

## **Support the Lower Snake River Dams:**

### **1. IF you believe in corporate welfare.**

Grain is the only product still transported on the Lower Snake River (LSR) waterway in any quantity, shipped by private companies often from their own property and over their own docks. These corporations pay none of the enormous costs of operating, maintaining and rehabilitating the locks and dams on the LSR. For example, over the past decade the Corps of Engineers spent over \$34 million taxpayer dollars managing sediment at the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater Rivers and upstream 2 miles to the Port of Lewiston. Most of the financial benefit went to a single private company, part of a Fortune 100 global corporation with sales during the first quarter of FY 2016 of \$14.4 billion.

### **2. IF you like paying federal taxes and are unconcerned about our national debt.**

The major responsibility of the Walla Walla District of the Corps of Engineers is the operation of the 4 LSR dams plus McNary Dam on the Columbia. The District's current annual budget is over \$225 million. Federal taxpayers also annually purchase from the Bonneville Power Administration, by way of a treasury credit, water in the form of "spill" so fewer juvenile fish will die passing through the hydropower system. The annual cost of this water exceeds \$100 million. Finally, the U.S. Army Corps faces enormous costs of maintaining a nationwide system of aging dikes and dams, levees and locks. The National Academy of Sciences reported the Corps was in an "unsustainable situation" and was "facing increased frequency of infrastructure failure and negative social, economic and public safety consequences." One major alternative the NAS outlined was the divestiture or decommissioning of parts of the Corps' infrastructure. With respect to freight transportation, the Corps categorizes the lower Snake River as a waterway of "negligible use."

### **3. IF you are willing to pay ever-higher electricity rates for the rest of your life to address fish mitigation.**

The cost of mitigation for damage Pacific Northwest federal dams inflict on salmon and steelhead populations exceeds \$14 billion (*yes, billion*), with annual costs over \$700 million. Federal agencies now project recovery of threatened and endangered fish will require 50-100 years. The result, along with the likely extinction of some species, is higher electricity bills for homeowners and businesses in perpetuity.

### **4. IF you believe barging is essential to the Inland Northwest economy.**

Freight transportation on the lower Snake River has declined steadily for at least the last 20 years. Barges no longer transport logs, lumber, paper or pulse, and few wood chips—hardly anything other than grain. According to the Idaho Department of Labor, from 1994-2014 north central Idaho's growth in jobs, private sector employers, labor force and other indicators of economic prosperity have lagged behind all other regions in the state by over 70%. Lewiston's largest employer, which produces more tons of paper and paperboard than all the grain that leaves the Port of Lewiston, relies totally on truck and rail transportation to ship its product to market.

**5. IF you don't mind spending millions more dollars on a failed government project.**

In 2002 the Army Corps of Engineers claimed the agency could make the four LSR dams safe for the passage of juvenile fish headed to the sea. The Corps has now spent over \$600 million attempting to 'fix' these dams. According to NOAA Fisheries, juvenile fish survival through the eight-dam hydropower system remains at 1999 levels of around 50%. Further losses occur due to avian predation (cormorants and Caspian terns, which nest on Corps-created islands of dredged sediment) or due to delayed mortality caused by dam passage. The Corps has budgeted another \$250 million for this failed effort on just the LSR.

**6. IF you believe 98% of the world's scientists who study climate change are wrong.**

With earlier snow melt, lower summer stream flows, higher water temperatures, increased sediment and poorer ocean conditions, the effects of climate change on salmon and steelhead will be increasingly debilitating. In 2015 over 250,000 adult sockeye died in the Columbia and Snake Rivers because of low flows and high water temperatures. While today, according to federal judges, wild salmon and steelhead are in peril of extinction, the future for these fish looks even bleaker.

**7. IF you accept the federal government's practice of continually breaking federal laws.**

Three federal judges in five separate lawsuits over a period of 20 years have concluded the federal government's operation of the federal dams on the lower Snake and Columbia Rivers has been and continues to be illegal. If the federal partners that manage the four LSR dams can repeatedly violate federal laws, what other laws is it okay for federal agencies to break —anti-discrimination laws, voting rights laws, or gun ownership laws?

**8. IF you believe the Walla Walla District of the Corps of Engineers will tell you the truth about the LSR dams.**

Despite unanimous warnings from state and federal fish scientists, the Corps of Engineers in 1947 concluded that the construction of the 4 lower Snake River dams would not have any negative impact on Snake River salmon and steelhead. When, in the 1990s, these species were officially listed as threatened or endangered, the Corps assured the public the agency could "fix" the dams to solve the problem of low survival rates for juvenile fish migrating to the ocean. Today the Walla Walla District is actively promoting the continuation of the *status quo* by providing the public with new rounds of misinformation even as they begin the scoping process for a new 5-year study on the dams' effects on the environment. Much of the Walla Walla District's continued existence depends on maintaining the *status quo* on the lower SR dams, and their reputation for public spin and cooking the books is well deserved.