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NORTHWEST POWER AND CONSERVATION COUNCIL DRAFT 2026

COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM

PUBLIC HEARING

TRANSCRIPT OF NORTHWEST POWER AND CONSERVATION
COUNCIL DRAFT 2026 COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN FISH AND

WILDLIFE PROGRAM

PUBLIC HEARING

HELD ON

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2026

4:00 P.M.

1230 MAIN STREET

LEWISTON, IDAHO 83501

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1 APPEARANCES

2
3 NORTHWEST POWER AND CONSERVATION COUNCIL:

4 Patty O'Toole, Fish and Wildlife Division Director

5 John Shurts, General Counsel

6 Peter Jensen, Communications Specialist

7 Jeffery Allen, Idaho Council Member

8 Ed Schriever, Idaho Council Member

9 Windy Schoby, Fish and Wildlife Policy Advisor

10 Kate Self, Fish and Wildlife Scientist

11
12 PUBLIC ATTENDEES:

13 Chris Norden, Self

14 Lucinda "Lucii" Simpson, Tribal Elder, Member,

15 Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment

16 Steve Paulson, Founder, Friends of the Clearwater

17 Chris Rasmussen, Executive Director,

18 Port of Clarkston

19 Max Beach, General Manager, ICL+P

20 Rick Hanks, Self

21 Tim Hatten, Self & Sierra Club

22 Dick Sherwin,

23 Citizens for the Preservation of Fish & Dams

24 Jerry McGehee, Self

1 APPEARANCES CONTINUED

2
3 PUBLIC ATTENDEES:

4 Fred Mensik,

5 Citizens for the Preservation of Fish & Dams

6 Darta Grimm,

7 Citizens for the Preservation of Fish & Dams

8 Charlie Pottenger, Citizens for the Preservation of

9 Fish & Dams

10 Marvin F. Dugger, Citizens for the Protection of

11 Fish & Dams

12 Stacy Horton, Policy Analyst/Biologist, NPCC-WA

13 Doug Zenner, Self

14 Jeff Biddig, Self

15 Scott Corbitt, General Manager, Port of Lewiston

16 Paul Busch, Media Director,

17 Friends of the Clearwater

18 Miles Butler, University of Idaho

19 Steve Becker, Chairman,

20 Nez Perce Soil & Water Conservation District

21 Ray Boyd, Self

22 Gerry Dorn, Nez Perce Soil and Water

23 Kaci Ralstin, Lewiston Regional Director, Senator

24 Jim Resch

25 Steven R. Evans, Self

1 APPEARANCES CONTINUED

2
3 PUBLIC ATTENDEES:

4 Seve Pettit, Salmon Friend

5 Leslie Duffel,

6 Director of Outreach, The McGregor Company

7 Jerry Kiekow, Lewis Clark Terminal

8 Telly Stanger, CEO, Clearwater Power Co

9 Raya Kumar, XR Palouse

10 Sam Earnest, University of Idaho

11 John Sovile, University of Idaho

12 Lynn Rasmussen, District Manager,

13 Nez Perce Soil & Water Conservation District

14 Jeffrey Johnson (John), Independent

15 Victor Vabrio, NWRP

16 Richard Scully, Self

17 Mark K. Edelblute, Self

18 Raequel Picard, Self

19 Jeff Sayre, Self

20 John Backin, Self

21 Judy Oatman, Member, Nez Perce Tribe

22 Barbara Hellier, Self

23 Trish Goodheart, Self

24 Andrew Pierce, PhD, Nez Perce Tribe Fish and

25 Wildlife

APPEARANCES CONTINUED

PUBLIC ATTENDEES:

Rebecca Miles, Member, Nez Perce Tribe

Bert Sahlberg,

Site Communications Manager II, Clearwater

Paper

1 PUBLIC HEARING

2 HELD ON

3 THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2026

4 4:00 P.M.

5
6 MR. SCHRIEVER: Good evening. Welcome.

7 Thank you all for coming. It's a pleasure to be
8 back in the Lewiston Clarkston Valley. I lived here
9 for nearly 20 years, 1989 to 2008. I see some
10 familiar faces in the room. Again, thank you all
11 for coming.

12 My name is Ed Schriever. I am one of two
13 council members from Idaho. To my left is Mr. Jeff
14 Allen. He is also an Idaho council member. We
15 serve at the pleasure of the Governor on the
16 Northwest Power and Conservation Council
17 representing Idaho.

18 MS. SCHOBY: We got a request to use the
19 microphone, please.

20 MR. SCHRIEVER: There's something about a
21 microphone I want to tell a joke, but I'm not going
22 to do that.

23 Thank you all for coming. We will be
24 taking public testimony tonight. If you wish to
25 provide public testimony, you should have written

1 your name -- everybody should have written their
2 name as you came in in attendance, and if you wish
3 to testify, you put an X in the box that you wish to
4 testify.

5 I will be calling folks to testify by
6 name, and then we will ask you -- our fine court
7 reporter here wants to make sure we get your name
8 absolutely correctly. We will ask you to state and
9 spell your name and tell the reporter who you are
10 representing. If it's yourself, just say yourself.

11 The first order of business, this is --
12 this is an official part of the Northwest Power and
13 Conservation Council's roles and duties in receiving
14 public testimony on our draft plan. I have a formal
15 statement to read for the record.

16 Under the Northwest Power Act, the
17 Northwest Power and Conservation Council adopts and
18 periodically amends a program to protect, mitigate,
19 and enhance fish and wildlife affected by the
20 development and operation of hydroelectric
21 facilities on the Columbia River and its
22 tributaries. The current version of the program is
23 the 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife
24 Program with a 2020 addendum.

25 The Council is in the process of amending

1 this Fish and Wildlife Program in a formal amendment
2 process under the Act. We recently released a draft
3 of the 2026 Fish and Wildlife Program. The Council
4 is now at the stage of the amendment process where
5 we are receiving public comment on that Draft Fish
6 and Wildlife Program. The formal comment period
7 extends until March 2, 2026.

8 The Council is conducting public hearings
9 like this one to receive oral comments on the draft.
10 We have a court reporter in attendance to record
11 your comments. The transcript of this hearing will
12 be circulated to all Council members and the staff
13 and will be included in the administrative record
14 for this program amendment process. The Council is
15 also accepting written comments on the Draft Fish
16 and Wildlife program until March 2, 2026.
17 Instructions for how to comment in writing are on
18 the Council's website. You can also ask any of the
19 staff in the room.

20 Before we get started with public
21 testimony, Kate Self, a staff to the Fish and
22 Wildlife Program is going to give a short
23 introduction, and then we'll move into comments.

24 Before I turn it to Kate, Jeff, do you
25 have anything you'd like to say?

1 MR. ALLEN: This isn't my first time
2 taking public testimony in Lewiston. I was up here
3 last time we amended the Fish and Wildlife Program,
4 and I want to tip my cap to all of you for your
5 turnout tonight. There's more of you than last
6 time. I think that's great. You know, when you
7 invest as much time as we do in this, it's good to
8 see the folks who are interested and want to tell us
9 what we got wrong, so thanks for showing up to do
10 that tonight.

11 I also want to just state that while this
12 format is kind of the norm or what you're supposed
13 to, I suspect we'll have a little bit of time after
14 all of the public testimony's given. So if you want
15 some give and take, we'll be here and we'd -- you
16 know, if you want to actually ask a question and
17 give us time to answer it, that'd be great, too.

18 But if not, we'll sit here and take
19 everything you've got and -- and transcribe it and
20 -- and do our best to -- to capture your -- your
21 thoughts and your emotions tonight. Thanks.

22 MR. DUGGER: Yes. I didn't put an X by
23 name for the testimony.

24 MS. SCHOBY: And what's your name, sir?

25 MR. DUGGER: Marvin Dugger.

1 MR. SCHRIEVER: You said yes.

2 MR. DUGGER: Marvin Dugger. I want to --

3 MS. SCHOBY: You did. You did say yes.

4 MR. DUGGER: Oh. Never mind. She did it
5 for me.

6 MS. SELF: Okay. Thank you, Chair
7 Schriever and Member Allen.

8 Good evening, everyone, and welcome to
9 this public hearing on the Northwest Power and
10 Conservation Council's Draft 2026 Columbia River
11 Basin Fish and Wildlife Program. As Member Allen
12 and Member Schriever said, my name is Kate Self, and
13 I'm a Fish and Wildlife Program scientist for the
14 Fish and Wildlife Division of the Council. I'm just
15 going to give a very brief presentation, and then we
16 will open it up for public comment.

17 Who we are. The Council was created by
18 Congress under the Northwest Power Act of 1980 to
19 give the Pacific Northwest a greater voice in power
20 planning and protecting fish and wildlife. The
21 Council is an interstate compact agency representing
22 the basin states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and
23 Washington. The governor of each state appoints two
24 members, both of which we have here tonight, very
25 lucky, from Idaho.

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

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

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

1 and we hope to hear from you then as well.

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

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

23 Over the 40-year life of the program,
24 there have been significant accomplishments.
25 Changes to how the hydro system operates as well as

1 improved passage at dams has befitted both adult and
2 juvenile migration. Habitat work has protected,
3 restored, or improved hundreds of thousands of acres
4 of land across the region.

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

13 Next, I'll talk about how the Fish and
14 Wildlife Program gets updated. Here's a timeline
15 just so you can kind of get the big picture zoom
16 out. But if you look at the bottom where the green
17 bar starts, that's 2026 where we are today, and
18 we're just in the middle of -- between releasing our
19 draft program at the end of December and receiving
20 comments on the draft program and traveling out to
21 speak with people like yourselves at public
22 hearings. Again, the -- we are now accepting
23 comments through March 2, 2025 (sic) with a goal to
24 release the final Fish and Wildlife Program in May
25 of this year.

1 We've received hundreds of recommendations
2 and thousands of comments during this amendment
3 process since it started in January of last year,
4 and the Council has considered them carefully over
5 the last six months. Over the course of this
6 review, some topics seem to be of particular urgency
7 or importance to the region, and priorities
8 identified for the draft program include making sure
9 that assets and projects have funding -- the funding
10 that they need to continue to function and benefit
11 fish and wildlife.

12 Having consistent and stable hydropower
13 operations over a long period of time that keep
14 water moving, increase velocities, and minimizes
15 fluctuations, assessing and managing predation in
16 the areas most likely to increase salmon and
17 steelhead survival, and continuing the crucial
18 habitat work that it a cornerstone of the Council's
19 Fish and Wildlife Program. The Council is also
20 placing particular emphasis at this time on
21 coordinating with other relevant agencies to
22 identify sources of non raparian funding.

23 And just for my last slide here on
24 tonight's public comment period, most of you have
25 already signed in and hopefully checked the box if

1 you would like to comment tonight.

2 Can staff in the room please raise your
3 hands so that people know who to look to with any
4 questions at any time throughout the evening? Just
5 a reminder to please be courteous to our council
6 members up here, staff, and other people in the
7 room, and try to keep your comments brief and on
8 topic and note that your comments will become part
9 of the official court record.

10 If you brought a written copy of your
11 comment, we're happy -- any of the staff that just
12 raised their hand, or you can come up and set it
13 down or bring it up with you when you testify. We
14 would love a copy of any written comments that made
15 it with you tonight, and you're also welcome to
16 submit comments online. Or if you're in the room
17 and don't feel like speaking out loud tonight, we
18 have these sheets in the back of the room. You're
19 welcome to submit written comment this evening if
20 you're ready or, again, anytime online through March
21 2nd.

22 So I'll leave this slide up here with you
23 throughout the night with a QR code that will take
24 you to our fish and wildlife page within the
25 Council's website with more instructions or again

1 feel free to ask any of the staff any questions at
2 any time.

3 So with that, I'm done, and thank you for
4 your attention, and we'll move on to the exciting
5 part of the evening.

6 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you, Kate.

7 Before we get started, an observation on
8 my part, and a request. Looking at -- looking down
9 the list of speakers, I can recognize a diversity of
10 opinions are present in the room, and I can also
11 recognize a polarity of interests are recognized in
12 the room. I want to thank you all in advance for
13 your civility this evening. We're not going to have
14 any applause and will not stand for any cat calling.
15 Thank you in advance.

16 What I'm going to do is call the name of
17 the person who is going to testify and I'm going to
18 call the name of the next person, and as the person
19 who testifies finishes up, the next name I'll call
20 will be the next on deck person so that we don't
21 have to pause for moments and let people shuffle
22 through the crowd. So as you come up to be on deck,
23 please do so quietly as there is going to be
24 testimony going on in the room.

25 The lovely lady at the front door is Windy

1 Schoby, she's going to be our timer. We've also
2 done a little math on the length of our program
3 tonight and the number of people interested in
4 providing testimony. I'm going to ask you to limit
5 your testimony to three minutes. If we have
6 additional time at the end, we'll use that wisely.

7 You're going to see Windy -- Windy,
8 they're going to see you do that. When you have two
9 minutes gone, she's going to give you the one-minute
10 sign so we'll start to wrap your comments up for --
11 in that last minute. Any questions before we get
12 started?

13 And I'm going to apologize in advance.
14 Some of y'all gave me some challenges to read your
15 handwriting. So if I butcher your name, I apologize
16 in advance. First will be Chris Norden followed by
17 Lucii Simpson.

18 MR. NORDEN: Well, thank you Mr. Shriever
19 and Mr. Allen and staff for taking the time to meet
20 with us, and I'd just like to begin this by saying
21 -- reassuring you that we do love each other, we
22 disagree passionately --

23 Yes, sir?

24 MR. SCHRIEVER: I didn't remind you all,
25 please state and spell your name at the beginning so

1 the court reporter can get it absolutely correctly.

2 MR. NORDEN: Very good. Chris, C-H-R-I-S,
3 Norden, N-O-R-D-E-N.

4 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thanks, Chris.

5 MR. NORDEN: Thank you. So thanks again
6 for taking the time to meet with us, and I'd like to
7 begin on an up note. We love each other, we
8 disagree on a lot of things, but especially at this
9 point in American history with the First, Second,
10 and Fourth Amendments under stress, we need to get
11 along, and we're committed to doing that here in
12 this part of the Northwest.

13 Following that, I'd just like to say --
14 you know, put out a controversial statement, which
15 is I think we all want the same thing which is
16 abundance and prosperity. How we get there, through
17 different -- different means. I've spent the last
18 30 some years living here and learning the science,
19 getting to know a lot of the people involved in
20 this.

21 I just retired from a 30 year career at
22 Lewis Clark State College where I was teaching an
23 environmental ethics course, and I've done on the
24 math on that, figured that I've taught somewhere
25 between 4- and 5,000 student, most of them Idahoans

1 and then from Washington, Oregon, and California and
2 Alaska being the runner up states in terms of where
3 most of the students are from.

4 During that time, I was on learning curve,
5 but I learned a great deal from the students who are
6 multi generation Idahoan family members. A lot of
7 them hunting and fishing and caring very deeply
8 about the -- about the -- our public lands here in
9 -- in Idaho, and of course waters as well. I did --
10 didn't run across any student who -- ever who said
11 we should let things go extinct.

12 So I think that the idea, the basic logic
13 of the Endangered Species Act, is pretty axiomatic
14 in this part of the country. We're seeing a lot of
15 different kinds of data thrown around about what
16 constitutes survival or recovery rates for fish. I
17 would urge you to look at smolt to adult return rate
18 as the gold standard.

19 I know that you guys are well versed in
20 the -- in the biology and the science of this, but
21 just make a plug for prioritizing the survive -- not
22 just survival, but recovery of salmon, steelhead,
23 lamprey and sturgeon, sturgeon I guess being kind of
24 the -- the murkiest in terms of what is actually
25 going on there. I just urge you to acknowledge that

1 electric production from the four Lower Snake River
2 Dams is declining for a variety of reasons.

3 If those dams were removed and we were to
4 shift to solar power, it would be at a better per
5 watt cost and indefinitely sustainable, and a lot of
6 the opposition to that shift is based on irrational
7 or bogus science, and a lot -- or nonscience, and a
8 lot of it's affected by ideological propaganda and
9 is not science based.

10 MR. SCHRIEVER: Chris, you're at three
11 minutes.

12 MR. NORDEN: Very good. Thank you.

13 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

14 MR. NORDEN: That's it. The end of my
15 comments.

16 MS. SCHOBY: I'll raise my hand at two and
17 I'll stand at the end. Does that work?

18 MR. SCHRIEVER: That works.

19 MS. SCHOBY: Okay.

20 MR. SCHRIEVER: Steve Paulson on deck.

21 MS. SIMPSON: Do I wait for him to call
22 me?

23 MR. SCHRIEVER: Please state and spell
24 your name for the record, please.

25 MS. SIMPSON: My name is Lucinda Simpson,

1 L-U-C-I-N-D-A, S-I-M-P-S-O-N. Just like our
2 representative.

3 My other name is Nepre, and I'm a Nez
4 Perce tribal elder. I have six great grandchildren
5 that are enrolled in Nez Perce, and I am hoping that
6 they can be able to fish and enjoy salmon from our
7 homeland waters. I am hoping our treaties do not
8 get overlooked.

9 I remember the days when my grandmother,
10 great-grandmother, and great-great-grandmother
11 cooked salmon for our people to eat during our
12 salmon feast. This is past year at the Nimiipuu
13 Protecting the Environment gathering, we had -- we
14 didn't have enough salmon to feed our people. We
15 ran out. Yeah. I'd say we ran out of our sacred
16 food at our event that we did have. So, anyway.
17 I'll cut it short. I had to be next to a professor.

18 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you very much.

19 THE REPORTER: Oh, Lucinda, could you --
20 could you come spell your tribal name for me?

21 MS. SIMPSON: Oh. I'm sorry.

22 THE REPORTER: You could write it down if
23 you --

24 MS. SIMPSON: Well, I could just show you.
25 I put it on here.

1 THE REPORTER: Okay.

2 MR. SCHRIEVER: Chris Rasmussen on deck.
3 Go ahead.

4 MR. PAULSON: Hi. My name is Steve
5 Paulson, S-T-E-V-E, P-A-U-L-S-O-N. I'm a fourth
6 generation Idahoan. We used to have a fish culture
7 in my family, but that went away. I don't think
8 that this plan will save the Snake River, threaten
9 the endangered salmon or steelhead from extinction.

10 Number one, the Council has not admitted
11 to an important conflict of interest. BPA funds
12 this draft plan. BPA is in the business of selling
13 power, not selling fish. The conflict doesn't allow
14 for the NPCC's Fish and Wildlife Plan to admit the
15 fact that the dams will fail in the foreseeable
16 future, leaving us with no dams, no fish, no
17 electricity, no barges, and no irrigation
18 commodities for export.

19 This plan does not address another -- this
20 plan does address -- does not address another very
21 important fact. Our production in the Lower Snake
22 River Dams has dropped nearly 30 percent over the
23 past five years. All dams now combined now
24 contribute 2.5 percent of the total power needed for
25 the Pacific Northwest. This power could easily be

1 replaced if wind and solar energy had access to
2 BPA's power grid.

3 Number 2. National Range Fishery
4 Service's 2016 five-year review summary and
5 evaluation of Snake River -- all the Snake River
6 salmons, many tribal governments, many Northwest
7 salmon scientists and resource managers and many
8 people including fisherman and residents have stated
9 unequivocally that unless the lower Snake River dams
10 are breached, salmon extinction will follow.

11 Number 3. Hatchery mitigation is a proven
12 myth. Since the first hatchery was built in 1883 on
13 the Columbia River, hatcheries have never increased
14 spawning adult returns. Hatcheries contributed --

15 MS. SCHOBY: You still have a minute.

16 MR. PAULSON: -- to native salmon
17 declines. This analysis makes no mention of the
18 effects of the dams on the headwater habitat. The
19 lack of nutrients that abundant salmon runs would
20 contribute to the flora and fauna make up the
21 headwater habitats.

22 I think this analysis will have no effect
23 on native headwater species. This plan contains no
24 meaningful attempts to lower reservoir temperatures
25 -- reservoir temperatures or control algae blooms,

1 the large water losses due to evaporation, water
2 temperatures that sicken and kill salmon, nor the
3 spawning habitat that was eliminated from the main
4 stem rivers by the dams.

5 The plan's obvious conclusion, continue
6 operations as usual with some minor mitigations,
7 will drive the Pacific lamprey to extinction.
8 People here don't really need dams, they do need
9 clean air, water and food. This plan is a violation
10 of public trust.

11 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you, Steve.

12 On deck is Max Beach.

13 Chris, go ahead.

14 MR. RASMUSSEN: So I provided her without
15 a card. So my name is Chris Rasmussen from the Port
16 of Clarkston. So chair members, I appreciate the
17 opportunity to provide testimony on the Draft 2026
18 Fish and Wildlife Program. The Port of Clarkston
19 and their industry partners have concerns that the
20 draft risks subverting the Port's ability to assure
21 safe, reliable river navigation on the Columbia
22 Snake Rivers.

23 M-84 is one of the most efficient freight
24 corridors in the U.S. along with providing safe
25 navigation to a growing cruise ship industry that

1 are both vital to the region's economic prosperity.
2 Congress authorized M 84 for multiple purposes:
3 Supporting navigation, flood risk, management,
4 hydropower, irrigation, and fish and wildlife needs.

5 The navigation system is essential to the
6 U.S. agricultural exports, energy distribution and
7 the economy over all communities across and in the
8 Northwest that include the Lewis Clark Valley.

9 Barging on the corridor remains the lowest cost and
10 lowest emissions transportation option available.
11 Policies and underlying navigation reliability carry
12 significant national economic and -- and supply
13 chain consequences.

14 The draft program adopts fish-centric
15 operational and funding assumptions that run counter
16 to the core statutory navigation emission. Although
17 it stops short of explicitly removing navigation, it
18 effectively places it in the subordinate position.
19 The draft advances measures without an assessment of
20 their impact on navigation. Flow, spill, and draw
21 down proposals are presented as preferred policy
22 choices rather than as decisions that involve
23 tradeoffs with navigation safe -- navigation safety.

24 There are safety and reliability risks
25 that the draft omits. Critical analysis of -- for

1 lock approach safety, tow handling challenges, delay
2 risk, and the effective increased debris and
3 sedimentation. These are not theoretical issues,
4 they have direct implications for accident risk and
5 system downtime. The document provides no threshold
6 for what constitutes acceptable degradation of
7 navigation performance. It also lacks a cumulative
8 impact assessment to evaluate how multiple operation
9 changes interact when implemented together.

10 We ask that in future drafts, the
11 following guardrails are considered and implemented
12 in the Fish and Wildlife Program: A navigation non-
13 degradation standard, mandatory navigation safety
14 and reliability analysis prior to any operational
15 changes. A funding firewall to protect navigation
16 O&M. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers technical
17 concurrence on all navigation affecting measures.
18 Clear deference on -- to congressional
19 authorizations.

20 Healthy fish population safe navigation
21 can and should coexist. The balance is only
22 achievable when statutory roles are upheld, and
23 navigation is treated as a co-equal priority rather
24 than an afterthought. Thank you for the time and
25 consideration.

1 MR. SCHRIEVER: Rick Hanks on deck.

2 MR. BEACH: My name Max Beach, M-A-X, B-E-
3 A-C-H.

4 I'm the general manager of Idaho County
5 Light and Power up in Grangeville, so just about an
6 hour east of here. We're one of the smaller
7 electric co-ops in the state and in the country. We
8 serve in total about 4,600 meters. Our revenue's
9 around 8 million a year, so we're very small, but
10 about 4 million of that goes towards our power bill
11 to BPA.

12 Of that, roughly 25 percent goes to fish
13 and wildlife mitigation costs as we all know. So
14 the hydro is very important to us and to our
15 members, especially being as rural as we are. So
16 over the last four months or so, on October 1st of
17 2025, our -- our power bill went up about 22
18 percent. So pretty significant for our members.
19 Obviously rate increases have to come forth out of
20 that.

21 But as I sit here -- I spend a lot of
22 time, that's one of the advantages for a small not
23 for profit utility with 14 people, we wear a lot of
24 hats. So I handle a lot of our wind or solar member
25 projects that are members put in, and we encourage

1 them to do that if they would like. So as I hear
2 some of the -- you know, some of the comments on
3 wind and solar, I always -- having firsthand
4 experience with it, it's not quite there yet.

5 I feel like we're very fortunate to have
6 the hydro production in this area and also seeing
7 some of the results firsthand kind of on-site of
8 what's happened over the years. As you mentioned
9 since 1980, seeing population of fish go up. I
10 believe that's extremely important. We're seeing a
11 lot of the dollars that our members have spent over
12 the year.

13 But we are getting to a -- a really tough
14 point right now with capacity on the system, because
15 there's not as much power out there as there used to
16 be, and demand continues to grow. We're -- we're
17 really at that point. You know, fossil fuels are --
18 we're going to have to look at something in the
19 future in order to be able to keep the lights on for
20 people.

21 And obviously, a small co-op, as I
22 mentioned before, not-for-profit is -- it's very
23 important to keep our member's lights on, especially
24 as we cover several thousand square miles of power
25 and average about 4 meters per mile. So I

1 appreciate you guys having the meeting tonight and
2 hear -- taking comments from the public, and I just
3 really wanted to -- to state how important the dams
4 to us and our members. So thank you.

5 MR. SCHRIEVER: Tim Hatten on deck.

6 MR. HANKS: I'm Rick Hanks. R-I-C-K, H-A-
7 N-K-S. I represent myself.

8 I'm a lifelong resident of the valley
9 except for a few years. I am very concerned about
10 the quality of life in the valley if we do not have
11 the dams. We've the major benefit of having slack
12 water for those that want to play on the river with
13 their boats and innertubes, whatever, tubes and we
14 also can go upstream with jets and all that.

15 I'm also concerned about -- there's a lot
16 people saying that the dams are going to produce
17 less electricity. Well, you're producing less
18 electricity because we're spilling the water over
19 the dams, and we're not using it to go through the
20 turbines. Also, with solar and wind it's very --
21 there's problems with both of them. One, I have
22 solar panels in my house, and I don't get power when
23 the sun's not shining. And I also got lithium
24 batteries which have a fire risk that are very bad.

25 Also, the solar and the wind are also

1 dependent on rare earth, and they destroy the earth
2 when we mine the -- for the rare earth. So relying
3 on solar and wind is not viable at this time. And
4 the reservoir of a dam is a major battery that you
5 can draw on whenever you need the power. So when
6 you got to increase demand for any reason, you can
7 use the -- that reservoir.

8 I also wanted to talk about the logic of
9 this whole thing. Why would you spill water over
10 the dam when you know it increases the total
11 dissolved gases, and you know the total dissolved
12 gasses harm fish. Up to half the fish die when they
13 get too much total dissolved gases. That logic does
14 not make any sense to me. But -- and you're also
15 concerned about predators killing the fish -- never
16 mind, it's in your literature.

17 So the biggest solution is barging. The
18 technology of barging has improved vastly over the
19 years, and it's very -- they control the pH, the
20 temperature. There's no predators. They -- up to
21 98 percent of the fish survive going down river. So
22 why -- if you want to really save the fish,
23 logically, what would you do? You would barge them
24 past the dams, so you save the dams.

25 So we've got electricity, irrigation,

1 flood control, tourism, transportation of barges.
2 There's so many benefits and all it is that you want
3 to save the fish. And I also want to make this
4 statement some people are not going to like. I
5 think the reason why they want to spill the water
6 over the -- over the dam, because they want to kill
7 the fish and then they can get rid of the dams. And
8 that's -- that's what I think.

9 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you, Rick.

10 Dick Sherwin, you're a maybe. Have you
11 made up your mind?

12 MR. SHERWIN: Yep.

13 MR. SCHRIEVER: Okay. You're on deck.

14 MR. HATTEN: Hello. My name is Tim
15 Hatten. I just want to say --

16 THE REPORTER: Can you spell your name,
17 please, Mr. Hatten?

18 MR. HATTEN: Yes. H-A-T-T-E-N.

19 THE REPORTER: And make sure you speak
20 into the mic, too, you're kind of quiet.

21 MR. HATTEN: Okay. Will do.

22 I'm going to give you a little intro on
23 myself, but then I'm going to make several points on
24 behalf of the Sierra Club. I'm a member of the
25 Spruce Group of the Sierra Club, and the -- the

1 state chapter. I'm also a member of Friends of the
2 Clearwater, but there's a number of Sierra Club and
3 Friends of the Clearwater here.

4 All right. So my wife and my young
5 children moved to Moscow, Idaho some 27 years ago,
6 and we immediately fell in love with the canyons and
7 rivers of the three-state area, Oregon, Washington,
8 and Idaho. Over the years, we've rafted, camped,
9 fished, and did biological surveys along or in these
10 rivers including the Lochsa, Selway, Clearwater,
11 North Fork Clearwater, Saint Joe, Grande Ronde,
12 Salmon. All of these, as you know, are tributaries
13 to the Snake River.

14 In terms of -- so again, I'm -- I've been
15 with the Sierra Club now for, I don't know, about 20
16 years. Here are three -- some points that the
17 Sierra Club would like to make about this plan.
18 They're recommending elevated levels of spill
19 through August 31st as a priority hydropower
20 operations measure while juvenile salmon and
21 steelhead that out migrate through August make up a
22 disproportionately large share of the wild adults
23 that return to the Columbia and Snake Rivers.
24 Increased spill is necessary to protect the genetic
25 diversity of wild and natural stocks and to allow

1 the generational population growth that is necessary
2 to recover healthy and abundant fisheries.

3 That's -- that's point one. Point two,
4 detailed and explicit accountability measures,
5 especially linked to Bonneville Power
6 Administration's responsibility to achieve program
7 goals with a -- with a whole of government approach
8 and to address all necessary hydropower measures in
9 the 9th Power Plan.

10 Point three, acknowledge Lower Snake River
11 Dam removal as a necessary measure in the final 2026
12 Fish and Wildlife Program and include an analysis of
13 dam breached scenario in the 9th Power Plan.
14 Established science clearly demonstrates that
15 removing the Lower Snake River Dams is a necessary
16 action to achieve the Council's 5 million fish goal
17 and will have the single largest impact on the
18 recovery of salmon and steelhead stocks in the
19 Columbia and Snake Rivers.

20 And I'd like to thank the Council for your
21 time allowing me to speak.

22 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you, Tim.

23 On deck, Jerry McGehee.

24 MR. SHERWIN: My name is Dick Sherwin, D-
25 I-C-K, S-H-E-R-W-I-N. I belong to a couple of

1 different organizations, but I'm just here
2 representing myself today. I wasn't sure whether I
3 wanted to speak a lot, but Paul Harvey got into my
4 head, and I couldn't help it.

5 If my goal was to eliminate anadromous
6 fish from the Snake River system, I would
7 immediately ban all barging. I would renew hatchery
8 production. Next, I would institute a program of
9 spilling enough water over the dam spillways to
10 raise the total dissolved gas levels to 125 percent
11 which is proven to be harmful or fatal to both
12 adults and juveniles in the river.

13 I would completely ignore the hundreds of
14 dams blocking spawning habitat in Idaho without a
15 single fish ladder. That's right, people. Almost
16 400 dams in Idaho, not a single fish ladder and
17 we're worried about the four Snake River Dams? Not
18 one single fish ladder to pass anadromous fish. If
19 my goal was to breach the four Lower Snake River
20 Dams, I would initiate the very same program and
21 blame the dams for the demise of the anadromous fish
22 runs from the Snake River. Thank you.

23 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you, Dick.

24 Fred Mensik on deck.

25 MR. MCGEHEE: Howdy, Ed.

1 MR. SCHRIEVER: Hi, Jerry.

2 MR. MCGEHEE: How you doing?

3 MR. SCHRIEVER: Doing great.

4 MR. MCGEHEE: You look great.

5 MR. SCHRIEVER: So do you.

6 MR. MCGEHEE: Jerry McGehee.

7 THE REPORTER: Can you spell your last
8 name?

9 MR. MCGEHEE: J-E-R-R-Y, M-C-G-E-H-E-E.
10 What is that Windy?

11 MS. SCHOBY: I just wanted you to speak
12 into the mic a little more. Thanks.

13 MR. MCGEHEE: Oh, okay. I'll get right up
14 on that thing. Ready?

15 MS. SCHOBY: Yes.

16 MR. MCGEHEE: Thank you guys for allowing
17 me time here tonight to hear the comments concerning
18 your Fish and Wildlife Plan. Before retiring after
19 36 years with Idaho Fish and Game, I worked in
20 hatcheries where I spawned over 48,000 chinook
21 adults and raised 65 million chinook smolts. I
22 spent over a year preparing my comments concerning
23 your smolt migration plan and 125 percent total
24 levels of gas.

25 This year, I communicated and spoke

1 directly with 12 fishery professionals --
2 professionals. Four professors of aquaculture at
3 two different universities, and researchers and
4 authors who the gas testing and smolt depth of
5 travel research. A common statement of these 12
6 professionals was, and I quote them, "I'm shocked to
7 learn that anyone would knowingly and intentionally
8 subject smolts to the unhealthy environment to 125
9 percent."

10 So from what I learned from these 12
11 professionals and 36 years of raising salmon, I'm
12 concerned that whoever authored the hypotheses of
13 125 percent is healthy for fish has lost contact
14 with the basic foundation of fish health 101. In my
15 personal literature search, I found 225 publications
16 saying that gas levels are unhealthy for fish.

17 Google Chat told me that it was unable to
18 enumerate the number of research reports stating
19 that the total gas above 100 percent was unhealthy
20 for fish. It then told me that it could not locate
21 one single report that totals of gas was healthy for
22 a fish, particularly above 110 percent. Therefore,
23 it said the scientific consensus was available from
24 the literature that gas is not healthy for fish.

25 I spoke with spill advocates this year.

1 They have four common beliefs. First, smolts dive
2 to avoid the gas. This is a fine sounding argument,
3 but fish would first have to be able to detect
4 elevated levels of the gas. The professionals I
5 mentioned earlier assured me that fish do not have
6 an onboard gas saturometer to detect it. Fish
7 cannot dive to avoid what they cannot detect. Four
8 of the researchers assured me that the churn effect
9 of the river causes the gas to be the same from the
10 surface to the bottom of the river, so the smolts
11 have no place to avoid the dangerous levels.

12 Belief number 2 is that short-term
13 exposure to 125 percent is okay and healthy. DART
14 says that at Lower Granite it will rise at 103, 104
15 percent. At the downriver dams, it will rise at 118
16 to 121 and the Fish Passage Center says that in this
17 report, smolt travel time from the Lower Granite to
18 Bonneville is 10 to 15 days. This is greater than
19 as short term response -- short-term exposure.

20 So over 30 years, people have paddled over
21 the effects of the Lower Snake Dams and the salmon
22 and steelhead. The battle may continue for 30 more.
23 In the meantime, fish advocates on both sides of the
24 issue must absolutely focus on what is best for the
25 fish and stop experimenting, copy the operations of

1 '98 to 2000 that brought back the historic runs of
2 '01 and '02.

3 I'm out of time?

4 MS. SCHOBY: Yeah.

5 MR. SCHRIEVER: Yeah. Thank you, Jerry.

6 MS. SCHOBY: Thank you, Jerry.

7 MR. MCGEHEE: Oh man. I had two more
8 sentences.

9 MS. SCHOBY: You can -- you can submit
10 those written comments, though. You're welcome to.

11 MR. MCGEHEE: Okay.

12 MS. SCHOBY: Thank you.

13 MR. SCHRIEVER: On deck is Darla Grimm.

14 MR. MENSİK: My name is Fred Mensik, F-R-
15 E-D, M E-N-S-I-K.

16 I worked down at Lower Granite there for
17 19 years. My comment is I want to see more fish.
18 And it's in regards to page 62 of your draft report.
19 Page 62, where you talk about wildlife agencies have
20 hypothesized that 125 percent total dissolved gas is
21 all right.

22 The -- the Science Advisory Board said it
23 was worth implementing this experiment, and then the
24 Council went on and we need to let this run for a
25 few years. In all honesty, folks, as spill goes up,

1 you have it in front of you. As spill goes up,
2 returns go down. That's just plain and simple. And
3 that is if you continue to spill, you can't collect
4 the fish. So the margin goes down.

5 And as the margin goes down, the number of
6 fish goes down. That's just real simple. When I
7 was down at Lower Granite in 2005, we had 24 million
8 fish released above us. 12 million came to the dam.
9 About half those fish died. We transported 12
10 million of those fish, and the resulting returns in
11 '6, '7, '8, and '9 were quite good. 567,000
12 returned in '09.

13 In 2025, 32 million fish were released
14 above Lower Granite. Again, half of them make it to
15 the dam. We barged only 400,000. That means 16
16 million fish were left in the river at a mortality
17 rate of 50 percent. That means there was a willful
18 killing of 8 million fish, because we know they're
19 going to die. We killed 8 million fish. If the
20 objective is to preserve the fish, we can't afford
21 that kind of loss. We need to protect the
22 investment, not kill it.

23 On one of the pages, you have a five-year
24 average return during spill. The next graph is a
25 five-year returns during barging when there was no

1 spill. During the spill, we have returns that
2 decline. During the barging without spill, we have
3 the numbers increasing. I want to see fish numbers
4 return, and that's why you have to end spill. It
5 failed -- it has failed to increase the numbers.
6 125 percent as Jerry indicated is lethal.

7 Spill eliminates the ability to collect
8 and transport shift. Barged fish survive at a 98
9 percent survival rate compared to in-river, 50
10 percent mortality rate. And spilled water is lost
11 revenue at each dam. Thank you so much for the
12 opportunity to talk.

13 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you, Fred.

14 Jerry Pottinger on deck.

15 MS. GRIMM: Hi. My name is Darla, D-A-R-
16 L-A, Grimm, G-R-I-M-M.

17 A 2005 court order that increased the
18 levels from the standard at 110 percent to 120
19 percent TDG at four of the Lower Snake River Dams,
20 then they increased it again in 2015 to 120, or 5
21 percent. It's a disastrous and failed 20 year plus
22 experiment resulting in dangerous and lethal
23 outcomes for juvenile smolts. Scientific studies
24 for decades have concluded that smolts are
25 susceptible to gas bubble toxicity at 105 percent

1 TDG.

2 Adult returns have declined over these
3 last 20 years as a result of this mass spill
4 program, and yet the program continues. Why? If
5 you really care about fish survival, this failed
6 experiment needs to be terminated. The fish counts
7 at Bonneville from 1938 to '47 for total steelhead
8 and spring chinook when Bonneville was the only dam
9 compared to the 10-year period from 2000 to 2009
10 when all 8 dams were in place show a 316 percent
11 increase in returning steelhead and a 268 percent
12 increase in spring chinook.

13 When managed properly, dams have had a
14 positive effect on total fish numbers with 2014 and
15 2015 being the highest years old record since 1938.
16 Barging, which was transporting more than 90 percent
17 of the smolts as the peak of the fish counts, was a
18 huge factor of this increase. Barged smolts have a
19 98 percent survival rate compared with in-reverse
20 smolts at 54 percent.

21 Prior to mass spilling orders, 90 percent
22 of smolts were being barged, and 10 percent stayed
23 in-river. Now, barging is reduced to 10 percent
24 with 90 percent in river, just the opposite of what
25 was 98 percent successful. Since this 20 years

1 failed experiment with high volume spill, at least
2 120 million smolts have died in the river needlessly
3 when barging could have saved 98 percent of them.
4 Let's bring the fish back with policies that are
5 proven to work.

6 Another consequence of high-volume spill
7 is the costly damage to the structural foundation
8 and stability of our dams. The dams were never
9 designed for continuous high-volume spill. Let's
10 not continue tearing them apart with this failed
11 experiment that kills 50 percent of the smolts.
12 Thank you.

13 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you, Darla.

14 Marvin, you're on deck.

15 MR. POTTENGER: My name is Charlie
16 Pottenger. C-H-A-R-I-L-E, P-O-T-T-E-N-G-E-R.

17 And I'm going to submit a letter that I
18 wrote to the Corps of Engineers for their update of
19 their environmental impact space. But the -- the --
20 the -- an addressed fish problem on the Columbia
21 River Basin involved two major fish related
22 transport issues. Number one, getting smolts to the
23 estuary. Number two, getting the adults back up the
24 river, and number three, if we're making real
25 important decisions, abandoning the supercilious SAR

1 concept and start looking at the primary measure
2 which is the return of adult anadromous fish, okay?

3 The downriver component of the whole
4 equation on what to involves getting the smolts down
5 to the estuary and if you look at -- and I gave a
6 graph in my report here. If you look at the data
7 from 1938 until the present, you'll see that from
8 1938 until 19 -- until 1999, there was no
9 significant, big upturn due to all the conditions
10 that are existing.

11 So the ocean conditions, predators,
12 everything else. There never was any big, big
13 upturn, and there's no real significant downturn in
14 spite of everything you hoped or are talking about.
15 So then what happened in 2000? All of a sudden,
16 we're getting three times as many fish, two and-a-
17 half to three times as many fish as we have ever
18 seen. And so the answer to that is barging.

19 And then the upriver, everybody worries
20 about the fish ladders, and we maintain the fish
21 ladders very effectively. And if you look at data
22 on the Snake River between Ice Harbor and Lower
23 Granite, look at the -- at the DART results, we
24 normally get 96 to 108 percent, so there's a little
25 counting problem.

1 Returns. So the fish ladders aren't the
2 problem. The problem is between Bonneville and
3 McNary, we lose huge numbers of fish, some to
4 hatcheries, and the rest to predators, mostly either
5 sport fisherman or Native American who are catching
6 fish. Now, which is fine, but we got to know that
7 it's not the dams causing the problems, it's people.
8 And so if we would preserve the downriver
9 transportation, we will get the fish back, we'll
10 make more power, and the world will be better all
11 around in the Northwest. Thank you.

12 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you, Charlie.

13 Doug Zenner, you're on deck.

14 MR. DUGGER: My name is Marvin Dugger, and
15 that's M-A-R-V-I-N, D-U-G-G-E-R.

16 And my name is Marvin Dugger. I live in
17 Lewiston, Idaho. I am a member of Citizens for the
18 Preservation of Fish and Dams. We are being sold a
19 bill of goods. We are being told that the four
20 Lower Snake River Dams are the main reason for the
21 disappearance of our anadromous fish runs and they
22 should be torn out.

23 Dr. David Welch and a team of scientists
24 from Kintama Research Cetner have determined that
25 there's -- the survival of chinook salmon has fallen

1 by 65 percent over the last 50 years on rivers along
2 the whole North American West Coast from California
3 to Alaska, not just the Snake River. And most of
4 these rivers have no dams.

5 A time proven fish tracking system with
6 miniature implants allowed Dr. Welch's team to
7 closely track and study the outgoing chinook --
8 outgoing juvenile smolts to increase their
9 understanding of the effects of dams on fish are
10 viable. The researchers compared the fate of
11 chinook and steelhead migrants leaving the heavily
12 dammed Columbia Snake River system to those of -- to
13 those leaving the primitive and undeveloped Thomas
14 Fraser River system in South Central British
15 Columbia.

16 According to an article published by PLOS
17 Biology October 2008, Dr. Welch says, "Surprisingly,
18 smolts fare are just as well negotiating the heavily
19 dammed Columbia as they are going down the free-
20 falling Fraser." Comparing the river citizen by --
21 systems by -- section by section, chinook smolts
22 traversing the dam system actually had higher
23 survival rates than their cousins in the Fraser,
24 adjusting the estimates to consider the distance the
25 and time smolts had to migrate to reach the river

1 mouth reveal that the average survival rates were
2 much higher for both species from the Snake River
3 than from the those on the undammed Fraser.

4 In fact, no matter how they analyzed the
5 data, the researchers reported survival is not worse
6 in the Columbia despite the presence of an extensive
7 network of dams. These results challenge long-held
8 assumptions about the impact of dams and suggests
9 that removing dams may not accelerate salmon
10 recovery as widely believed. The four Lower Snake
11 River Dams have efficient bypass systems and only
12 affect a small amount of fishing -- fish spawning
13 habitat.

14 But there are thousands of miles of
15 destroyed fish-spawning habitat in Idaho behind
16 Dworshak Dam and the three Hell's Canyon Dams that
17 have no fish bypass systems. There are hundreds of
18 miles of lost spawning habitat upstream of Grande
19 Coulee and Chief Joseph Dams in Washington State
20 that have no bypass system.

21 The actual percentage of spawning grounds
22 lost to these dams in Washington State according to
23 the government figures are 80 percent for fall
24 chinook, 70 plus percent for spring and summer
25 chinook, and 65 percent for steelhead. Why aren't

1 we talking about this?

2 MR. SCHRIEVER: Marvin, can you wrap it
3 up, please?

4 MR. DUGGER: All right. Thank you very
5 much.

6 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

7 Jeff Biddy, your name is next. You did
8 not check whether you were going to testify. I
9 don't want to skip over you if you do.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Who?

11 MR. SCHRIEVER: Jeff, it looks like,
12 Biddy. B-I-D-D-Y, is the best I can read that.

13 Okay then. On deck is Scott Corbitt.

14 MR. ZENNER: Doug Zenner. D-O-U-G, Z-E-N-
15 N-E-R.

16 First of all, gentleman, thank you for
17 coming to listen. It is critical that you guys did
18 that. I'd like to comment about BPA and Pacific
19 Coast salmon recovery funding. I know you gentlemen
20 are very interested in that. Our county here, when
21 I was a county commissioner, we did lots of
22 projects. Thanks to Mr. Jost, we were able to get
23 them done. You're filling big shoes, gentleman.
24 Big shoes.

25 But what we have done in our county is

1 tried to mitigate and open up reaches so we could
2 have more anadromous fish here in this valley from
3 the streams here in Nez Perce County. But I harken
4 back on my second set of comments to the Northwest
5 Power Act of 1980. Assuring the Pacific Northwest
6 has an adequate, efficient, economical and reliable
7 power supply. Big words. Especially in this state
8 with the influx of population, and we live on two
9 things: Power and water. Without them we don't
10 survive.

11 Please, look at barging and fish ladders.
12 Thank you.

13 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

14 On deck is Paul Busch.

15 MR. CORBITT: Scott Corbitt representing
16 the Port of Lewiston. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr.
17 Allen.

18 THE REPORTER: Could you spell your name,
19 please?

20 MR. CORBITT: Oh, I am sorry. S-C-O-T-T,
21 C-O-R-B-I-T-T.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Allen for
23 being here tonight and for the opportunity to
24 provide testimony. Again, my name is Scott Corbitt.
25 I'm the general manager for the Port of Lewiston,

1 Idaho's only seaport. The Port of Lewiston takes
2 this opportunity to provide comments very seriously
3 as the actions contemplated by your Draft 2026
4 Program will have direct implications on Lewiston
5 and the LC Valley.

6 Put simply, there is an effort underway by
7 anti hydropower advocates to incorporate Lower Snake
8 River Dam removal objectives as part of your Fish
9 and Wildlife Program. The Columbia and Snake Rivers
10 make up marine highway M-84. The federally
11 recognized highway, M-84, is an interconnected
12 network of waterways, locks, and dams linking
13 Astoria, Oregon to Lewiston, Idaho.

14 Because of this system, we're able to
15 transport valuable commodities for export. This
16 system makes up the fourth largest grain transport
17 corridor in the world. Without it, our farm
18 families, agricultural cooperatives, grain
19 elevators, communities would be nonexistent. For M
20 84 to function, that system of locks and dams
21 combined with the operating pools behind the dams
22 are critical.

23 Unfortunately for decades, there have been
24 many concerted efforts to compromise that system
25 reaping detrimental impacts on our economy and our

1 communities. You may not be aware that the Port of
2 Lewiston now hosts a cruise ship dock in partnership
3 with American Cruise Lines. More cruise ships means
4 more travelers to the Lewiston/Nez Perce County
5 Regional Airport, more visits to our restaurants and
6 hotels, and more exposure to our community's assets
7 including the Nez Perce Tribe and its culture. The
8 current state of the river supports the tourism
9 piece of our local economy. Any degradation of
10 safety of navigation would be problematic for all
11 involved.

12 So why is the Port of Lewiston testifying
13 before you today? Because even though your
14 responsibility as established by the Northwest Power
15 Act is to balance energy and fish, these dams
16 provide for far more than that. Congress's vision
17 all those years ago was to help bring progress to a
18 struggling region. That vision included hydropower
19 and fish mitigation, but it is also responsible for
20 the creation of a world-class river transportation
21 system that generated immense recreational
22 opportunities and provides irrigation to some of the
23 best high-valued crops in the nation and the world.

24 All of the examples that I've shared with
25 you today involve the Port of Lewiston highlight

1 this economic progress. Now is not the time to turn
2 back the clock. And, again, nobody's suggesting
3 that salmon aren't important. But there is scant
4 evidence dam removal will return salmon runs to pre-
5 colonial levels. And you have to ask yourself, is
6 it worth it to inflict so much harm in our river
7 communities or are there balanced approaches that
8 serve both fish and our future.

9 The Port of Lewiston would assert strongly
10 that those opportunities do exist. My request to
11 you today is simple: Please do not consider fish
12 and wildlife amendments that support dam removal or
13 modifications to the system that imperil our
14 community, our livelihoods, and our future. On
15 behalf of all of the community members that benefit
16 from the existence of the Port of Lewiston, thank
17 you for the opportunity to provide comments today.

18 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you, Scott.

19 Miles Butler is on deck.

20 MR. BUSCH. Hello. My name is Paul Busch.
21 P-A-U-L, B-U-S-C-H, like the crappy beer.

22 I'm here, I work for Friends of the
23 Clearwater which is a conservation group with
24 several hundred members in Idaho and throughout the
25 region, and the -- the country. I wanted to say a

1 few things. First off, if my leg was cut off, I
2 would be not very concerned with if I had an ear
3 removed. And some of the comments today about the
4 levels of oxygenation seem to be focused on creating
5 a very powerful narrative that barging is somehow
6 the salvation for fish. That's not true.

7 There are four dams that stand within the
8 ocean to the populations in the Yakima River. Those
9 populations of salmon and steelhead are stable
10 despite four dams. However, we are not the Yakima
11 River. We have eight dams, and significant
12 problems. That's why smolt to adult is too low to
13 sustain healthy populations.

14 We are simply not going to get over the
15 complex issues by talking our way around them if we
16 don't get rid of those four Lower Snake River Dams
17 which don't provide a lot of electricity. They
18 provide something like three to five percent of the
19 energy portfolio for the Northwest, which is
20 something that we can learn to live without. We did
21 before. And we can find ways to lower our energy
22 costs and supply new energy supplies from other
23 alternative sources as other people have said.

24 I want to say one other thing that I think
25 is really important is that in the Endangered

1 Species Act, that is a very important piece of
2 legislation which asserts that the extinction of
3 species is the number one priority of every agency
4 in the United States including the military above
5 and beyond any other goal, because extinction is not
6 something you can reverse.

7 And I want to bring a -- an important
8 point to this: You have -- you are under a legal
9 obligation to save this keystone of our economy, of
10 our environment, and of the local culture, both
11 native and settler alike. And I think that it is
12 really important for us to get this right and to
13 overlook a lot of the misinformation, make sure that
14 we can save the salmon that do exist here, and the
15 rare runs.

16 People haven't mentioned that in the Lolo
17 Creek Watershed, those are at Quazi extinction
18 levels right now. They're not recovering, right?
19 This is an important genetic line of fish that are
20 going to be gone despite the so-called wonderful
21 situation we're in now which is, by the way, a
22 disaster for fish and for people.

23 One other thing that I wanted to mention
24 quickly is that there is a growing risk of concern
25 about energy development for the use of data

1 centers. I personally am very concerned that huge
2 out of state interests are doing this, and I would
3 like that to be looked more closely in the analysis
4 on this -- this plan. I don't think we should pay
5 for out-of-staters to Google things. I think that's
6 lame.

7 And -- yeah. And thank you for trying to
8 look at all of the pieces of this pubble (sic), and
9 I want to remind you of your obligation to the law.
10 Thank you.

11 MR. SCHRIEVER: Steve Becker on deck.

12 MR. BUTLER: Hello. My name is Miles
13 Butler. That's, M-I-L-E-S, B-U-T-L-E-R.

14 And I wanted to take a little bit to share
15 about why salmon recovery and a strong fish and
16 wildlife program matter to me. I live in Moscow
17 right now, and I've lived in Idaho my entire life,
18 and myself and many another ripars in our community
19 want Bonneville Administration and our utility
20 companies to prioritize fish friendly power
21 generation and sustainable, abundant salmon and
22 steelhead populations.

23 I recognize how valuable it is to have a
24 healthy and anadromous fish population not only for
25 our economy, but for tourism, for recreation, for

1 anyone in the communities. And so I want to ask to
2 achieve the Council's 5 million fish goal, I urge
3 you to adopt all of the recommendations by state and
4 tribal fishery managers throughout the reason to
5 whom the Council must pay deference as required by
6 the Northwest Power Act including the following
7 three priorities:

8 Elevated levels of spill through August
9 31st as a priority hydro operations measure.

10 Detailed and explicit accountability measures,
11 especially linked to Bonneville Power
12 Administration's responsibility to achieve program
13 goals. Finally, to acknowledge the Lower Snake
14 River Dam removal as a necessary measure in the
15 final 2026 Fish and Wildlife Program and include an
16 analysis of dam breached scenario in the 9th Power
17 Plan.

18 Currently, this program is detrimental to
19 salmon populations, and continuing on the current
20 path will prevent any progress toward achieving the
21 5 million goal. Thank you for allowing me to speak
22 today.

23 MR. SCHRIEVER: Next name did not check
24 the box to speak, I just want to make sure that
25 that's still the case, Ray Boyd?

1 MR. BOYD: No, I'm not speaking I just
2 signed in.

3 MR. SCHRIEVER: Okay. Thank you.

4 Then on deck, I believe it's Gerry Dorn.
5 You're on deck, sir.

6 MR. BECKER: Steve Becker. S-T-E-V-E, B-
7 E-C-K-E-R.

8 Today I'm speaking on behalf of the Nez
9 Perce Soil and Water Conservation District. We
10 appreciate this opportunity to come in on the
11 Council's Draft 2026 Program and want to express our
12 strong support for its continued emphasis on locally
13 led science-based restoration. Through partnerships
14 supported by the Council's program, the Nez Perce
15 Soil and Water Conservation District has made
16 measurable progress toward steelhead recovery goals,
17 particularly by improving habitat function, stream
18 connectivity, and water quality at the watershed
19 scale.

20 These efforts demonstrate the sustained
21 investment at local conversation. Delivery produces
22 real biological outcomes. In addition to steelhead
23 recovery, we've seen complimentary successes
24 including increased land -- land owner
25 participation, improved riparian condition, and --

1 and more resilient working landscapes that benefit
2 both fish and communities.

3 We encourage the Council to continue
4 prioritizing collaborative locally driven approaches
5 in the final 2026 program. Thank you again for the
6 opportunity to speak today.

7 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

8 I just want to make sure that Steven Evans
9 does not want to speak.

10 Steve Petitt, did you want to speak
11 tonight?

12 MR. PETITT: I have a written comment.

13 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

14 Then on deck -- excuse me. Leslie
15 Druffel, do you want to speak?

16 Then Jerry Kiekow, you're on deck, sir.

17 STANDING RED BEAR: Good afternoon.

18 MR. SCHRIEVER: Good afternoon.

19 STANDING RED BEAR: (Speaking in native
20 language.)

21 I am Standing Red Bear. I'm a member of
22 the Nez Perce Tribe. I'm also sitting on the board
23 with the Sierra Club.

24 THE REPORTER: Could you state your full
25 name, sir, and spell it, please?

1 STANDING RED BEAR: So my name is Standing
2 Red Bear. S-T-A-N-D-I-N-G, R-E-D, B-E-A-R.

3 THE REPORTER: Thank you.

4 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

5 STANDING RED BEAR: This plan needs to
6 change. It needs to be rejected until these
7 conditions are met. The plan is not distinguished
8 between how wild and hatchery salmon counts
9 realistically with regards to plans and objectives.
10 There's no mention of lamprey species in the species
11 protection except to prohibit Endangered Species Act
12 listing, which I'm sure Mr. Allen is familiar with
13 with regard to wolf delisting.

14 There's no mention of a directive to
15 receive tribal consent. There's only consultation
16 in this plan. There's no mention of Palouse Water
17 Conservation District Plan to pipe water from the
18 Clearwater River to possibly recharge the Palouse
19 Aquifer. I was just in that meeting on Tuesday
20 night, and there's nothing in here about that.

21 You need to dispel the -- that the
22 reservoirs are just like a switch to turn on when
23 you need power and articulate that due to the 1855
24 treaty stipulations, we have to adjust the flow for
25 salmon. You can't just turn the dam on and provide

1 power. You as leaders need to represent that --
2 that fact.

3 There's no mention of action to protect
4 Pacific Northwest fish populations from illegal and
5 overzealous ocean fish trawlers who catch all
6 species of fish and their -- because their nets
7 don't care. And that's affecting our fish count
8 also. And that's not in this -- this -- it's not on
9 this report, which it needs to be.

10 I think everyone here can agree that
11 anyone else that's out of state, out of -- out of
12 our country that's taking our fish is a threat to
13 the Pacific Northwest. The number of barges go up,
14 the number of fish go up. The number of barges go
15 down, the number of fishes go down. The real answer
16 is the number of dams that go up, the number of the
17 fish went down.

18 Another thing I want to -- I would like to
19 ask, request, hopefully you'll listen to is there
20 should be nobody on our Council, there should be
21 nobody in this room testifying from Montana about
22 the Columbia River fish -- fish populations. This
23 is our area. Montana's got nothing to do with
24 anything that you're -- that's in this plan with
25 regard to the Columbia River, the Snake River, the

1 Yakima River, all the rivers in this area.

2 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

3 Telly Stanger? On deck, sir.

4 MR. KIEKOW: Jerry Kiekow. It's J-E-R-R-
5 Y, K-I-E-K-O-W.

6 Thank you for the opportunity to speak
7 with you guys today. I worked at the Lewis Clark
8 Grain Terminal. We have some concerns about the
9 Draft Program. It does pose some risks to the Army
10 Corps of Engineers congressionally mandated ability
11 to ensure reliable, safe, and a navigable river
12 system.

13 Lewis Clark Terminal serves over 2,000
14 member farmers in this region. They rely on our
15 terminal and the river system to get their products
16 from here to the export -- export markets on the
17 Lower Columbia River. Using barges is the most
18 efficient, reliable, cost effective, and
19 environmentally clean mode of transposition for
20 transporting their products to those markets.

21 With recent silting in the Clearwater and
22 Snake River areas, safe navigation and operations
23 are being compromised with the lowered river levels
24 and increased spills. Tugboats and barges have
25 bottomed out in the river which adds -- adds a

1 safety risk to those boats, barges, and their crews.
2 In addition, the silting has caused barges being
3 loaded at our terminal to be pushed away from the
4 berth as they load and finish up operations which
5 hinder safe access to and from those barges at the
6 end of our loading operations.

7 A couple economic factors that play into
8 it as well. When these -- when the water level is
9 down due to the increased spills and our pool is
10 down, those barges will bottom out as they're
11 loaded, and that decreases the amount of efficiency
12 and the amount of the product that gets loaded, and
13 that does decrease -- decreases revenues and
14 increases operational costs.

15 I believe we can figure out a plan to have
16 healthy fish populations and safe navigation and not
17 focus just on one particular problem. I think we
18 need all to work together and make it all work.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. SCHRIEVER: I'm going to need a little
21 help on the next on deck person. The organization
22 represented is XR Palouse.

23 Thank you. You're on deck.

24 MR. STANGER: My name is Telly Stanger, T-
25 E-L-L-Y, S-T-A-N-G-E-R.

1 I'm the general manager for Clearwater
2 Power Company and also a board -- board of director
3 member for Northwest RiverPartners. And I
4 appreciate the work the Council does to balance the
5 needs of fish and wildlife with affordability and
6 reliability.

7 Clearwater Power does our best to maintain
8 affordability and a large part of this is because
9 our accessibility to clean or renewable hydropower.
10 The words affordability and reliability are getting
11 harder to use in the same sentence in our industry.
12 With increased danger from wildfires and major
13 storms hitting our systems, utilities are seeing the
14 challenges firsthand and balancing rate increases
15 with continuing to have a reliable delivery system.

16 When we talk to our members, they're
17 keenly aware of rates, they're keenly aware of fish
18 issues, they're keenly aware of the hydropower
19 system and where their power comes from and the
20 uniqueness of that in this region of the United
21 States. Speaking of reliability, this past
22 December, Clearwater Power experienced the worst
23 storm that many can remember in their lives, and the
24 worst natural disaster in the history of Clearwater
25 Power.

1 It caused systemwide damage and we had
2 hundreds without power for 10 days. While our
3 members understand the challenges of living in a
4 rural, rugged area, they also understand the
5 importance of affordability that the federal
6 hydropower system brings. They know their
7 livelihoods rely on this source of power. Speaking
8 of affordability, Clearwater Power just implemented
9 a 9 percent rate increase and will likely need a
10 rate increase of the same magnitude next year.

11 There are multitudes of reasons why we
12 raise rates: Power is one, nongrowing -- as a
13 nongrowing utility, we depend on the affordability
14 and stability of our BPA Tier 1 rates to help keep
15 costs low. The list of challenges BPA continues to
16 grow in keeping power affordable, and Clearwater
17 Power is involved with groups like Northwest
18 RiverPartners to make sure our voice is heard.

19 The degradation of the federal power
20 system through spill and other questionable measures
21 lessens our ability to keep power affordable by
22 taking more precious Tier 1 power from rural
23 utilities. As a rural electric cooperative, our
24 focus in serving our members is threefold:
25 Reliability, affordability, and safety. All three

1 of these are well served by the Lower Snake River
2 Dams operating at the highest capacity possible.

3 Any additional spill and degradation of
4 the federal system adds unnecessary costs to our
5 members. Thank you.

6 MR. SCHRIEVER: Sam Earnest, you're deck.

7 MS. KUMAR: Hello. My name is Riya Kumar.
8 That's R-I-Y-A, last name, K-U-M-A-R, and I am with
9 Extinction Rebellion Palouse. Is it all right if I
10 start now?

11 MS. SCHOBY: Yeah.

12 MS. KUMAR: Okay. I'm originally from
13 Pennsylvania and the East Coast. We don't have
14 anything like we do in Idaho. Idaho has the most
15 wilderness of any of the lower 48 states, and it has
16 intact, globally unique ecosystems. There is
17 nothing like the Columbia River Water Basin in the
18 entire world, and there is nothing like the salmon
19 here in the entire world.

20 I've lived in Idaho for the last five
21 years and I've fallen in love with North Idaho, but
22 that's a little bit about me and why I care. It's
23 because of these things that I fell in love with
24 Idaho, and I plan to stay here for many, many years.
25 I've also noticed that a lot of people that have

1 been speaking here are much older, and they are not
2 going to be around for much longer.

3 I am concerned about the earth and
4 generations like mine. We are going to inherit this
5 world, and we are going to inherit this earth, and I
6 am not -- I have no interest in inheriting extinct
7 species. And frankly, I think it's pathetic to be
8 talking about money when we're talking about species
9 that are going entirely extinct. There -- there is
10 nothing -- you cannot put a value on ecosystems, you
11 cannot put value and money, and salmon are the
12 backbone of these ecosystems. Orcas rely on them.

13 I also want to remind you of your legal
14 and moral duty to the highest law of the land that
15 -- which is treaties. Our native brothers and
16 sisters have never caused the extinction of seamen
17 -- salmon, sorry. I'm a little nervous. And I
18 think we should be looking to them when we're
19 talking about salmon recovery. It is very clear
20 that the four Lower Snake River Dams need to be
21 removed, and I don't think we should be beating
22 around the bush for that, and I don't think we have
23 any time left to wait around and be talking about
24 barging or spilling.

25 There is so much money spent on salmon

1 recovery. We have spent over \$9 billion on salmon
2 recovery because of these dams. We don't need to be
3 wasting money on creating false solutions like
4 barging and spilling and any other things we can
5 come up with when -- when the solution is right in
6 front of us, and that is removing these dams.
7 Before these dams, we never had issues with salmon
8 -- salmon populations and -- yeah.

9 I also want to remind us that we are
10 looking at a climate and ecological crisis right
11 now. The U.N. has named biodiversity as our largest
12 natural defense against the climate crisis, and that
13 means bio -- and biodiversity means salmon. We
14 don't really have time. When you are looking at
15 existential threats and existential crises, that
16 means providing adequate responses.

17 And that can look extreme to a lot of
18 people, but we are facing an extreme situation right
19 now. And so I would like you to face this head-on
20 and look at reality. Thank you.

21 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

22 John Sovile. You're a no?

23 Lynn Rasmussen, you are on deck.

24 Go ahead.

25 MR. EARNEST: Hello. My name is Sam

1 Earnest S-A-M, E-A-R-N-E-S-T.

2 I am a fourth generation Idahoan. I've
3 been here my whole life. I've lived all over the
4 state and I -- I will admit I'm quite young. I may
5 not know as much as a lot of you about this whole
6 thing. I haven't had to deal with it my whole life.
7 Well, I guess I have, but not as much time. And I
8 came here today to argue in favor of the salmon and
9 recovery, but a lot of the biology, which is what I
10 was going to talk about, has already been discussed.

11 So I kind of just want to look at this
12 from a fiscal prospective, because it to me is kind
13 of ridiculous how much money we've been spending
14 every year and how little growth we've seen. At
15 least in my lifetime, there's been almost none.
16 We've been in a constant. Maybe I think growth
17 should happen faster than that, I don't know. But
18 it kind looks like all of our conservation plans
19 have not been very effective at meeting our goal of
20 5 million salmon.

21 So to me it seems like we need to have
22 some sort of major change. And as the dams to me
23 are much older than my life, it feels like we should
24 either invest a lot more money in fixing these
25 things or the cheaper option, which as an Idahoan

1 I'm always for, is just removing them. I think that
2 that might fix your goal in a much cheaper fashion,
3 and you could invest that money in additional power
4 and other infrastructure requirements to help divert
5 shipping and other recreation that we could lose.

6 I understood this has been proposed in the
7 past by U.S. senators -- or not U.S., Idaho
8 senators. And I also understand that there's been
9 large dam removal projects in other parts of the
10 Pacific Northwest recently that have had 30 percent
11 increase in salmon post-removal. So to me it seems
12 like the cheapest, most efficient option, and it's
13 kind of strange to me looking at the future why we
14 would be stuck on infrastructure that costs so much
15 money.

16 That's really all I had to say. Thank
17 you.

18 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

19 I'm not sure if I called Leslie Druffel.
20 You did not check you want to speak. I'll move on
21 then.

22 John.

23 MR. JOHNSON: Yes. Next. Is that what
24 you're saying?

25 MR. SCHRIEVER: John, your email is S --

1 dancing bear, is that you?

2 MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

3 MR. SCHRIEVER: You're on deck, sir.

4 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

5 MS. RASMUSSEN: Good afternoon. My name's
6 Lynn Rasmussen, L-Y-N-N-, R-A-S-M-U-S-S-E-N.

7 I am here as the manager of the Nez Perce
8 Soil and Water Conservation District. I have been
9 doing habitat restoration since the 1990s, I don't
10 even want to say how old or how many years that is.
11 But anyway, I'm here today to thank you for the
12 opportunity to speak and to welcome you to Lewiston.
13 We're really appreciative that you're here in
14 person. And also, we are in support of the program
15 and the draft that is written, especially the
16 habitat components.

17 We have several success stories I'd like
18 to highlight today to let you know how the program's
19 worked for us in the past, and that we believe that
20 will continue in the future with the program as it's
21 written. Our restoration efforts mostly focus in
22 the Lapwai Creek Basin, but also several of the
23 smaller tributaries of the Lower Clearwater and that
24 those efforts demonstrate the effectiveness of the
25 Council's approach to funding, science and

1 implementation.

2 Through this program, we have successfully
3 implemented multiple habitat restoration projects
4 that have produced measurable benefits for fish,
5 wildlife, and local communities. Of particular note
6 are projects focused on the removal and replacement
7 of fish passage barriers. These actions have
8 restored access for both juvenile and adult
9 steelhead while also providing some important co
10 benefits including flood risk reduction and improved
11 public safety.

12 Replacing undersized and failing
13 structures has increased hydraulic capacity, reduced
14 infrastructure vulnerability, and reconnected
15 critical habitats. In addition to fish passage
16 improvements, we've made significant investments in
17 instream and floodplain habitat restoration. We've
18 removed outdated levies restoring natural floodplain
19 connectivity and increased availability of high
20 quality juvenile rearing habitat.

21 These projects have enhanced channel
22 complexity and improved overall ecosystem function
23 within the watersheds. One of the most successful
24 efforts to date has been the implementation of large
25 wood and even small wood structures inside the

1 stream channel to improve habitat complexity and
2 also the expansion of riparian areas.

3 These have produced clear and documented
4 results including decreased stream temperatures and
5 a substantial increase in aquatic insect production.
6 Importantly, juvenile salmon are now being observed
7 utilizing those restored areas confirming that the
8 habitat improvements are translating into biological
9 benefits.

10 Beyond the on the ground outcomes, the
11 program's been invaluable in providing a stable
12 funding base and access to sound peer reviewed
13 science. We really appreciate the science that
14 comes out of the Council's programs and use that as
15 some of our decision-making tools.

16 This combination allows practitioners such
17 as myself and others in the area to design and
18 implement projects for both locally appropriate and
19 grounded in the best available information leading
20 to durable and dependable restoration outcomes.
21 Based on our experience in the Lower Clearwater and
22 specifically Lapwai Creek Basin, we strongly support
23 the continued investment in the habitat restoration
24 and fish passage floodplain reconnection and
25 riparian recovery through the Council's program.

1 And we -- I appreciate your opportunity to
2 comment, and I have one specific item in your plan,
3 it's on page 70 under, "Habitat Measure 47." It's
4 the first bullet, and it lists a list of projects,
5 and when you look at the list of projects, we think
6 you should expand those. They look like they're
7 maybe narrow in focus and maybe represent the
8 interests of one or two entities, and we'd like to
9 see that expand, and specifically in the Lochsa,
10 Potlach, and Big Canyon drainages, and we can
11 provide you a list of what we think those are at a
12 later time. Thank you.

13 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

14 Richard Scully is on deck.

15 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. John is just the name
16 I go by. My legal name is Geoffrey, G-E-O-F-F-R-E-
17 Y, Johnson, J-O-H-N-S-O-N.

18 Hey, I'd just like to say that in the
19 future -- I'm not against anything. I'm not them or
20 anybody. I'm for life. And I'm especially for my
21 river. I'm for the river, okay? The dams aren't
22 the only problem with the river, the salmon aren't
23 the only problem. You've got pollution, you've got
24 a lot of different things affecting the flow of life
25 down that river.

1 And the thing is -- I'm going to ask you a
2 question. Is life sacred? Is your life sacred?
3 Could you exist without nature and the things it
4 provides? We've kind of thought that it's hard, but
5 it's ours in a bigger sense. We're a community with
6 nature, and your head can deny that, but your heart
7 can't. So when you folks, when we make these
8 decisions about what's good for us personally, it
9 has to be good for the river and its species as
10 well.

11 And the cultures and the history that lie
12 under the water covered by these dams, those are
13 sacred as well. They're a part of us, a part of our
14 history as human beings. So I'm just wanting to
15 help shift the prospective away from head thoughts
16 and, you know hubris, and it seems like every time
17 we mitigate or change, it just leads to something
18 worse or another problem and it doesn't change
19 anything.

20 Nature's 4 billion years old. They're --
21 they're going to take care of itself. I mean, are
22 we going to be helpful, or are we going to be in the
23 way? And if -- if we're going to be in the way,
24 we're going to get removed. It's -- it's that
25 simple. So we can talk and bargain and back and

1 forth for as long as you want, but if you don't keep
2 in your heart and stay in your head, nothing is
3 going to change for the better. Thank you.

4 MR. SCHRIEVER: Mark Edelblute, I'm sorry
5 if I got that wrong.

6 MR. EDELBLUTE: Edelblute.

7 MR. SCHRIEVER: You're on deck, sir.

8 MR. SCULLY: My name is Richard Sully, R-
9 I-C-H-A-R-D, S-C-U-L-L-Y.

10 Thank you very much. Councilors, I
11 appreciate seeing you here, especially the old fish
12 and game director, nice to see you. Anyway, I'm
13 going to say a few things that probably you've heard
14 a million times. A lot of the stuff in the room,
15 we've heard over and over again, but I guess that's
16 what -- what we have to -- you know, keep -- keep
17 expressing our opinions.

18 The wild Snake River salmon and steelhead
19 are to me like the goose that laid the golden egg,
20 if you remember that old parable. That if you take
21 care of it, take care of its habitat, you'll have it
22 forever, and it's provide, you know, value.
23 Economic, social, ecological, great value. In -- in
24 the -- probably in about the 70s or 80s, we all
25 determined that in order to recover Idaho salmon and

1 steelhead we can expect a smolt to adult of around 2
2 to 6 percent was the average S -- SAR of about 4
3 percent, and the -- and the Power Planning Council
4 has accepted that goal as well.

5 In the -- in the 1970s when we were having
6 a really problem with trying to get better survival,
7 one of the experiments was to barge fish. And
8 barging seemed to work better or as -- as well or
9 better than the alternative which was basically to
10 go through the turbines. Forced -- man forced spill
11 didn't happen at that time, so that wasn't an
12 option. But it was either you went through the
13 turbines, or you went into the barge.

14 And but -- but at end of that -- end of
15 the 1980s after we maximized barging for a decade,
16 all of the Idaho's -- or Snake River salmon and
17 steelhead had been listed on the Endangered Species
18 Act, because barging or one of the other options
19 weren't -- weren't going to cut it. So the fish got
20 to be continued to study, and one of the -- the --
21 they came up with different options. One was
22 mandatory spill to -- to higher and higher
23 percentage rates which you've heard people talk
24 about up to 125 percent of -- of total dissolved
25 gasses.

1 And -- and in 2022, they came out with an
2 option -- or a list of options for the environmental
3 impact statement on the Columbia River system's
4 operation, and the -- the option that would get the
5 best survival was breach before Lower Snake River
6 dams which would get you about 4 percent SAR which
7 is what the goal of it's been.

8 But I think some of the other options, one
9 was to maximize barging, and that's the lowest smolt
10 to adult survival, and next highest -- highest
11 survival rate short of breaching was to maximize
12 spill up to 125 percent total dissolved gas and to
13 operate cool -- the -- a dam that minimum operating
14 cools. And in the -- and -- and that is -- I mean,
15 breaching would be great, but that's not going to
16 happen right away.

17 So minimum operating cool and maximum
18 spill, let's go with that for now. Thank you.

19 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you, Richard.

20 Jeff Sayre, you're on deck, sir. Is Jeff
21 in the room?

22 MR. EDELBLUTE: M-A-R-K, E-D-E-L-B-L-U-T-
23 E.

24 I don't want to talk about the dams per --
25 per -- per say, but I'll just tell you that I fish,

1 and if you go out here in April and catch some
2 smallmouth bass and throw them in a live well, when
3 you get home, you'll see how many smolts are in
4 those -- in your live well. These -- the predation
5 of -- you know, unless this river can flow, and the
6 -- it's not going to -- you know, I'll -- we talk
7 about the spilling and all the -- and the dissolved
8 gasses and all those kind of things.

9 But these fish did not evolve with a
10 series of lakes that obviously impede the -- their
11 movement to ocean. And so obviously the predators,
12 the pelicans -- I grew up here. I've lived here all
13 my life, which is 70 -- going on 77 years. We never
14 had pelicans, we never had cormorants. We -- now we
15 have walleye, which I enjoy fishing for, and I enjoy
16 for -- fishing for smallmouth bass because they're
17 good to eat, but boy, they're fish eaters.

18 And as far as pikeminnows go, they don't
19 even start catching those things until the water
20 warms up. And by that time, the -- the April fish,
21 the steelhead and the spring chinook are already
22 coming down the river. But until we can do
23 something to speed up the movement of these fish to
24 the get -- get them to the ocean, we're not going to
25 get them back. And, you know, the fish ladders as I

1 see it other than those years when we -- and this is
2 going to be a hot water year, you know?

3 And why we -- all this hot water that they
4 were taking off the surface and putting over the --
5 over the ladders obviously didn't work, and so fish
6 died. Thousands and thousands of sockeye that were
7 coming up here, we worked for years trying to
8 restore sockeye to Idaho, and but we've wiped them
9 out of the Payette and, you know, all we got is up
10 to Stanley, so.

11 But anyway, like I say, to me, doing
12 something to get the fish downstream and I -- and I
13 -- you know, I -- I -- personally, I think
14 technology will surpass water hydropower.

15 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

16 MR. SAYRE: My name is Jeff Sayer, S as in
17 Samuel, A-Y-R-E.

18 MR. SCHRIEVER: Judy Oatman is on deck.

19 MR. SAYRE: Sorry. Appreciate Ed and Jeff
20 showing up here with the Northwest Power Council,
21 and I like the way your sign is over here. It says,
22 "Integrating energy and the environment in the
23 Columbia Basin." This is probably the most
24 complicated natural resource issue in the United
25 States bar none. I don't care what it is. There's

1 studies and studies and studies.

2 I moved to Lewiston in the 1970s, started
3 fishing for salmon. I documented for 14 years all
4 the improvements the Corps of Engineers did as an
5 subcontractor for the Corps in all four of the Snake
6 River Dams. So I've been in where they've put the
7 turbines in, I've seen the R -- I documented the RSW
8 coming up. There's one of those in each of the
9 Lower Snake River Dams.

10 A RSW is basically a slide that helps the
11 smolts that are migrating to the ocean not be
12 spilled and killed by gas saturation. It puts them
13 in the top 10 to 20 feet. I hope you guys can push
14 to get more of those, put at least two of them on
15 each of the dams. There's one at all four of them
16 now.

17 I fish for salmon, I fish for steelhead.
18 I didn't know who Chief Joseph was until I moved
19 here in 1984 and met a -- a gentleman that was
20 asking where I fished and hunted in Montana, it was
21 right where the Nez Perce surrendered to the -- to
22 the calvary. I bought some of the best smoked
23 salmon you'll ever eat from a lady in the back of
24 room, Judy Oatman. If you want to buy some smoked
25 salmon, she's the lady to do it.

1 So I respect her treaty rights. That
2 makes this even more complicated for everybody else
3 involved. All the decisions that have been made
4 since Bonneville Dam was built until today are very
5 difficult, and they all affect everyone.

6 Electricity is critical for all of us. This
7 wouldn't be a very good meeting if we were in a dark
8 room and didn't have electricity.

9 So I believe hydro is the backbone of the
10 Pacific Northwest's power supply. We have an old
11 grid, now we have something new that's even worse
12 than all the predators coming in the river, and it's
13 AI. Morrow County in Boardman -- where Boardman,
14 Oregon is a Google center that they have for all of
15 the things that you go on and search for, they're
16 building AI now. That already uses 14 percent of
17 the State of Oregon's electricity. So AI's going to
18 be a major demand on water, because those things run
19 24/7, 365 a day, they need to be cooled. The chips
20 get hot.

21 So I appreciate you guys coming to
22 Lewiston. Hopefully we can come back here again.
23 The habitat where I go hunt and fish in Idaho is the
24 best it's been in my 38 years of living here. All
25 the streams are clear, there's less timber being

1 cut, at least on national forest land. The private
2 stuff gone, but, anyway, I appreciate what you guys
3 do.

4 You have the most difficult job to try in
5 trying to figure this thing out and provide
6 continuous, good electricity for everybody, all the
7 Pacific Northwest that the Northwest Power and
8 Conservation Commission touches. Thank you for
9 coming to Lewiston. Hope to see you again.

10 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you, Jeff.

11 MR. SAYRE: You're welcome.

12 MR. SCHRIEVER: Before you start, there's
13 two names that did not check yes or no. Barbara,
14 are you here?

15 MS. HELLIER: No. No.

16 MR. SCHRIEVER: No?

17 Trish Goodheart?

18 MS. GOODHEART: That's myself.

19 MR. SCHRIEVER: Would you like to --

20 MS. GOODHEART: No, I already sent my
21 comment in.

22 MR. SCHRIEVER: You gave written --

23 MS. GOODHEART: I already -- yes.

24 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

25 Andre Picard, no? Thank you. Got it.

1 Rebecca Miles?

2 MS. MILES: Here.

3 MR. SCHRIEVER: On deck. You're next to
4 speak. Thank you.

5 MS. OATMAN: Thank you. My name is Judy,
6 J-U-D-Y, Oatman, O-A-T-M-A-N.

7 I'm a proud member of the Nez Perce
8 people, and I have six enrolled Nez Perce children
9 and numerous grandchildren and even enrolled great
10 grandchildren.

11 Now, when I was young, I remember coming
12 to Lewiston, I lived up in Grangeville, and we'd
13 drive down here, and we'd get almost to Lewiston,
14 and I would get terrified of that dam that was right
15 by Clearwater Paper. It's gone now, but that
16 terrified me, and I hated that dam, and I'm glad
17 it's gone. And I'd like to see the other four Snake
18 River Dams gone also.

19 But, you know, the fish wouldn't really
20 probably even be here today if it wasn't for the
21 Indian people going out and fighting for those --
22 having to fight for the bold decision, having old
23 ladies being beaten up by cops, people put in jail
24 and then prisons. Harsh prison conditions, federal
25 prison for fishing, for protecting these salmon. I

1 know these people, I hear their stories.

2 So I feel we have a -- a huge duty to --
3 to respect the Nez Perce Tribe's treaty and the
4 other treaty tribes, because the treaty is the only
5 reason these fish are still alive, and I know that.
6 Because if it wasn't for that bold decision back in
7 the -- in the days when it was years and years and
8 years ago, decades ago, those fish would be
9 depleted.

10 I've seen the reports, I've had them in
11 hand, and it -- and you can see -- and I hate to say
12 it, but the non tribal communities, when they were
13 fishing, they depleted the salmon over on the
14 Columbia River and even here because of their
15 abundance waste and -- and their just absolutely
16 horrendous ways of doing things. They depleted the
17 salmon, and now we have to deal with that.

18 So I feel it's -- it's crucial to consider
19 drawing -- doing those removals. But in the
20 meantime, I think there's also the -- the draw down
21 option. I remember when the draw down was done, I
22 believe in the 90s, and the years after that draw
23 down, the fish came back, because I've heard it said
24 in here, too, it's, like, Snake River is a lake.
25 It's not a free -- free-flowing river. When that

1 can flow free, we see the river -- we see the salmon
2 thriving and we see the other species out there.

3 So, again, the last thing is is I want
4 people to know that they're getting ready to put in
5 a -- they're proposing a hundred-mile underground
6 transmission line in the Columbia River, and it's
7 going to heat that river up, and it's going to do a
8 lot of damage. And if you don't know about it, it's
9 the Cascade -- the Cascade Transmission -- I've got
10 it here somewhere.

11 Anyway, you need to -- you need to get
12 educated about it, because it's not good. It's not
13 going to be good for our fish, for our environment,
14 and for a lot of reasons. So, again, thank you. I
15 appreciate you guys coming here, taking this
16 testimony from us. And I think the young people
17 need to listen to old people, because that's where
18 you can get your knowledge. Thank you.

19 MS. MILES: (Speaking in native language.)

20 I just learned about this just a few days
21 ago, and so I was helping with a family with a
22 funeral, so forgive me if my -- if I stumble a
23 little bit. I'm not the polished testimonial person
24 I was back in the day, but I'm still here.

25 MR. SCHRIEVER: Rebecca, would you please

1 state your name and spell it, please? Thank you.

2 MS. MILES: Yes. Rebecca Miles. R-E-B-E-
3 C-C-A, M I-L-E-S.

4 My name is Rebecca Miles. I'm a proud
5 citizen of the federally recognized tribe, the Nez
6 Perce, but known as the Niimiipuu for a much longer
7 period of time. I'm a citizen of Nez Perce County
8 and also a United States citizens in case ICE is
9 still lingering looking for people like me. I'm
10 here to share why salmon recovery and a strong fish
11 and wildlife program matter to me.

12 As I've learned from my grandparents,
13 mentors of mine that are elders that are now gone,
14 my former boss and former chairman who is now gone,
15 who we will memorialize tomorrow, Former Chairman
16 Silas Whitman. Forgive me for saying his name
17 early. But remembering his important steps that
18 walked while he was on this earth.

19 From his teachers before, they would say
20 the salmon were the first ones to speak up. They
21 would say (Speaking in native language). Salmon
22 would say, "I will give my life, my young ones, my
23 flesh, my spirit. I will give my life to the two
24 legged so they can survive, and I will teach them to
25 sing the songs so they can celebrate my return. And

1 as I come back, I will give all these things to
2 these new creatures, humans, us. I will give them
3 the significance of our life, our way of life."

4 The historical timing of Mother Earth, the
5 historical timing of when fish comes back and how
6 life starts every year around the fish. The big
7 wheel, the (speaking in native language), the
8 unwritten law in our language, (speaking in native
9 language). The code, the will of life moves. But
10 it is the salmon, the (speaking in native language),
11 that move forward.

12 Everything revolves around this, the
13 wolves, the bear, the -- all the four-legged. The
14 winged ones, the condor, the eagle. They clean the
15 earth, and the earth then provides for the two-
16 legged and it also provides for all others. These
17 are the words of Silas Whitman. These teachings
18 have been passed down for thousands of years, and
19 they are true. They are not myth, they are not
20 legend, they are fact.

21 Our teaching was to take care of them, and
22 in return they would take care of us. In such a
23 short time in this nation's history in a span of 200
24 years we have managed to desecrate and even
25 annihilate existence of some of our greatest animal

1 teachers. They are our big brothers and sisters who
2 have sacrificed our lives for us to continue our way
3 of life.

4 We continue to think money means progress
5 and that our future generations will have the same
6 economic progress capitalism has given all these
7 years. Our teachings say otherwise. They are
8 simple: Take care of them, and they will take care
9 of us. Don't take care of them, well, the future
10 generations will learn that hard lesson,
11 unfortunately.

12 How many plans have existed from the
13 Northwest Power and Conservation Council? At least
14 10. I think I was 8 when the first one came about.
15 This is a powerful group of people that can change
16 the trajectory that we have been on . That
17 trajectory has been to let politics decide -- excuse
18 me. That trajectory has been to let politics decide
19 and put money for projects where the fish are not
20 struggling or where they already are extinct.

21 Money is out in provinces least likely to
22 have the greatest return. This Council can make
23 changes. We all know that water temperature is
24 crucial, especially in the hot months. No other
25 rivers know that more than the Clearwater and Snake

1 Rivers in August. They need it the most in those
2 hot months. Regardless of any river this council
3 manages, we all know -- and I think of what became
4 of a good friend of mine, Judge Redman, that spill
5 is the most important measure you can take while we
6 exist with these dams.

7 Increased spill is necessary to protect
8 the genetic diversity of wild and natural stocks and
9 allow the generational populational growth that is
10 necessary to recover a healthy, abundant, natural,
11 native wild species. Spill allows fish to be fish
12 and grow up and learn to be natural. They have to
13 exist in an environment they have known for
14 thousands of years.

15 Further, I want to know what
16 accountability measures are in place for Bonneville
17 Power Administration to achieve their own program
18 goals. I personally helped and was the leader of
19 the billion-dollar program known as the Accords. My
20 tribe thankfully did not accept those accords.
21 Those accords put money where fish never had passage
22 that was lost long ago through dams in their basins.
23 Hundreds of millions of dollars that went into areas
24 to buy off tribes and to end litigation.

25 MR. SCHRIEVER: Rebecca --

1 MS. MILES: That kind of management has no
2 place in fish management. That is a significant
3 problem. And I just have my final comment.

4 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

5 MS. MILES: Finally, the most important
6 thing I come here to say is to stop the rinse and
7 repeat. The critical nature of this species is in
8 your hands. The four Lower Snake Rivers have been
9 deadbeat dams beyond measure. They're outdated.
10 They are -- we are telling ripairs they are for
11 power production, and that is not true. The power
12 production is lost in the noise. They were not
13 built for power production. The transportation that
14 was provided, we told the -- the area citizens would
15 bring economic prosperity to this region, and yet
16 it's still being subsidized by the taxpayer, it has
17 not yet brought that prosperity.

18 So I ask of you in 2026, please let the
19 rivers run like rivers. Let Mother Nature do her
20 job and heal. Let the rivers run like rivers. I
21 thank you for your time.

22 MR. SCHRIEVER: Thank you.

23 That concludes everybody on the list. I
24 want to say again how much we appreciate you all
25 taking the time out of your busy lives to come here

1 and provide comment to help us refine the plan as it
2 is a draft. If there's one tenant that is more
3 important than any, in my opinion, of the Northwest
4 Power Act, it is the requirement for the Council to
5 engage the public in this, as Jeff said, wicked
6 problem.

7 So I very much appreciate not only you all
8 coming tonight and sharing your thoughts, but the
9 civility that you showed each other. Thank you very
10 much. We are adjourned.

11 (WHEREUPON, the PUBLIC HEARING concluded
12 at 5:48 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I, Mary Murphy, 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 18th day of February, 2026.



Mary Murphy

Certificate No. 24023022

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