

The Northwest in Transition

Myths and Facts

Myth - *There will be increased flooding risks if the dams are removed.*

Fact – The four Lower Snake River (LSR) dams are not flood control dams. If they were to be removed it would not affect flood control.

Myth - *If these dams are breached, all dams will be in danger of being breached.*

Fact – This concept would protect hydropower in the Northwest by locking in all other major dams in the Columbia River basin for the next 35-50 years and end Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act lawsuits.

Myth - *Congressman Simpson is writing legislation to remove dams.*

Fact – Congressman Simpson has released a concept; he has not written legislation—he is continuing to hold meetings and take feedback because he wants this to be a process where all stakeholders are creating certainty and security on their own terms for their own futures.

Myth – *Congressman Simpson doesn't support hydropower.*

Fact – Congressman Simpson has supported hydropower for his entire career. The four LSR dams produce incredibly valuable low cost, clean reliable energy. Congressman Simpson's plan would require that the power lost by dam removal be replaced with clean, affordable energy that would be online **before** any of the dams were removed. It would also lock in protections for all major dams in the Columbia Basin for 35-50 years.

Myth - *The four LSR dams don't affect salmon runs.*

Fact – Idaho wild salmon that must transit the four LSR dams have unsustainable survival rates when compared to the salmon that only are required to go through the Columbia River Dams. Salmon on the John Day River in Oregon - which negotiate three dams-have a smolt to adult return (SAR) ratio of around 4%, which is what Snake River salmon need to achieve recovery goals. The mainstem Columbia River salmon go through four dams and their SAR is also roughly 3- 4%. Wild Idaho salmon that transit eight dams (four Columbia and four Snake River) have a SAR of roughly 1%, which biologists say is below replacement and on a trajectory towards extinction.

Congressman Simpson believes that if the dams are removed, we must have a plan to protect Idaho agriculture, Palouse farmers, and our communities. His number one goal is to protect Idaho.

Myth - *More reasonable steps at saving salmon need to be addressed first.*

Fact – For over 30 years, working groups and collaboratives have been examining this issue and have attempted many solutions, and none have proven to save the dying salmon runs. This plan protects Idaho's right to control its water and economic future. It trades chaos for certainty.

Myth - *This concept just throws money at a problem.*

Fact – Over 17 billion dollars has been spent on fish recovery already, and there are more endangered salmon species in Idaho than when we began. The status quo is not fiscally responsible. Congressman Simpson's shifts the investment from wasteful spending on failed fish experiments to Idaho's economy and puts the financial backing for important projects that protect Idaho.

Myth - The power from the four LSR dams cannot be replaced.

Fact – Recent advancements in energy storage will be key to replacement power. This plan invests 10 billion dollars in firm clean power replacement such as; pump, battery storage, small modular reactor, or other technologies.

Myth - Once the dams are breached, replacement power might not be online.

Fact – All replacement power must be online prior to any breaching. Also, the dam infrastructure will remain in place, only the earthen berms around the dams will be removed, so if salmon do go extinct, the dams could be restarted.

Myth - Congressman Simpson is prioritizing salmon over people.

Fact – While these fish matter, the people are the priority here. Congressman Simpson is the only one to insist that people must be made whole if these dams are to be removed. These dams have incredible benefits that must be replaced. Congressman Simpson is trying to protect Idaho from liberal federal judges. If that happens, our communities and industry will have no voice or say in the matter, and there is no chance all parties would be made whole. In this plan, everyone is invited to collaborate and have a say in their own future.

Myth – Congressman Simpson is moving forward on this concept without agriculture.

Fact – Congressman Simpson and his staff are in constant communication with a number of Idaho agriculture groups and water user groups. We have learned a great deal about how dam removal would impact their livelihoods. This plan was developed with their critical input and is an effort to find real solutions.

Myth - This concept is only supported by environmentalists.

Fact – There is a broad coalition of groups and stakeholders who recognize that the endless cycle of lawsuits and uncertainty around the four LSR dams is not working. Congressman Simpson isn't asking people to support his plan, he's asking if the Northwest wants to fix a problem that is only getting more difficult and expensive with no resolution in sight.

Myth – Lower Snake River Farmers who use this water will not be able to irrigate.

Fact – The concept provides resources for the water groups to reconfigure pipes and deepen wells to ensure irrigation continues without issue.

Myth - Barging is the only way to transport goods from Lewiston.

Fact – Road and rail are a reasonable alternative to barging. Also, the concepts would expand and reconfigure the Tri-Cities area ports so that they can become an even larger regional hub/destination for increased barging (agriculture, commodities and containers) with the goal of putting more annual barging tonnage on the Columbia River than exists today.