



Keith Johnson
County Administrator

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March 2, 2021

Honorable Dan Newhouse
3100 George Washington Way
Richland WA 99354

Dear Congressman Newhouse:

Idaho's 2nd District Congressman, Mike Simpson recently introduced a plan to consider removing the 4 Lower Snake River Dams in an effort to improve salmon recovery in the Pacific Northwest. These dams are incidentally, located in the 4th and 5th Congressional Districts of Washington State.

The stated purpose for this plan is to address the question of what to do to preserve the Idaho's 2nd District's access to salmon. As the 2nd District has no other apparent stake in the discussion, this is of course appropriate.

In his proposal, the Congressman makes note of the various essential roles that these dams play in the region. He acknowledges their importance in relation to transportation, agriculture, recreation, flood control, and renewable energy in the immediate and surrounding areas. Unfortunately, all of these factors appear to not be as important in the overall scheme of things as salmon recovery. He does admit though, that his plan is still no guarantee of survival for the salmon. His answer for replacing these functions after removing the dams is simply to provide some additional funding to study and fix whatever shortcomings may arise.

While we can appreciate the Congressman's concern for his constituent's needs, it does the 2nd District and its citizens no good to weaken the region or nation that they are a part of for such a speculative and narrow benefit.

The facts and figures that explain the essential and beneficial nature of the dams are of no use when put against the emotional reasoning of those in opposition to them. The documented impact the dams have on salmon migration as well as anecdotal evidence suggest that more benefit might be achieved by addressing what happens to the salmon in the ocean, than in destroying a priceless legacy left to us by previous generations.

The Congressman states that he has held over 300 meetings with multiple stakeholders to help develop this plan. As the elected body representing the people of Franklin County in the 4th Congressional

District of Washington, we can state unequivocally that we have never been contacted by the Congressman or his office in regards to this matter, nor have we heard from any other elected body in our region about efforts made to contact them. All of us are familiar however, with the frequent attempts made by various progressive entities in the past, to bring about the same end as the Congressman's plan.

It is a bold thing indeed to attempt to reach across the aisle in today's political climate, but we could perhaps hope it would be on some other issue instead. Removal of the Lower Snake River Dams is not something that will benefit the people of our region, or our nation as a whole. We also do not see it as keeping with the ideals and principles that Mr. Simpson endorsed when running for office.

This plan will only impoverish and harm our region, while doing nothing certain to address the issue of salmon recovery. With so many resources being wasted recently at the federal level, further pursuit of this goal will only add to the economic difficulties our great nation will be subject to in the near future. We call on Congressman Simpson to abandon this proposal and work instead to help strengthen and rebuild those things that made this region of such importance to the nation.

Sincerely

The Board of County Commissioners of Franklin County

Clint Didier, Chairman

Brad Peck, Chair Pro Tem

Rocky Mullen, Member