



## PRESS RELEASE

**February 9, 2024**  
**Vancouver, WA**

### **Agreement threatening Northwest clean power moves forward despite objections**

*Uncertainty for public utility customers remains a significant concern*

**Vancouver, Washington**—February 9, 2024—The risks related to the future of Columbia River System Operations (CRSO) remain high as the US District Court of Oregon accepted an agreement negotiated in secret by the U.S. Government and anti-hydropower plaintiffs. Northwest RiverPartners (NWRP), which represents nearly 3 million electric utility ratepayers, continues to express concerns as the Court accepts the five year stay despite opposition by utilities and other river users.

NWRP, along with all other intervenor defendants in the CRSO litigation, was excluded from negotiations producing the CRSO settlement. The exclusion of stakeholders means that millions of people in vulnerable communities across the region will now bear the brunt of the increased energy costs and uncertainty created by this agreement.

At a time when grid reliability, affordability, and climate change objectives are straining utilities across the country, the Northwest has relied heavily on its backbone of robust hydropower to meet expanding energy needs. In the wake of the settlement, community owned utilities will face a much more challenging future, as the settlement introduces more chaos into the region's energy sector.

“We have made repeated efforts to ensure that public power consumers across the Northwest were given meaningful representation over the last two years of negotiations. It is deeply troubling that with the continued pressures on energy costs and grid reliability, communities that will be most impacted by this agreement were left out of the conversation,” said Heather Stebbings, interim executive director of Northwest RiverPartners. “Ultimately, this will

cost hundreds of millions of dollars and set us back on our region's climate objectives while the biggest threats to salmon recovery remain unaddressed.”

To enhance salmon recovery, NWRP has identified and supported habitat improvements, research into ocean conditions and climate change impacts, predator control, investments in new technologies that support salmon, addressing blocked areas, and the Phase 2 Implementation Plan to reintroduce salmon in the upper Columbia River basin. NWRP remains committed to supporting science-based salmon recovery efforts that balance our regions recovery goals with the production of Northwest hydropower to support our clean energy future.

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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>