

For Immediate Release  
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**Public Power Council, Inland Ports and Navigation Group, and Northwest RiverPartners  
release joint statement on Biden Administration extension of Columbia River System  
Operations litigation mediation**

**Organizations express concern with the process and support more transparency**

**(Washington State)** Today, the Biden Administration requested [and secured] an additional 60-day stay extension to allow for continuation of the already two year-long mediation process regarding the Columbia River System Operations litigation. The Public Power Council, Inland Ports and Navigation Group, and Northwest RiverPartners did not oppose this limited further extension of the stay while we continue to review its longer-term implications. Although respectful of the confidential nature of the substance of the ongoing mediation discussions, all three of our organizations nevertheless feel compelled to express their deep reservations and considerable disappointment regarding the overall process that has been followed in the mediation so far, and we intend to remain highly engaged on seeking to ensure that it is meaningfully modified going forward so as to become more productive, inclusive, and transparent during this latest stay extension.

Our organizations collectively represent millions of electricity customers, farmers, river-dependent ports, transportation, and export sectors across the region who to date have not had a true seat at the table in negotiations carried out pursuant to the ongoing mediation. This is of significant concern to us because we feel strongly that major decisions about the region's continuing ability to provide reliable, safe, low-carbon electricity and transportation should not be decided when directly and significantly impacted parties such as our organizations are not present in the room.

We therefore strongly urge the Biden Administration and all other parties to the litigation to avail themselves of this new extension and join together at the mediation table to discuss our shared goals of salmon recovery within the context of maintaining grid reliability, energy affordability, access to irrigation, and low-emission transportation options, while also meeting the challenges presented by climate change. We also urge the Biden Administration and plaintiffs in the litigation to acknowledge the many operational and financial concessions already made over decades – up to and including as recently as this year. Our organizations, and each of our respective members, stand in solidarity behind the principle that this extension should be seen as an opportunity for truly comprehensive and productive negotiations among all major stakeholders and not used simply as a means to craft steep concessions to plaintiffs that will saddle even greater costs and burdens on ratepayers and river users, while not adequately accounting for their interests and values or ensuring that the full suite of critically important purposes of the Columbia River System are met.

Kurt Miller, NWRP Executive Director, released the following statement regarding the Biden Administration's announcement today:

“Hydropower is the cornerstone of our region’s clean, reliable, and equitable energy future. Given the threat posed by climate change to people and to salmon, carbon-free hydropower is even more important. We can’t have salmon recovery without reducing emissions and lessening our dependence on fossil fuels. Hydropower is our region’s solution to the climate crisis.”

Scott Simms, CEO & Executive Director of the Public Power Council, released the following statement:

“Hydropower is the backbone of this region’s energy supply while also being the largest, most consistent source of funding for one of the world’s largest fish and wildlife mitigation programs – bar none. Revenues from Northwest non-profit, community-owned utilities already fund the lion’s share of habitat, hatchery and hydro system improvements, all the while as robust fish harvesting activities continue year in and year out. We need others to join us in our efforts to help salmon, not look for ways to further hobble the very hydro system that currently provides a vast range of environmental and economic value to Northwest communities large and small.”

Neil Maunu, Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA) Executive Director, released the following statement on behalf of the Inland Ports and Navigation Group, a subset of PNWA:

"Low-cost, fuel-efficient barge transportation is one of the main reasons our region continues to be competitive in the global market. It keeps our products moving, our economy thriving and plays a significant role in our region's efforts to combat climate change," said Neil Maunu. "The communities that rely on this river system, including farmers, farm workers, and transportation operators, support a collaborative, science-based approach to salmon recovery in the Columbia River Basin. We are committed to being part of the solution in these conversations going forward and to ensuring that we can continue to have a healthy river and a healthy economy in the Northwest."

### Background

The Inland Ports and Navigation Group (IPNG) is comprised of ports, farmers, pilots, transportation companies, terminals and water resources stakeholders who work to balance economic prosperity with environmental stewardship. They strive to protect inland navigation, hydropower, irrigation on the Columbia Snake River System, while supporting a healthy environment and robust fish runs in the Northwest. IPNG is a subset of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA), a broad regional trade group representing over 150 members from Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. [www.rivervalues.com](http://www.rivervalues.com).

The Public Power Council, established in 1966, is an association that represents over 100 consumer-owned electric utilities in the Pacific Northwest. PPC’s mission is to preserve and protect the benefits of the Federal Columbia River Power System for consumer-owned utilities, and is a forum to identify, discuss and build consensus around energy and utility issues. For more information, please visit us on the web at [www.ppcpdx.org](http://www.ppcpdx.org).

Northwest RiverPartners is a not-for-profit, member-driven organization. Members include community-owned utilities, ports, and businesses from across the northwestern United States. The organization is focused on raising awareness about how the Northwest’s hydropower system betters communities and

the natural environment and encourages science-based solutions that help hydropower and salmon coexist and thrive. <http://nwriverpartners.org>

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