



Statement by Terry Flores, Executive Director
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Northwest RiverPartners is extremely disappointed in recent remarks made by Judge James Redden concerning litigation on federal hydro system operations that he previously presided over.

Judge Redden's remarks do provide insight into why no salmon plan, no matter how comprehensive, collaborative, scientifically sound or expensive met with his complete approval since they did not include removal of the Snake River dams. It would appear that nothing short of an extreme action like dam removal would have satisfied the Judge. Further, dam removal was not an issue before the court, nor could it be ordered by the court. Only Congress has that authority.

We are astonished at Judge Redden's lack of appreciation for the value of the Snake River dams to the Northwest. There is simply no question that the Snake River dams are a tremendous resource for the region, generating enough clean renewable energy to power a city the size of Seattle. And let's not forget those dams provide irrigation for farmers to grow and ship crops that feed the Northwest and the world.

Furthermore, suggesting that removing the Snake dams would be quick, easy or inexpensive and could simply be accomplished by 'just digging out the ditch' is bizarre. In fact, according to a National Academy of Sciences report: 'Dam removal and drawdown of those rivers ...would be enormously expensive, would take many years, and probably would have long-term adverse impacts on the rivers.'

Fortunately, it's clear that the actions being taken by the federal agencies, states and tribes -- who are working together implementing real measures in the plan to help salmon -- are working. This decade we've seen remarkable increases in the salmon runs and this year is no exception: adult returns of spring Chinook are already well above the ten year average and more are on the way.

Despite the Judge's comments, there is simply no disputing reality: the salmon plan is based in the best possible science, as confirmed in an independent science review by the Obama Administration and world class scientists; it was developed in an unprecedented collaboration that continues today; and it is the most comprehensive and expensive plan to help endangered species anywhere in the country.

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Northwest RiverPartners is an alliance of farmers, ports, and utilities that promote science-based salmon restoration and the benefits of the Columbia and Snake Rivers.