

The Northwest in Transition

Dams, Energy and Salmon

The Northwest has been caught in an unsustainable cycle of conflicts over salmon and energy. For over thirty years, lawsuits, appeals, salmon management directives and endless spending have prevailed, while salmon, energy, agriculture and transportation interests continue to suffer. This concept is a proposal to break that cycle and deliver certainty and security to the Northwest without picking winners and losers.

Dams

The 4 Lower Snake River dams (LSRD) provide significant benefits for clean energy, transportation, agriculture and to communities. If the dams were to be removed, the benefits must be replaced. Suggestions in the concept include:

- 35-50-year license extension for all public and private FERC licensed dams in the Columbia River Basin greater than 5 megawatts.
- 35 year dam litigation moratorium related to anadromous fish under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Clean Water Act (CWA) for the fourteen federal Columbia River System dams, the 12 federal projects on the Upper Snake River, and all FERC-licensed dams within the Columbia Basin greater than 5 megawatts.
- Liability protection for irrigation districts, energy interests or any other entities that own a dam or other engineering structure that impedes the movement of fish.
- Allows for the voluntary removal of nonoperational, marginal or high expense dams or diversions with irrigation protection.
- Incentivizes innovation and collaboration with waste management/digesters for dairy and confined animal operations.
- Provides funding and legal indemnification to ditch districts or small energy entities to remove abandoned or non-functioning irrigation structures or dams.
- Ensures irrigation mitigation in the Lower Snake River Corridor.
- Guarantees resources for Palouse/Idaho grain farmers that utilize the Snake River ports to reconfigure/adjust their transportation options or create new opportunities.
- Expands Tri-cities port as a regional hub with an emphasis on creating greater barging volume of agriculture commodities on the Columbia River than exists today.
- Ensures economic adjustment protections for Snake River bargers.

Agriculture and Transportation

Barging provides our agricultural farmers (especially grain) with a low-cost option that prevents them from becoming captive shippers to rail and trucking. They are a critical component in getting our agricultural products overseas. It is essential that the needs of the agriculture community are heard and met if these dams are to be removed. Framework includes:

- A 25-year lawsuit exemption from Clean Water Act or Endangered Species Act lawsuits related to water quality issues for those participating in voluntary watershed partnerships.
- Projects must provide firm clean power replacement for lost generation.
- Examples include: renewable to battery storage, pump storage, hydrogen storage, small modular reactors, etc.
- Replacement must be built and online prior to any breaching.
- Provide BPA with needed authorities and certainty to enhance their balance sheet.
- Northwest Power Council will have an expanded energy role and be removed from fish recovery.
- Establishes a new Center for Advanced Energy Storage co-located at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) and a Lewiston-Clarkston Technology campus.

Fish

All Idaho's salmon and steelhead are listed as threatened or endangered. Poor ocean conditions, warming rivers and reservoirs and the 4 LSRD are contributing to their demise. Removing the 4 LSRD isn't a guarantee that Idaho's salmon will return, but if those dams remain, our salmon and steelhead are on a certain path to extinction. Recovery efforts include:

- Designates Columbia Basin States and Tribes as Co-Equal partners in fish management.
- Revitalizes salmon habitat through watershed partnerships.
- Restores Non-ESA protected salmon runs in the Upper Snake and Columbia River Basin.
- Address salmon fisheries infrastructure backlog.

Communities and Recreation

- Provides waterfront restoration for Lewiston-Clarkson.
- Established economic development funds for Tri-Cities and Lewiston-Clarkston areas.
- Designated Lower Snake River National Recreation Area.
- Ensures tourism promotion for Lewiston-Clarkston and Tri-Cities/ Spokane Areas.
- Grants mitigation funds for marina relocation, recreational boating, and impacted sportfishing.