



PRESS STATEMENT

October 15, 2021
Vancouver, WA

Northwest RiverPartners Response to Governor Inslee Statement on Lower Snake River Dams

Hydropower Group Urges Governor to Support Existing Hydropower Projects to Fight Climate Change, Protect Salmon; Calls For Consistent Decarbonization Policies To Address Oceanic Threat To Salmon

Yesterday, at a meeting hosted by a political advocacy group, Washington Governor Jay Inslee [announced](#) he intends to work with Senator Patty Murray in a stakeholder process that examines replacing the services provided by the lower Snake River dams and to have the process completed by next summer.

Inslee stressed he hasn't decided the dams should be breached (i.e., removed). He also noted the extreme danger that the warming, acidifying ocean represents to salmon populations and stressed the need to fight climate change to reverse this existential oceanic threat.

Interestingly, Governor Inslee went on to criticize litigation efforts aimed at nullifying [Washington's Clean Fuels legislation](#). Given the context of climate change, the Governor stated it just doesn't make sense to take a step back in the state's decarbonization efforts, especially for salmon.

The Governor's statement seems particularly at odds with his willingness to examine breaching four highly productive, carbon-free hydroelectric dams, given that breaching the dams would also significantly set back the region's decarbonization efforts.

We are not in a situation where we have ample renewable resources. The UN's Code Red for humanity makes it clear we are behind in our decarbonization goals as a country and a planet. With this knowledge, it is difficult to justify talk of removing carbon-free generation while we still have a significant portion of electricity generated by fossil fuels.

We support the values Governor Inslee promotes, including the criticality of fighting the climate crisis and recovering healthy salmon populations for Tribal Nations. However, given the political context of his announcement, it seems highly unlikely this new process could conclude in a way that recommends the lower Snake dams remain in place.

Importantly, in 2020, the federal government completed a \$40 million, multi-year analysis with consultations by states and Tribal entities and input from the public. The conclusion of that extensive [study](#) was that breaching the dams is not in the best interest of society from a climate, cost, and grid reliability perspective, especially given the highly uncertain benefits for salmon.

Northwest RiverPartners has already committed to being part of the solution for salmon, and we will continue our science-backed advocacy efforts in support of the lower Snake River dams and the critical role they play in fighting climate change and ensuring the safety and health of everyone in the Pacific Northwest.

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About Northwest RiverPartners

Northwest RiverPartners (NWRP) is a not-for-profit, member-driven organization. We represent not-for-profit, community-owned utilities across Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Nevada. We also proudly represent farmers, ports, and businesses across the region that support clean energy and low-carbon transportation.

NWRP is focused on raising awareness about how the Northwest's hydropower system betters communities and the natural environment, and we encourage science-based solutions that help hydropower and salmon coexist and thrive. <http://nwriverpartners.org>