



PRESS STATEMENT

June 18, 2024
Vancouver, WA

Statement from Northwest RiverPartners on establishment of Columbia River Task Force, report from Interior Department

Vancouver, Washington—June 18, 2024—Today, Northwest RiverPartners released the following statement in response to the Biden Administration’s creation of a new interagency Columbia River Task Force and a report released by the Department of the Interior on federal hydropower in the Pacific Northwest.

“As river operations remain dynamic, utilities, farmers, businesses, river transportation, and other users need to be actively included from beginning to end in all aspects of the Columbia River Task Force,” said Clark Mather, executive director. “Northwest RiverPartners remains committed to working with sovereign Northwest Tribes because bringing the entire region, including millions of electric customers and other river users into this conversation, is the best opportunity to find sustainable solutions without doing harm.”

“We also urge the Biden Administration and the Columbia River Task Force to take a wholistic view of hydropower using peer-reviewed science to drive decisions and ensure long-term confidence amongst all regional residents,” said Clark Mather. “Climate change is among the greatest threats to people and salmon...affordable, reliable, carbon-free hydropower remains central to meeting rapidly growing energy demands while offsetting countless tons of air emissions.”

“Northwest RiverPartners remains committed to ensuring all communities, particularly our most vulnerable, can benefit from our existing renewable energy infrastructure as we continue to build our clean energy future. Promoting justice is multi-faceted and complex, particularly as it relates to energy, economic, and environmental security for an entire region. Climate change, and our response to the challenges represented by our warming

planet, exacerbate these challenges. Northwest RiverPartners supports efforts that fulfill U.S. obligations to Northwest Tribesⁱⁱ, and in confronting the need to address harms to Indigenous people, we should avoid deepening or causing other injustices,” said Clark Mather.

###

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>

ⁱ Published scientific analysis titled, “Climate change threatens Chinook salmon throughout their life cycle” by Lisa G. Crozier (NOAA Fisheries), Brian J. Burke (NOAA Fisheries), Brandon E. Chasco (NOAA Fisheries), Daniel L. Widener (Ocean Associates – under contract to NOAA Fisheries) & Richard W. Zabel (NOAA Fisheries); February 18, 2021; states, in part: “Previous population models that have used global climate model (GCM) projections have focused on drivers in freshwater life stages only (e.g., stream temperature, winter flooding, and drought). While these are useful for evaluating restoration actions within those contexts, they completely ignore the large impacts of climate change on the marine stage.”; “Nonetheless, negative effects from SST [sea surface temperature] still drove most populations extinct within the century.”; “Climate impacts were most dramatic in the marine stage, where survival was reduced by 83–90%.”; “Our analysis showed relative resilience in freshwater stages, with the dominant driver toward extinction being rising SST (sea surface temperature), which tracked a ~90% decline in survival in the marine life stage.”

ⁱⁱ [NWRP Salmon Reintroduction in upper Columbia River Basin \(nwriverpartners.org\)](http://nwriverpartners.org)