



.... Working to enhance economic vitality in the Pacific Northwest since 1934

February 7, 2003

Northwest Power Planning Council  
c/o Mark Walker  
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Portland, Oregon 97204

**PNWA comments on the “Draft Mainstem Amendments to the Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program”, Council document 2002-16**

Dear Council Members:

The Pacific Northwest Waterways Association was formed in 1934 (as the Inland Empire Waterways Association) as a coalition of public and private sector organizations. Since 1934, we have worked in support of regional economic development programs that enhance regional economic vitality. Since the 1980s, we have worked to accomplish this goal within the context of improving the environmental health of the region.

The Council’s mainstem amendments have the potential of affecting both the economic vitality and the environmental health of the Pacific Northwest. The economies of the region and the nation have been extremely fragile for several years. Improvement is likely to be slow. The availability of efficient, economical and reliable power at the lowest possible cost is a critical element in the region’s economic recovery and its long-term economic health.

For these reasons, we urge the Council to adopt the most cost-effective measures possible and eliminate those measures that have been shown to have little or no benefit for endangered fish. We have watched ratepayer fish and wildlife costs grow to \$6 billion over the last 20 years. Some of those expenditures have been effective. Many have not. So far, if a measure has proven to be ineffective, the approach has been to do more, not something different. Flow augmentation and spill programs are examples in point. Repeatedly, when they have not worked, they have been increased rather than scrapped for more effective measures.

Cost matters. It matters now more than ever. The Council has taken some measures in this draft that move toward more cost effectiveness within the overall program. But, you do not go far enough. We urge the Council to go farther in the reduction of spill and flow. We also urge the Council to scrutinize all programs for excessive costs, be they overhead, duplication or conflicts between program objectives. If the Council and the region do not reduce fish costs and increase program effectiveness, we put the financial solvency of the Bonneville Power Administration and the economic health of the region at extreme risk.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Glenn Vanselow  
Executive Director