

Sponsors: Oregon Municipal Electric Utilities Association; Northwest Public Power Association; Northwest Requirements Utilities; Washington Public Utility Districts Association; Oregon People’s Utility District Association; Idaho Consumer-Owned Utilities Association; Benton Public Utility District; Cowlitz Public Utility District; Franklin Public Utility District; City of Richland

In Support of Hydropower, the Federal Columbia River Power System, and Opposing Breach of the Lower Snake River Dams

1 Hydropower is a premier renewable resource that provides cost-effective, clean electricity. It plays a
2 critical role as our nation works to lower greenhouse gas emissions and maintain an affordable, reliable,
3 and resilient grid. As policies are adopted to increase the electrification of other sectors of the economy,
4 such as transportation, it has become increasingly important. Hydro generation is unique in its ability to
5 instantly increase or decrease generation and in maintaining the constant balance of generation and
6 electric demand. It provides a foundation for reliability that is necessary with increasing levels of variable
7 renewable resources, such as wind and solar.

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9 The recently concluded Columbia River System Operation (CRSO) Environmental Impact Statement
10 (EIS) studied the environmental, biological, power supply, and socioeconomic impacts of the entire
11 Federal Columbia River Power System, which is marketed by the Bonneville Power Administration
12 (BPA). This multi-year, \$50.4 million analysis of the system was conducted by federal government
13 experts with consultations by federal natural resources agencies, state and tribal entities, and with input
14 from the public. The EIS included analysis of the impacts of removing or breaching the Lower Snake
15 River Dams (Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental, and Ice Harbor). The unambiguous
16 conclusion of this comprehensive federal study is that the Lower Snake River Dams play a critical role in
17 the Northwest power system and economy, and that their continued operation does not jeopardize the
18 existence of endangered or threatened salmon species.

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20 The Lower Snake River Dams are among the lowest cost generating resources in the region and are a
21 critical part of providing affordable, clean electricity to several of the region’s most vulnerable
22 communities. On an annual basis, the plants on the Lower Snake River provide about 1,000 average
23 megawatts of electricity, enough to serve over half a million Northwest businesses, industries, and
24 households.

25
26 The continued operation of the Lower Snake River Dams is central to reliably meeting the region’s clean
27 energy goals, providing dispatchable capacity to prevent blackouts and ramping capability to integrate
28 other renewable resources. The Lower Snake River Dams can provide over 2,000 megawatts of sustained
29 peaking capacity and represent a quarter of the Federal Columbia River Power System’s reserves holding

30 capability. As extreme weather events, like ice storms and heatwaves, have become more commonplace,
31 the Lower Snake River Dams have also proved critical to ensuring public safety.

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33 The Lower Snake River Dams are important to maintaining an affordable power supply for Northwest
34 communities. Breaching the Lower Snake River dams and replacing them with other non-emitting
35 resources—the most likely scenario given coal plant retirements and state clean energy policies—could
36 raise BPA’s power supply rates up to 50 percent. For most utilities relying on BPA, that translates to a 25
37 percent rate increase for their customers.

38
39 Public power utilities are committed to scientific, cost-effective mitigation for the impacts of the federal
40 hydro system. Costs related to fish and wildlife mitigation, including the cost of lost power generation,
41 comprise a quarter or more of BPA’s power rates. The Lower Snake River Dams feature state-of-the art
42 fish passage technology greatly improving in-river fish survival, achieving spring juvenile survival at 96
43 percent and summer migrating fish survival at 93 percent. Academic studies have shown that fish survival
44 through the Federal hydro system is comparable to undammed rivers, such as the Fraser River in British
45 Columbia. Removal of the Lower Snake River Dams is not a clear path to recovery of endangered species
46 or overall abundance of salmon. More attention is needed to the threats of ocean conditions, avian
47 predation, and over-fishing.

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49 In addition to delivering affordable and reliable clean power, the Lower Snake River Dams contribute to
50 the region’s economy by providing irrigation, navigation, recreation, and employment.

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52 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:** Consistent with environmental protection, the American
53 Public Power Association (APPA) opposes efforts to remove productive dams that provide, or have the
54 potential to provide, clean and economic hydropower generation; and

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56 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That APPA opposes proposals to breach the Lower Snake River
57 Dams, or the development of additional federal studies that presuppose removal of the Lower Snake River
58 Dams, and encourages collaboration to help salmon in every part of their life cycle.

Adopted at the Legislative & Resolutions Committee Meeting

March 1, 2022

Sunsets in March 2030