-
13 O V-I-E-R-A.

14 I'm the public information officer
15 representing Franklin Public Utility District. We
16 provide electricity service to nearly 30,000
17 customers in the cities of Pasco, Connell, Kahlotus
18 within Franklin County.

19 We know from experience that increased
20 bill and reduced generation flexibility, like those
21 proposed in this draft, directly increase the cost
22 of the power that we must provide to our customers.
23 This impacts families in one of the most
24 economically challenged counties in Washington
25 state.

1 As an example, I was recently at our local
2 supermarket. I stood behind a woman at a self-
3 checkout who was watching her total climb up as she
4 scanned her items. When it hit a certain number,
5 she paused then called for the clerk to come over
6 and help her start removing items from her screen.
7 She left various items in her cart as well. She
8 simply didn't have the money, is what she said. She
9 was deciding in real time which necessities her
10 family would have to be without.

11 That woman is not an anomaly. Her
12 struggle is backed by the latest data from Northwest
13 River Partners. For the first time their annual
14 four state survey data shows that energy costs have
15 surpassed climate change as the primary concern for
16 Northwest residents.

17 Our county is 56 percent Hispanic with a
18 poverty rate of 13, higher in some concentrated
19 areas. This is why we have high scores in the
20 Washington department environmental health disparity
21 map ranking 9 and 10, which is some of the highest
22 for socioeconomic burdens.

23 The people who will bear the cost of the
24 Council's proposed operations are much like the lady
25 at the supermarket. We are deeply concerned that

1 our proposed summer -- the proposed summer spills
2 mirror the harmful injunctions seen in federal
3 court.

4 This jeopardizes the reliability of the
5 hydro system exactly when our customers need it
6 most, during our 100-plus degree summer days. We
7 recognize and respect the Council's mandate. We all
8 want healthy rivers and thriving salmon runs. Those
9 are values we share across the Northwest, but we
10 cannot pursue those goals through a one-size-fits-
11 all approach that ignores the economic reality of
12 the people.

13 We respectfully ask that the flow
14 objectives and minimum operating pool measures be
15 removed from the final program to protect regional
16 reliability and the affordability of our energy.

17 KC GOLDEN: Thirty seconds, Rosario.

18 ROSARIO VIERA: Let's work together toward
19 a balanced outcome that protects both our fish and
20 our families.

21 We thank you very much for the opportunity
22 to provide this comment today.

23 KC GOLDEN: Thanks so much.

24 And next up is Sarah LaBrasca.

25 SARAH LABRASCA: Hello, can you hear me?

1 KC GOLDEN: Yes, we can.

2 SARAH LABRASCA: Thank you. My name is
3 Sarah LaBrasca, S-A-R-A-H L-A-B-R-A-S-C-A.

4 Chair Purce, Council Members Golden and
5 Schriever, thank you for the opportunity to speak
6 during the amendment process today.

7 My name is Sarah LaBrasca and I serve as
8 the communication specialist for Lakeview Light and
9 Power of Cooperative Utilities serving Lakewood,
10 Washington.

11 First, I want to acknowledge the detail
12 reflected in the work of the draft program,
13 particularly in the support for the phase two
14 implementation plan and the increased attention to
15 managing predation of salmon and steelhead.

16 I don't disagree that these are important
17 priorities for our region, but we must also
18 recognize the critical reality that energy
19 affordability in the Northwest is eroding. The
20 United States Energy Information Administration
21 reported that residential electricity prices rose
22 8.4 percent in Washington and 15.5 percent in Oregon
23 in 2024, compared to just 3 percent nationally.

24 Washington once ranked first in the
25 country for affordable retail electricity in 2015.

1 Today we rank 13th. That is a trajectory that
2 should concern all of us. I'm commenting not just
3 as a utility representative, but as a single mother
4 raising a nine-year-old daughter on a single income.

5 Many of the rate payers I interact with on
6 a daily basis share similar circumstances. We earn
7 too much to qualify for assistance, but we still
8 feel the strain of rising bills. For families like
9 mine, affordable hydropower isn't a conceptual
10 policy issue. It determines whether we can
11 comfortably pay for electricity and groceries in the
12 same month, much like Rosario touched on.

13 We rely on the federal hydropower system
14 to keep our rates stable and low. I also want to
15 acknowledge the importance of fish and wildlife
16 recovery. I grew up vegan into my adulthood and
17 I've always held a deep reverence for animal life.

18 I understand the passion behind these
19 efforts, but this doesn't have to be an either or
20 conversation. Adult salmon and steelhead returns
21 are nearly three times higher than in Bonneville
22 Dams first year of operation. We also shouldn't
23 ignore that climate change and warming oceans are a
24 significant threat to these fish populations.

25 We can continue improving fish recovery

1 while maintaining a reliable hydropower system. The
2 operations being proposed, including increasing
3 spill and dam breaching, would drive up costs and
4 make our grid less reliable by limiting dam
5 flexibility and reducing output.

6 As the Northwest grows and energy needs
7 rise, we just can't afford to lose a resource that's
8 clean, affordable, and essential to our community.

9 I respectfully urge the Council to --

10 KC GOLDEN: Thirty seconds, Sarah.

11 SARAH LABRASCA: -- consider the
12 operational expertise and input of the Bonneville
13 Power Administration, the US Army Corps of
14 Engineers, and the Bureau of Reclamation before
15 finalizing any changes to hydropower operations.
16 These decisions impact families, affordability,
17 reliability, and the future of the Northwest.

18 Thank you for your time and consideration.

19 KC GOLDEN: Thanks, Sarah.

20 And next is Reggie Westgate. With us,
21 Reggie?

22 REGGIE WESTGATE: Thank you for the
23 opportunity to speak. My name is Reggie Westgate,
24 R-E-G-G-I-E W-E-S-T-G-A-T-E. I live in Tacoma,
25 Washington, and I'm a rate payer with Tacoma Public

1 Utilities.

2 I study earth and climate science at the
3 University of Puget Sound. I'm a leader of the
4 NextGen Salmon Collective as part of Save Our Wild
5 Salmon Coalition. NextGen is a network of student
6 leaders across the region who are working towards
7 the future of abundant harvestable populations of
8 Pacific salmon in the Columbia River Basin.

9 I want to first thank you for including in
10 the draft the interim goal of five million return
11 adult salmon and steelhead per year. State and
12 tribal fish managers have recommended key
13 comprehensive actions to reach this interim goal in
14 the next 5 to 10 years. The final program must give
15 inference to the recommendations of fisheries
16 experts as required by the Power Act.

17 As we know, salmon and steelhead migrating
18 in August make a -- a large portion of returning
19 wild adults, which help maintain genetic diversity
20 of wild and natural stocks. Thus, in order to meet
21 the previous city goal of five million returning
22 adults, later migrated fish must be considered in
23 the final program by maintaining elevated levels of
24 spill through August 31st as recommended by regional
25 and tribal fisheries experts.

1 In addition, the program must hold
2 Bonneville Power Administration accountable to all
3 the set goals. Without accountability these goals
4 that are set just become suggestions. We are not
5 just suggesting this -- the necessity for future
6 healthy harvestable fish populations. We are not
7 just suggesting that this program honor the treaty
8 rights of tribal nations.

9 We are not just suggesting the need for
10 future reliable, affordable, and clean energy. We
11 are demanding this future, and accountability is the
12 pathway to this future. The decisions that you make
13 in this final program decides the trajectory and the
14 future. It is not a decision between salmon or
15 energy.

16 There is a possible future with healthy
17 and harvestable populations of steelhead and salmon
18 and affordable clean energy. I urge you to choose
19 that future.

20 Thank you to the council members and staff
21 for this opportunity to speak.

22 KC GOLDEN: Thanks, Reggie.

23 And next up is George Slots -- Slaats.

24 GEORGE SLAATS: Hello. For the record, my
25 name is George Slaats, G-E-O-R-G-E S-L-A-A-T-S, and

1 I'm a student leader for the NextGen Salmon
2 Collective with Save Our Wild Salmon.

3 Hello and thank you for the opportunity to
4 provide a comment on the 2026 Draft Fish and
5 Wildlife Program and for all the work that has gone
6 into it so far. Like I said, my name is George and
7 I'm a Tacoma Public Utilities rate payer, as well as
8 a student of the University of Puget Sound, studying
9 natural science biology as well as environmental
10 policy and decision-making in Tacoma.

11 I understand that if we make -- do not
12 make informed and responsible policy decisions now,
13 there may not be healthy salmon in our waters within
14 my lifetime. I'd like to echo what others have
15 said, and thank you for continuing the five million
16 salmon return goal.

17 And we must defer to the experts at
18 regional, state, and tribal fisheries as required by
19 the Northwest Power Act and include elevated levels
20 of spill through August 31st as a priority
21 hydropower operations measure. Migration of these
22 fish requires high spill levels and cannot be cut
23 off too early in order to maintain genetic diversity
24 of fish stocks and return goals.

25 Secondly, including breaching the four

1 lower Snake River dams as an action for fish that
2 must be considered and analyzed in the next power
3 plan is important. Removing these four dams and
4 replacing the hydro power with clean renewable
5 energy will have the single largest impact for
6 rebuilding salmon runs. And this cannot be
7 disregarded in planning that is now underway with
8 the Fish and Wildlife Program.

9 Finally, we must hold the BPA accountable
10 for reaching the goals you set. They must meet
11 their obligations to protect fisheries, honor
12 treaties with tribal nations and understand the
13 importance of long-term fishery health over short-
14 term cost savings. Like many of my student peers, I
15 care deeply about the futures of our river, fish,
16 and communities and understand that we are not
17 separate from our environments.

18 The Council holds power to make decisions
19 that will directly impact the future energy
20 landscape and environmental health of the region.
21 And I urge you to reject the false choice between
22 healthy salmon and energy demand. The repercussions
23 of decisions made now will be felt heavily by my
24 generation and those that come after me.

25 I appreciate the opportunity to comment on

1 this matter and I hope you take time to reflect on
2 and implement responsible recommendations that align
3 with those of state, regional, and tribal fisheries.

4 Thank you to the staff and council members
5 for your time and opportunity for feedback.

6 KC GOLDEN: Thanks so much, George.

7 And next up is Cindy Hansen.

8 CINDY HANSEN: All right. Can you hear me
9 okay?

10 KC GOLDEN: Yes, we can.

11 CINDY HANSEN: Great.

12 My name is Cindy Hansen, C-I-N-D-Y H-A-N-
13 S-E-N, and I'm here representing the nonprofit Orca
14 Network. Thank you so much for the opportunity to
15 comment this evening.

16 You've already heard Southern Resident
17 orcas mentioned several times, and I would like to
18 provide a little bit more background and science
19 about the importance of salmon to their future
20 survival. Despite two decades of being listed as
21 endangered federally and in Washington State and
22 more recently in Oregon, the Southern Resident
23 population is not recovering.

24 They have many threats, but lack of salmon
25 is widely recognized as the primary limiting factor

1 to their recovery. A population viability analysis
2 published in 2024 showed that Southern Residents are
3 facing an accelerating risk of extinction due to
4 reduced prey availability and that any successful
5 mitigation must include ambitious salmon recovery
6 actions.

7 Recovering Columbia and Snake River
8 Chinook salmon populations represents one of the
9 best opportunities to restore the prey necessary for
10 their recovery. Research has shown that Chinook are
11 an important prey item year round, and that Columbia
12 Basin Chinook in particular make up over 50 percent
13 of Southern Resident winter diet during a time of
14 year when they are likely the most nutritionally
15 stressed.

16 Also, as Fraser River Chinook populations
17 have declined, Southern Residents have been spending
18 less time in their poor summer habitat at the Salish
19 Sea and are instead foraging off the coast showing
20 that they will adapt their foraging patterns when
21 food becomes scarce, underscoring the importance of
22 salmon recovery throughout their range.

23 In fact, critical habitat for Southern
24 Residents was expanded in 2021 to include the West
25 Coast because of the importance of these coastal

1 waters and salmon runs. As I'm sure you recall, in
2 2018, Washington's Governor Inslee called on all
3 Washingtonians to do what they can to help save the
4 Southern Resident orcas.

5 He created the Southern Resident Orca Task
6 Force, which ultimately resulted in many
7 recommendations aimed at salmon recovery on behalf
8 of the Southern Residents, including creating a
9 stakeholder process to discuss reaching the four
10 lower Snake River dams.

11 Orcas are Washington's official marine
12 mammal and both Washington and Oregon have taken
13 significant action in recent years to halt the
14 decline of this population and ensure their
15 recovery. We urge you to do your part and adopt a
16 robust Fish and Wildlife Program that incorporates
17 all the recommendations from state and tribal fish
18 managers and includes extending spillover dams and
19 reaching the four lower Snake River dams.

20 Thanks again for allowing me to comment
21 this evening.

22 KC GOLDEN: Thanks so much, Cindy.

23 And next up is Joe Kotman -- Kolman,
24 sorry. Eye test.

25 JOE KOLMAN: Good evening, Mr. Chairman,

1 Members of the Commission. Can you hear me okay?

2 KC GOLDEN: Yes, we can.

3 JOE KOLMAN: Great.

4 My name is Joe Kolman. It's J-O-E K-O-L-
5 M-A-N. I'm testifying today on behalf of the
6 Montana Electric Cooperatives Association. We
7 represent 25 co-ops in Montana, eight of whom get
8 their power directly from BPA and supply that power
9 to about 220,000 Montanans.

10 We'd like to note that those rates paid by
11 those Montanans go to fund the investments in the
12 Federal Columbia River Power System, including those
13 intended to mitigate the impacts on fish and
14 wildlife.

15 At the Kalispell Hearing, Commissioners
16 Grob and Milburn heard from industry folks who
17 depend on power, but interestingly enough, they also
18 heard from the local food bank in Kalispell that
19 talked about how they see the effect of electric
20 rate increases at the food bank.

21 That all being said, I think we can all
22 acknowledge the Council has a difficult job
23 protecting and balancing the fish and wildlife with
24 the legal mandate to provide adequate, efficient,
25 economical, and reliable power. So in that vein, we

1 urge the Council to do a few things.

2 Modernize recovery objectives using the
3 best available peer-reviewed science, continued
4 support for the Montana operations that ensure
5 storage reservoirs operate with consideration to
6 both power generation and fish health and consider
7 expanding these measures to other projects.

8 Revise the mitigation strategy and measure
9 listed as the general major (h)(1) on page 44. I
10 won't read that, but we would suggest that it be
11 amended to read, "Prioritize operations and dam
12 modifications that best balance the flow passage and
13 habitat conditions beneficial to native fish with
14 flow necessary for power generation."

15 We'd also ask you to recognize the
16 billions of dollars that have been invested in
17 salmon and steelhead recovery, are showing
18 measurable improvements. We urge you to reject
19 proposals that reduce high bill electric
20 availability and increased costs that includes
21 breaching of the dams, but anything else that would
22 increase the likelihood of rate increases in grid
23 emergencies.

24 We applaud your effort to pursue outside
25 funding through the whole of government approach.

1 That is a great aspiration, but we do ask that you
2 look for some assurance that funding shortfalls
3 don't inadvertently shift unanticipated cost to co-
4 op members. Finally, we'd ask that you prioritize
5 predator --

6 KC GOLDEN: Thirty seconds, Joe.

7 JOE KOLMAN: -- as the most effective way
8 to boost fish returns rather than further
9 restrictions on hydropower operations.

10 So all in all, Mr. Chairman, we urge the
11 Council to move with extreme caution when
12 contemplating changes that we devalue the carbon-
13 free electricity that powers our communities. Thank
14 you, Mr. Chairman.

15 KC GOLDEN: Thanks so much, Joe.

16 And next is Suzanne Grassell.

17 SUZANNE GRASSELL: Good evening. My name
18 is Suzanne Grassell, S-U-Z-A-N-N-E G-R-A-S-S-E-L-L,
19 and I'm with Chelan County Public Utility District
20 in North Central Washington State. Thank you for
21 the opportunity to testify today.

22 Chelan PUD comes to this discussion with
23 the perspective that fish and hydropower can
24 coexist. We generate hydropower, but we're not a
25 customer of the Bonneville Power Administration and

1 we manage our own long-term fish programs.

2 Chelan PUD opposes actions that reduce the
3 flexibility of the Federal Columbia Snake River
4 Hydropower System because it provides critical
5 capacity to support regional reliability. We're
6 concerned that the Council's proposed main stem
7 hydro system operations will negatively impact
8 regional reliability, particular during extreme
9 weather events.

10 The Northwest is at an elevated risk for
11 power supply shortfall. That's corroborated by
12 several recent assessments and studies. In April,
13 2025, the Pacific Northwest Utility Coordinating
14 Committee released its 2025 Northwest Regional
15 Forecast, which collects and aggregates data to
16 assess roads and resources in Washington, Oregon,
17 Idaho, and Montana.

18 The report suggests loads could grow by
19 approximately 7,800 megawatts over the next decade,
20 an increase of more than 30 percent. This
21 translates to around 23,800 average megawatts in
22 2025, rising to roughly 31,600 average megawatts by
23 2034.

24 And then right after that, in September,
25 2025, the consulting firm, E3, completed a new

1 analysis of resource advocacy and they found the
2 Greater Northwest study region faces a shortfall of
3 roughly 8,700 megawatts of effective capacity by
4 2030. And that's almost the load of the state of
5 Oregon. That grows to approximately 14 gigawatts by
6 2035 and continues to grow through 2045.

7 In addition, the Western Electricity
8 Coordinating Council also released its Western
9 assessment of resource adequacy in 2025, and it
10 found that the West plan resource build out will not
11 keep up with anticipated load growth over the next
12 decade, particularly in the basin and Northwest
13 subregions. The West could see energy shortfalls as
14 early as 2028.

15 So rapid load growth is a huge challenge
16 for this region, and utilities need the capacity to
17 meet resource adequacy requirements and to serve
18 customers and protect public safety, energy delivery
19 and costs for communities. And hydropower keeps
20 power on during the hottest and coldest times of the
21 year when it's most important, when losing power has
22 the most significant ramifications for people who
23 are our customers and our responsibility at
24 utilities.

25 So thank you for the opportunity to

1 testify.

2 KC GOLDEN: Great. Thanks so much,
3 Suzanne.

4 And next is Eleana Pawl.

5 KENDRA COLES: Eleana, please unmute
6 yourself.

7 ELEANA PAWL: Thank you very much. I'm
8 sorry. Yeah.

9 Eleana Pawl, E-L-E-A-N-A P-A-W-L. I am
10 living in Seattle. I'm a rate payer.

11 And I so much appreciate the work that's
12 been done on this plan to restore the five million
13 salmon to absolutely make sure that the extra
14 water's spilling over the dams to help them migrate
15 is -- is happening. And to definitely look into
16 breaching the four lowest Snake River dams.

17 I've been listening to all the testimony
18 this evening and I always hear things like money and
19 numbers and we have to be reliable -- reliable
20 energy. I think that's very important. And I also
21 think that we are people who are creative people,
22 who have a mind, who can do things like figure out
23 ways to work with ourselves in our economy in a very
24 much better way.

25 I agree with that, but also, I'd like to

1 take just a second and remember that the salmon --
2 the salmon, well, you know, we take away their
3 water. We tell where they'll flow. We take away
4 the temperature from them exist -- they cannot
5 exist. You know, they need that. They're very
6 wonderful creatures.

7 They know how to migrate and do these
8 amazing things, but they need the river to be intact
9 and to be restored for them because the growth of
10 this -- this region will happen with people. The
11 people are intelligent. We can get better
12 alternatives to those dams. Those dams need to be
13 replaced. We efficiently all know this.

14 We've been talking about taking care of
15 those salmon and those dams for the last 20 years,
16 all kinds of studies about it. We need to go to bat
17 for the salmon and we can do it. We need to
18 understand that the nature gives us life quality in
19 so many ways and we're just beginning to understand.

20 And we need to respect our lives and the
21 lives around us. We need to learn how to not only
22 live on the land, but with the land. And certainly
23 people who are here have come before us, the tribal
24 people who know how to -- to do that, can help us
25 share their wisdom and their systems. We need that

1 now. Things are changing.

2 We need to come together as people and use
3 all of our creativity and all of our intelligence to
4 repair the damage that we've done. And it can be
5 done. And I so much appreciate the work that you've
6 done and the opportunity to express my gratitude.

7 And please do hold Bonneville Power
8 Administration accountable for reaching the goals,
9 set those deadlines. We can do it. We can come
10 together. Please live with the earth, not just on
11 it or just off it as well. Thank you very much.

12 KC GOLDEN: Thanks, Eleana.

13 And next up is Kurt Miller.

14 KURT MILLER: Hi, can you hear me?

15 KC GOLDEN: Yeah.

16 KURT MILLER: Okay. Great. Thank you so
17 much. My name is Kurt Miller, spelled K-U-R-T M-I-
18 L-L-E-R.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to speak
20 tonight. I'm the executive director for the
21 Northwest Public Power -- and I'm sorry, for the
22 Northwest Public Power Association, serving 155
23 community-owned utilities across 10 Western states
24 in British Columbia that provide electricity to over
25 10 million Western residents.

1 I always admired the Council's work and
2 it's particularly meaningful that the Council is
3 responsible for two sides of the same coin when it
4 comes to Columbia River System, power supply and
5 fish and wildlife. However, I'm concerned that the
6 Council continues to create plans and goals that go
7 beyond proven scientific findings.

8 And this latest Fish and Wildlife Plan
9 plays fast and loose with rate payer dollars. The
10 Council continues to use, in some cases on
11 scientific standards, including the use of a \$5-
12 million adult return target. There was -- which was
13 -- were -- that target was established without the
14 basis of any study to look at what was physically
15 possible given new ocean conditions and salmon
16 predators in the ocean.

17 Very tellingly in the oral arguments
18 provided by the plaintiffs this last Friday, Amanda
19 Goodin of Earthjustice was specifically asked to
20 quantify the benefits of higher skill levels and
21 lower operating pools that the plaintiffs are asking
22 for. Very tellingly she admitted she could not.

23 The reason she could not provide a number
24 of benefit for returning salmon is that there is no
25 evidence that these operations will provide any

1 benefit to salmon at all. Unfortunately, this falls
2 into recurring pattern of the Council, which is
3 supporting billions of dollars of projects without
4 any actual evidence of the benefit.

5 The Council has fallen into a trap of
6 ready, fire, aim, and verified science must come
7 before hundreds of millions of dollars a year of
8 rate payer dollars continue to be spent on spill.

9 Earlier, a speaker indicated that millions
10 of people who support reaching the lower Snake River
11 dams are on board with paying higher prices for
12 electricity, but that sentiment is based erroneously
13 or is based on erroneous information. Their
14 information that they share with their members is
15 it's actually cheaper to operate the grid without
16 the dams, but we all know that is apparently and
17 absolutely untrue.

18 Every credible study demonstrates that
19 replacing the dams will cost billions of dollars.
20 The next most cost-effective carbon-free option to
21 the lower Snake River dams would literally raise
22 consumer-owned utility rate payer dollar cost by
23 roughly 50 percent.

24 KC GOLDEN: Thirty seconds.

25 KURT MILLER: -- team asked for by the

1 plaintiffs, which is similar to the Council's Fish
2 and Wildlife Plan as an interim step before their
3 ultimate goal of dam breaching would result in an
4 immediate 17 percent rate increase in BPA's rates
5 that charges for to not-for-profit electricity
6 utilities across the region.

7 So at the end of the day, I really urge
8 you to step back and take a look at this salmon plan
9 or this Fish and Wildlife Plan and ensure that
10 you're spending rate payer dollars really wisely.
11 Recognizing that one-third --

12 KC GOLDEN: Thanks, Kurt. Time's up.

13 KURT MILLER: -- residents depend on some
14 form of government assistance to make end meet. For
15 our rural communities, those figures are even
16 higher.

17 Again, thank you so much for the
18 opportunity to speak to me.

19 KC GOLDEN: Okay. Thanks Kurt.

20 And next up is Logan Bahr.

21 LOGAN BAHR: Good evening, Chair Purce and
22 Members of Council. I'm Logan Bahr L-O-G-A-N B-A-H-
23 R. I serve as the community and government
24 relations manager for Tacoma Public Utilities and
25 Tacoma Power.

1 We serve over 400,000 residents in the
2 city of Tacoma, surrounding cities, and areas of the
3 incorporated Pierce County.

4 Thank you for the significant work
5 reflected in the Draft 2026 Fish Wildlife Program.
6 The draft demonstrates a thoughtful approach to
7 meeting the region mitigation responsibilities under
8 the Northwest Power Act. However, we suggest the
9 future version plays a stronger emphasis on
10 affordability as a guiding principle.

11 As electricity demand grows and costs
12 rise, maintaining reasonable rates is an increase in
13 priority for our utility, our policymakers, and the
14 customers we serve. We serve communities with
15 higher than average rates of economic need. And as
16 we enter our two-year rate setting process, we are
17 carefully reviewing our costs to manage rate impacts
18 while strengthening our local assistance programs to
19 support income qualified customers.

20 Fish and wildlife mitigation is critical
21 obligation, but it should be pursued with clear
22 transparency regarding cost impacts, elevating
23 affordability lines that other objectives will
24 strengthen the long-term durability and credibility
25 of this program.

1 Thank you for your leadership and for the
2 opportunity to comment.

3 KC GOLDEN: Thank you, Logan.

4 Next up is Amy Grondin.

5 AMY GRONDIN: Hello. My name is Amy
6 Grondin, and thank you very much for the chance to
7 speak here today.

8 I live in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm
9 a repair and a commercial salmon fisherman. My
10 husband and I fish the coast of Washington and
11 Oregon for salmon.

12 I'm here to speak on behalf of Duna
13 Fisheries, the salmon fishing business my husband
14 and I own as a family of two and the Coastal
15 Trollers Association, an organization made up of
16 commercial fishermen and businesses that supports
17 the salmon fishing industry.

18 For all of us, salmon mean business and
19 all of the salmon trollers on the west -- on the
20 Washington and Oregon coast are family-owned small
21 businesses of two to three people, at the most.

22 As a commercial fishermen, I have invested
23 interest in the future that includes a healthy
24 salmon populations, the wild ones specifically. I
25 see salmon as very important business partners.

1 Part of the year I catch salmon. The other part of
2 the year, I do what I can to protect and restore
3 wild salmon and the habitat that they need to be
4 successful in their life's work of spawning the next
5 generation.

6 To do this, I believe -- I do this because
7 I believe it's important to give back to what I take
8 from. All salmon and steelhead need cold, clean,
9 free running water. They need extra spill over the
10 four lower Snake River dams to keep the water cold
11 and help juvenile fish out on their out migration to
12 the ocean.

13 Not all -- all salmon and steelhead runs
14 follow the same schedule. Please keep the level of
15 high levels of spill all the way through the end of
16 August. The juvenile fish that hatch later need the
17 spill, as will the adults that return from the
18 oceans to their natal streams.

19 There's been a standing goal of growing
20 salmon to return to the five million fish. To this
21 day, the goal has not yet been met. Managers and
22 co-managers from the state and tribal fisheries have
23 offered recommendations on how to reach this goal.
24 All of their recommendations should be followed as
25 is required by the law.

1 Bonneville Power Administration should be
2 held accountable for reaching the -- the set goals
3 in the final plan. Please make sure BPA meets their
4 obligation to protect fisheries and honor treaties
5 with the tribal nations. Please adopt 2035
6 timeframe and hold BPA accountable to the milestones
7 to achieve the five million salmon goal.

8 The possibility of breaching four lower
9 Snake River dams should be considered as an action
10 to help restore fish. It should be analyzed in the
11 -- in the power plant, removing these four dams and
12 replacing them with hydropower that's clean --
13 replacing their hydropower with clean renewable
14 injury energy will be the single largest impact for
15 rebuilding salmon runs.

16 I ask you to make sure to include
17 solutions that will assure that farmers can still
18 irrigate their crops.

19 KC GOLDEN: Thirty seconds, Amy.

20 AMY GRONDIN: Sure.

21 So just quickly, I want to try and see how
22 much I can read of a report from Fish and Wildlife
23 -- or actually it's just a Department of Fisheries
24 in Washington. It was from 1949 and we are not
25 looking to restore fish to pre-colonial salmon

1 levels. We just want to go to 1949.

2 The lower Snake River dams. Another
3 serious threat to the Columbia River Fishery is the
4 proposed construction by the US Army Engineers of
5 the Ice Harbor and the other three dams on the lower
6 Snake River between Pasco, Washington and Lewiston,
7 Idaho --

8 KC GOLDEN: Amy, time's up. You could
9 submit that to us in a written comment.

10 AMY GRONDIN: I would love to. Thank you.

11 KC GOLDEN: Thanks -- thanks so much.

12 And next up is Liz Green.

13 LIZ GREEN: Hello.

14 KC GOLDEN: Hi, Liz.

15 LIZ GREEN: Hi.

16 I want to thank you for the opportunity to
17 speak today. My name is Liz Green and I'm an
18 elected commissioner for Skamania Public Utility
19 District in Skamania County Washington.

20 Skamania PUD provides electrical service
21 to the entire county. Skamania -- Skamania County's
22 southern border is entirely the beautiful Columbia
23 River. Those of you listening that have never
24 experienced life on the mighty Columbia, should come
25 to the gorge and experience a few days here.

1 Just yesterday, I was driving home from
2 the Dells back to my home in Skamania County, and I
3 saw the setting sun reflected in the water and
4 realized how easy it is to take our beautiful
5 location for granted.

6 I do appreciate the work that you are
7 doing to keep our river system operation
8 environmentally sound, as well as providing
9 affordable and reliable power to the region.
10 Skamania PUD is a full requirements customer of BPA,
11 and we have become increasingly aware of the impacts
12 of river system operations on our customers.

13 We see how hard it is becoming to have a
14 home and raise a family here, here where generations
15 have settled, raising families that are now looking
16 for less expensive places to live. Some of our
17 neighbors, our customers have chosen -- have to
18 choose between power, food, and healthcare. These
19 people are really struggling.

20 In addition to having to make hard choices
21 about their bills, they're also worrying that the
22 power supply will fail to meet their need. They are
23 hearing the term blackouts and wonder if it will
24 happen here.

25 You have been asked by special interest

1 groups to adopt measures that impact the output and
2 flexibility of the hydro system, but those measures
3 cost money and the rate payers are already burdened,
4 having borne the previous hydro system operation
5 changes.

6 My ask of you today is that you consider
7 prioritizing cost effective actions with
8 demonstrated biological benefit and make sure the
9 hydro system operation in the final plan, considers
10 affordability and reliability. I don't know how
11 much more the rate payers can hold.

12 Thank you again for your time and
13 consideration.

14 KC GOLDEN: Thank you, Liz.

15 And next up is Jacob Henry.

16 KENDRA COLES: Member Purce and Golden, it
17 looks as if Jacob is no longer online.

18 KC GOLDEN: Okay. Thank you.

19 And we'll go to Joe Olson.

20 JOE OLSON: Thank you. I -- I was
21 wondering if anybody was still there in person.

22 KC GOLDEN: Yeah. We're -- we're here.

23 LES PURCE: Plenty of us.

24 JOE OLSON: That's great. Well, okay.

25 My name's Joe Olson. You can all see how

1 to spell it. I'm the president of the Puget Sound
2 Chapter of the American Citation Society.

3 That's the oldest -- world's oldest whale
4 conservation organization. It was founded in 1967
5 in California. I founded the Puget Sound Chapter in
6 1999. And, you know, you might guess that I love
7 whales, which I do and I care about them. And our
8 -- our whole organization does.

9 And the Southern Resident killer whales
10 are dependent on salmon, as many people have said
11 here. And I just would like to reiterate or support
12 everything that save our wild salmon, orca network.

13 And Amy Grondin said and so many others
14 that you do need to maintain that high spill level
15 through the end of August and hold BPA accountable
16 to your program goals and -- and -- and seriously
17 investigate what it -- what it would do to remove
18 those lower four Snake River dams so that you can
19 have a -- a very informed -- so it's part of the
20 plan.

21 But I think I'd like to just go off script
22 here a bit because everything else has been said and
23 just let you know that I have a strong connection to
24 these dams as well. My grandfather helped build the
25 Grand Coulee.

1 And I've -- I've always -- I loved the --
2 the amazing engineering feats that were performed to
3 build these dams. At the same time, that same
4 grandfather took me to see Namu, the first orca that
5 was held in captivity for a long period of time.
6 And who actually then because of him starting all
7 the captures that really led to the decline of the
8 Southern Resident killer whales.

9 He took me to see Namu when I was three
10 years old here in Seattle many times. And that's
11 where my love for the whales grew. And with that,
12 an understanding throughout my life of the
13 importance of a very strong and healthy ecosystem.
14 And I mean, it's -- it's obvious to anybody, all of
15 you on the -- on the committee that dams do wreak
16 havoc with ecosystems.

17 And so there's a lot of work that we need
18 to do to try to mitigate that. And I really applaud
19 you for the work that you're doing. And it's --
20 it's -- it's not easy because you're hemmed in with
21 -- with trying to make fixes for something that is
22 damaging the ecosystem, but that's given us cheap
23 power.

24 And -- and I know how cheap that power is.
25 I really appreciate it. When I went to grad school

1 back in the '80s in -- on Long Island, it was -- the
2 -- the price --

3 KC GOLDEN: Thirty seconds, Joe.

4 JOE OLSON: And so it was double the price
5 here. So, you know, the thing is, our -- our power
6 here is still really cheap. So even -- even as it
7 goes up, we need to then work with other
8 organizations.

9 So not just the -- not just people who are
10 power companies or organizations who want to protect
11 salmon, but also ones who are helping with people
12 who are poor. And that means the government as
13 well. So look for other solutions as well to try to
14 help the rate payers -- as I am one -- who have
15 trouble paying their bills as the rates go up, and
16 they're going to do it anyway.

17 But -- so I think that needs to be rolled
18 into it as well. So anyway, that's -- my time's up
19 and I appreciate the time.

20 KC GOLDEN: Thanks, Joe.

21 And finally, at this point we're going to
22 hear from Jay Backus, who gets the last word.

23 JAY BACKUS: Hi. I'm Jay Backus, J-A-Y B-
24 A-C-K-U-S. And I'm testifying on behalf of myself
25 and also for the Port of Clarkston where I'm a

1 commissioner.

2 Clarkston is a community on the Snake
3 River that relies on the navigation of that river
4 for a fair amount of its economic benefits. So I
5 want to thank the Council for listening and reaching
6 out to get the comments of everybody that's been
7 heard here.

8 I'm not going to spend a lot of time on
9 the statistics. I've heard a lot of them as I've
10 listened through here, particularly from Kurt
11 Miller, who I think has a lot of good information on
12 that.

13 But I guess really what I want to say is
14 that I feel real thankful to the forefathers, my
15 forefathers that lived in the Pacific Northwest and
16 developed one of the best hydroelectric systems in
17 the world.

18 And it's the envy of every other state
19 that I've lived in and most countries that I've
20 visited and seen. They don't have the benefit of
21 the hydroelectric system that we have in the Pacific
22 Northwest. It needs to be protected.

23 You know, one statistic that I will throw
24 out, and it's probably been tossed out already, is
25 that the average adult salmon and steelhead returns

1 are nearly three times higher than they were in the
2 first year of the Bonneville Dam operation.

3 So my conclusion is it's not the dams,
4 it's a lot of things that -- that are contributing
5 and that the dams don't have to be the main focus of
6 trying to get our salmon population back. We -- we
7 need to operate the dams as best we can and -- and
8 make sure that we keep our hydroelectric system as
9 effective and as important as it is while we work on
10 fish recoveries.

11 And that pretty much sums up how I feel.
12 Thank you very much.

13 KC GOLDEN: Thanks so much to Jay and to
14 everyone who has testified online and -- and in
15 person. It's -- it's a lot of work being a citizen
16 these days and we appreciate you coming in here and
17 spending the time with us. This -- this input
18 really matters. It's a big part of how we think
19 about the plan and make it better. So thank you so
20 much.

21 And I'll hand it back over to Chair Purce.

22 LES PURCE: Thank you, KC.

23 And I will echo what KC just said. Thank
24 you all for being here this evening, for sharing
25 your thoughts and just as importantly hearing the

1 other citizens and their point of views related to
2 this plan. We really appreciate you and thank you
3 for sharing with us. So I will declare this hearing
4 over at this time.

5 (WHEREUPON, the DRAFT 2026 COLUMBIA RIVER
6 BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM concluded at 6:44
7 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I, Rachel Gezymalla, 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 3rd day of March, 2026.



Rachel Gezymalla, CER No. 4586

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