



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Utilities Support 100% Clean Energy and the Snake River Dams

Tri-Cities, WA – Local leaders banded together to support the four hydroelectric dams on Eastern Washington’s Lower Snake River and the role they play in maintaining reliable and affordable power to Washington State and the region.

Benton PUD and Franklin PUD Board of Commissioners, Benton REA Board of Trustees, and the Richland City Council unanimously approved resolutions firmly stating that the removal of the Lower Snake River Dams would negatively impact our region’s ability to provide reliable, clean, and affordable power to its customers.

“Removing the Lower Snake River Dams is bad for the state of Washington, our local economy and the region’s overall quality of life. These dams mean carbon-free energy at an affordable cost and greater reliability for all utility customers,” stated Roger Wright, Franklin PUD Commission President. “To Eastern Washington and the Columbia River Gorge, the impacts are even greater. They impact the lives of thousands of families through irrigation, navigable waterways and outdoor recreation.”

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) identified the Lower Snake River Dams as a low-cost resource, critical to supporting reliable power by maintaining a constant balance of generation and load. According to BPA, Ice Harbor Dam is critical to the local area because it provides support during high-demand periods. If Ice Harbor Dam was breached, either costly new generation or significant transmission reinforcements would be needed to meet Tri Cities power loads, especially during the high-demand periods of the summer.

Some anti-dams groups use emotional scare tactics to try to connect cyclic decreases in salmon populations to the operation of the dams. Studies carried out by several groups including National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries and the Environmental Protection Agency show that predation, ocean conditions, pollution and other factors have greater, far-reaching effects on salmon over their lifespan than the relatively brief period they spend around hydroelectric dams.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates the dams according to federal requirements developed over decades of extensive scientific research, and fish runs have significantly improved. More than 96% of young salmon make it past each of the Snake River dams on their down-river passage.

“Since 1978, electric ratepayers have spent \$17 billion dollars on infrastructure and other fish restoration projects,” said Jeff Hall, Benton PUD Commission President. “Those projects have made a real difference, and are evidence that dams and salmon can coexist.”

“The City of Richland supports the Federal Columbia River Power System, recognizing its role in environmental stewardship and economic vitality. We oppose removal of the Lower Snake River Dams”, reiterates Bob Thompson, Mayor of the City of Richland.

Some resolutions highlighted the irony that comes from the Washington State Legislature passing a bill calling for a 100% emissions free power system, while at the same time the Governor appropriated \$750,000 to study

breaching parts of the hydrosystem that make wind and solar possible. The region has made huge strides toward a 100% clean energy, with hydropower the backbone of the system that helps our economy and firms renewable energy. "Benton REA members can write their congressmen and women, tell their neighbors and attend RiverFest to help educate themselves," stated Mike Freepons, Benton REA Board of Trustees President.

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For more information or to view the individual resolutions:

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