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From: Michael Barger [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, January 12, 2003 6:36 PM

To: Mark Walker

Subject: Public Comment "Mainstem Amendments"

January 12, 2003

Subject: My comment to the Mainstream Amendments

A strong flow of water can help young salmon in several ways. Increasing flow improves river speed, helping to "flush" young fish downstream and helps the fish avoid predators. Water flow can also help prevent high water temperatures that can be fatal to both adult and juvenile fish. A strong water flow has also been shown to help increase the health of the Columbia River estuary - where young salmon rest before entering the ocean and where adult salmon rest before heading upstream to spawn.

Federal, state, and tribal biologists, and even the Council's own scientific advisory board, have all confirmed the biological importance of spill and flow. The State of Oregon submitted a plan to the Council that actually took a step in the right direction and called for the BPA to increase water flows and spill for salmon recovery. Oregon needs to be treated fairly and Oregon's common sense plan should be the Council's recommended position.

The Council's proposal would require barging more fish around the dams, a failed recovery strategy. Putting more fish in barges is also inconsistent with the Council's position that barging should be an "interim" strategy while river conditions are improved. The Council's proposal violates its legal obligations under the Northwest Power Planning Act by ignoring the best scientific recommendations of the region's federal, state and tribal fisheries scientists. The Council's proposal directly contradicts the federal Salmon Plan, which calls for increases in both water flow increases and "spill" for salmon.

The Council's proposed changes would weaken an already anemic federal effort to recover imperiled salmon and steelhead. The Power Council is ignoring the many men and women of the Pacific Northwest whose livelihood depends on salmon. Salmon means jobs and without water in the rivers, the Council will be hurting working families. The Council's proposal would eliminate measures to protect and restore wild salmon in favor of ramping up hydroelectric energy generation. But the Council is required by law to assure an adequate "power supply," not an adequate "hydropower supply." There is no justification for ramping up hydroelectric production by a paltry 0.5 percent at the expense of salmon.

The surest, most cost-effective way for the Council to perform its duty of enhancing fish and wildlife in the Columbia and Snake River basin is to recommend removing the 4 lower Snake River dams. If the Power Council continues down the destructive path of sacrificing salmon for industry wishes, Northwest citizens must speak up and demand accountability. If the Council adopts this proposal on top of its past failures, it will be

delivering a message to the people of the Northwest, congress and the courts that it has abandoned its mandate to protect and restore salmon!

Sincerely,

Michael B. Barger

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