



Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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January 31, 2003

Mark Walker
Public Affairs
Northwest Power Planning Council
851 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Council:

The following comments concern your draft mainstream amendments, document 2002-16.

I am the General Manager of Lincoln Electric Cooperative headquartered in Eureka, MT. The cooperative has 3,200 members purchasing all of their energy from Bonneville Power Administration and our service territory includes a large portion of Lake Koocanusa behind Libby Dam so this issue is of utmost concern to us. We are not only concerned about how Bonneville's fish and wildlife cost affect our rates but are equally concerned about the impact river operations have on our native fish populations and the impact of reservoir levels on our local recreation based businesses.

We strongly support the Council's proposal to modify river operations to get greater biological benefit at lower costs. In particular we strongly support the alternative to change river operations now, such as the recent implementation of VARQ at Libby Dam.

Second, we support the Council's efforts to make clear and prioritize the region's goals not only for salmon but also for resident fish populations. We believe that the all out effort to meet the Endangered Species Act's requirements for salmon have short-changed local resident fish goals and objectives which in reality are more important to us.

Third, we support proposed changes to the spring and summer operations to major dams and reservoirs to reduce or eliminate those operations that do not appear to provide significant biological benefits. It is particularly hard for Lincoln Electric members to watch the level of Lake Koocanusa being drawn down just

when our peak recreation season arrives. It is especially difficult to understand when we continue to see scientific evidence that questions the benefits of operating the reservoir as it currently is.

Overall we support the Council's willingness to aggressively review the existing fish and wildlife programs, and to recommend drastic changes where biology and cost effectiveness dictate. We appreciate how hard it will be to make significant changes to these programs but our consumers and the region are depending on you to make good decisions for all of us.

Sincerely,



Michael T. Henry
General Manager

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