

RD-0115

Sent: Monday, September 23, 2002 10:39 AM
To: comment@bpa.gov
Subject: BPA should promote renewables and wild salmon restoration

Administrator Steve Wright
PO Box 12999
Portland, OR 97208

Dear Administrator Steve Wright,

It really irks me when I hear BPA refer to lost energy production when flows are spilled for salmon and steelhead. You simply can not lose what you never had to begin with.

In the mid 80's I produced a report under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act that estimated an average survival per dam and overall survival to below Bonneville Dam for various flows in the Snake and Columbia Rivers. I used regression to describe the relationship between discharge and survival. In an average water year I predicted that about 13 percent of outmigrating salmon would survive to below Bonneville Dam. Not far off from what we know today is it?

The Dams are the main problem for dwindling Snake River salmon stocks. BPA and the Northwest Power Planning Council have made the decision to spend rate payer money elsewhere.

Power production at those dams is simply not needed. Moreover there are better ways to produce more power. We know that.

I strongly support a clean energy future for our region that includes plentiful wild salmon, clean, renewable energy, and a healthy economy. The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is currently weighing proposals to change the way it distributes power from federal dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers. Current and future allocations of federal power from these dams have profound impacts on salmon and salmon dependent communities. Under the status quo, BPA and other federal agencies have largely failed to meet their legal salmon recovery responsibilities. I urge the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to ensure that any plans to change its power supply role include measures to improve the conditions facing wild salmon and increase investments in clean, renewable energy.

BPA's process to consider its role in the region is an opportunity to guarantee stability for wild salmon restoration. However, a proposal forwarded by regional

utilities falls short of providing this certainty. Instead, the utility proposal underestimates the relationship between hydropower generation and salmon protection; increases pressure on the Columbia and Snake rivers to produce power; and at best, maintains our current level of salmon restoration effort that has yet to produce self-sustaining, harvestable populations of wild salmon.

Rather than increasing the burden on our already struggling salmon and salmon dependent communities, any changes to BPA's power supply structure must be an improvement over the status quo. I support principles put forward by a coalition of commercial and sport fishing businesses, conservation organizations, and clean energy advocates to improve the Northwest's energy structure to benefit salmon, salmon communities and Northwest ratepayers. The proposal states that any power supply plan must include explicit and stringent salmon requirements with clear accountability mechanisms. The proposal also hopes to reduce potential opposition to salmon requirements that result in a reduction of power from federal dams, such as removal of the lower Snake River dams. As demonstrated in a recent report released by RAND, we can remove those four dams and replace the power with energy efficiency and renewables without impacting the regional economy.

Additionally, any allocation plan must maintain and increase BPA's commitment to the development of clean, renewable energy and cost-effective energy efficiency. Federal law specifically states that BPA should consider conservation and renewables its top priority when trying to meet new power demands. Therefore, we must maintain and increase these investments.

We need your leadership to restore endangered salmon and promote clean energy. As BPA considers its role in our region, I urge you to ensure that it promotes a Northwest future that includes abundant wild salmon, clean energy and a strong economy.

Thank you,

Roy F. Heberger, Jr.
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