



PRESS RELEASE

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Apples to Wine: Washington Ag Backs Dams on the Lower Snake River

Dams benefit family farms, local food production

Vancouver, Washington—July 25, 2022— Family farms depend on the benefits provided by the lower Snake River dams (LSRD). Removing the dams would hurt agriculture and drive energy costs up at a time when family farms and their communities already face steep price increases.

“Fruit growers are currently facing supply chain disruptions and a shortage of transportation capacity, soaring energy costs, urgent needs to upgrade water management infrastructure to adapt to changing weather patterns, and demands from multiple stakeholders to support carbon emissions reductions efforts,” said Jon DeVaney, president, **Washington State Tree Fruit Association**. “These are all significant challenges requiring sustained effort and investment, and removing the dams on the lower Snake River would move us in the wrong direction on each of these issues.”

LSRD provide critical transportation infrastructure for bulk products. Nearly ten percent of the wheat exported from the United States travels by low carbon and low cost barging through the Snake River dams. Removal of the LSRD would result in shipping activities shifting from barge to road and rail transport which would result in increases in GHG emissions associated with transportation.

“Every decision made by Washington wheat farmers must strike the delicate balance between environmental and business sustainability. Barge transportation on the Columbia-Snake River System is a key tool in ensuring that balance. In fact, shipping by barge is 40 percent more fuel-efficient than rail and 270 percent more fuel-efficient than semi-trucks, the other transportation methods that would be used should the Lower Snake River Dams be breached. Breaching the Lower Snake River Dams would not only hurt wheat growers’ bottom lines, but would also harm our environment through increased emissions. We look forward to working with Senator Murray and Governor Inslee to ensure a solution that is science-based,

data-driven, and allows the simultaneous success of salmon populations and family-owned farming operations,” said Michelle Hennings, executive director, **Washington Association of Wheat Growers**.

The LSRD also provide critical irrigation to ensure 48,000 acres of farmland remain productive for local food production and local economies.

“Healthy, Fish, Farms, and Community have been the focus for our family potato growers. Without all three our farms suffer. Lower Snake River Dams are key in providing affordable energy, enhanced fish returns, and delivery of water for continued support to meet the demands of national food security. Without the Lower Snake River Dams our region will suffer impacting communities across the Northwest,” said Matt Harris, director of governmental affairs, **Washington State Potato Commission**.

Agriculture relies on the LSRD and agricultural leaders have asked Governor Jay Inslee and Senator Patty Murray to follow the science on salmon.

"My family has been farming on the Snake River just above Ice Harbor Dam since 1978. We depend on the river system to irrigate our crops. Not only that, we - and all other farmers - depend on a healthy environment, low energy costs, and reliable transportation. Removing the dams would eliminate an essential clean hydropower source, put more trucks on the road which increases CO2 emissions, and drive up energy and fuel costs,” said Katie Nelson, **Kamiak Vineyards**, Pasco, WA. “Science has shown that dams and salmon can coexist, and there is no guarantee that dam removal will improve fish runs. There are so many other variables like ocean conditions, climate change, and predation which have not been addressed. It does not make sense to sacrifice family farms like mine and all the other benefits the dams provide on the off-chance that fish numbers will increase. We know the dire consequences of dam removal, but we do not know if there would be any benefit to salmon. That's not a risk anyone should be willing to take.”

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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>