



For Immediate Release

July 31, 2017

Port of Pasco and Pasco Chamber of Commerce Support Legislative Solution for Dams (H.R. 3144)

At last Friday's Port of Pasco meeting, Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution supporting key members of our Congressional delegation that are taking action to declare the value of the Columbia/Snake River dams to provide safe navigation, irrigation, recreation, and affordable, renewable hydropower. The Pasco Chamber of Commerce Board passed a similar resolution on July 25th. These Legislators are asserting their rightful authority over the eight federal dams that serve families and businesses in Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon.

In June, Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA), Dan Newhouse (R-WA), Kurt Schrader (D-OR), and Greg Walden (R-OR) introduced a bipartisan proposal, H.R. 3144, that would maintain current salmon protection measures and federal hydro system operations in the 2014 Biological Opinion (BiOp) until a Court-ordered review of alternatives is complete.

Their bill would protect the river system from an expected ruling by the U.S. District Court in Oregon later this year that would amount to a grand experiment with our hydrosystem. The Court has already opened the door to potentially spilling tremendous amounts of additional water over the dams, around the clock, instead of relying on the balanced flow regime recommended by federal agencies. Left unremedied, these decisions could render navigation unsafe, raise power costs, and harm protected salmon species.

Our representatives have a common-sense solution to the Court's overreach. Their bill re-sequences events that the Court itself has ordered: First, a full NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) review of the hydrosystem by September 2022. Then, adoption of a new salmon plan or BiOp based on the public NEPA process and the science it yields, instead of a costly spill experiment that may not help and could possibly harm fish.

Our elected officials are showing vital leadership with a proposal supported on both sides of the aisle. Their bill protects salmon with measures vetted by the Obama Administration's top scientists, and at the same time, protects the hydrosystem that powers our economy and supplies the biggest part of our energy mix.

Please join the Port of Pasco and Pasco Chamber of Commerce in thanking them.

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