



## PRESS STATEMENT

**August 25, 2022**  
**Vancouver, WA**

### **Murray-Inslee Report Confirms Importance of the LSRD, High Value of Hydroelectricity to the Region**

*Community Service Advocates Were Concerned Replacement Costs Would Fall on Disadvantaged*

**Vancouver, Washington**—August 25, 2022—Senator Patty Murray and Governor Jay Inslee today released their final “Lower Snake River Dams Benefit Replacement Report” and recommendation. The report is meant to examine if there are reasonable means to replace the value and benefits of the four Federal dams on the Lower Snake River (LSRD). They concluded that breaching the dams is infeasible in light of their importance in achieving the region’s clean energy goals. Their recommendation states that robust clean energy solutions must be in place before dam removal to meet our region’s existing emissions laws.

“We appreciate Senator Murray and Governor Inslee’s efforts on the decades-long debate over the lower Snake River dams,” said Kurt Miller, executive director, Northwest RiverPartners. “Their recommendation recognizes the importance of the dams in avoiding blackouts and keeping electricity affordable for lower income communities as we retire coal and natural gas generation. The dams cannot be removed without significantly increasing the region’s CO2 emissions, which is bad for salmon in all phases of their lifecycle and will make climate change worse. Northwest RiverPartners and its members remain committed to being a partner in salmon recovery and solidifying hydropower’s role in fighting climate change.”

The Murray-Inslee report and recommendation is unconnected to any active permitting or regulatory rulemaking process. The report does highlight the exorbitant costs of removal and the risks to our economy and efforts to promote economic justice if the dams are breached.

Just yesterday (8/24/2022), Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm was interviewed by Malcom Woolf on National Hydropower Day and stated: “Most other energy resources simply can’t do what hydropower can do.” Adding, “Hydropower is cheaper and cleaner. [It] means lower bills, means better health.”

According to President Biden’s appointee, “Hydropower is a force multiplier for adding more clean energy to the grid.”

The Murray-Inslee report states replacement costs could exceed \$31B, other reports have placed the figure at more than twice that number. The report does not go into any detail about who would have to pay for the billions in additional costs. Many in the region are in agreement with the Secretary that hydropower provides affordable energy.

“Cowlitz County communities face significant challenges, with a disproportionate number of residents living in poverty at a rate 25% higher than Washington State. Ensuring our customers are served with clean, affordable and reliable electricity helps protect our communities' most vulnerable population. Losing the lower Snake River dams could raise rates by over 25%. It’s critical the dams are protected for the populations we serve,” said Gary Huhta, General Manager of Cowlitz Public Utility District.

“The question the low-income households will have to ask themselves is, “Do we pay rent, pay the energy bill, buy food or buy the needed medicines.” The answer either way is not a viable option, either choice has its consequences,” said Dahlia Ochoa, Energy and Emergent Service Department Director at Community Action Connections.

Community Action Connections (CAC), located in Pasco, Wash, provides utility and heating assistance to help ensure families will not have to live in a cold, dark house, eat cold food and wash with cold water that can lead them to be more susceptible to illness. The CAC provided written comment to the Murray-Inslee process, it can be read [here](#).

“Maintaining the absolute lowest cost, clean, renewable energy supply is essential to economic recovery and slowing current rapid erosion of the working middle class,” said VJ Meadows, executive director, Tri-Cities Food Bank. “Replacement of the power generation capacity provided currently by the dams would come at a much higher cost and drive electrical bills higher long into the future.”

The Tri-Cities Food Bank provides emergency food to more than 40,000 families in Benton City, Kennewick, Finley, Richland, and West Richland. Forty percent of the people served by the Tri-Cities Food Bank are children. You can read their comment letter to the Murray-Inslee process [here](#).

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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>