



PRESS RELEASE

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Flawed 2023 Columbia Basin Settlement Agreement withdrawn, opening door for sustainable solutions

Northwest RiverPartners calls for transparency and clear commitment to clean, reliable energy that supports residents, businesses and the environment

Vancouver, Washington—June 12, 2025—The Trump Administration announced today it would withdraw from the 2023 Federal Columbia River Power System settlement, known as the “12/14 Agreement.”

The agreement was reached by the Biden Administration and the Six Sovereigns, which includes the States of Oregon and Washington, the Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation.

The 12/14 Agreement and its resulting commitments were developed during six months of secret negotiations that excluded the States of Idaho and Montana and organizations representing the voices of millions of people in the Pacific Northwest, including NW RiverPartners. The agreement and its implementation threatened to dramatically increase the chance of blackouts and customer electricity bills.

“Now is the time to come together and chart a sustainable path toward effective solutions that protect salmon and maintain affordable and reliable hydropower needed by millions of people in the Pacific Northwest,” says Clark Mather, executive director of Northwest RiverPartners. “This politicized agreement between the former administration and only a fraction of impacted sovereign entities, devalued hydropower, our region’s largest source of affordable, clean electricity. Northwest RiverPartners remains committed to

working with all sovereign Tribes, state leaders and other stakeholders to identify science-based, durable solutions.”

During the process, NW RiverPartners submitted nearly 40 comments and studies on behalf of its members. Yet, no meaningful effort was made to include the perspective of the millions of electric utility customers, ports, agricultural organizations and businesses that NW RiverPartners represents. Lacking representation and transparency, concerns were raised about the durability and outcome of the agreement.

Strong public support for hydropower and growing affordability challenges further highlight how critical a secure and sustainable energy ecosystem is for our region’s future. An October 2024 survey, administered by research firm DHM, found that three in four Pacific Northwest residents support hydropower produced by dams across Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. 84 percent of Pacific Northwest residents ranked electricity affordability as their top concern in the same survey.

In addition to undermining our region’s energy needs, the agreement threatened food production, regional water supplies and our river transportation system, which would have drastically impacted the region’s economy. Further, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the agreement ignored the serious threat of rising sea surface temperatures, deemed the most significant cause of salmon declines in the Pacific Basin.

Fish returns have more than tripled since federal dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers began operating. More than 456,000 adult salmon and steelhead were counted in 1938 when Bonneville Dam, the first federal dam on the Columbia and Snake Rivers, was built. In 2024, that number topped 1,770,000, which is 3.8 times more fish than in 1938.

“The livelihood of Washington wheat growers and rural communities depends on their ability to utilize key benefits from the Columbia River System, including transportation, irrigation, and reliable energy, but without the Lower Snake River dams that won’t be possible. We look forward to working with the federal government and all policymakers to ensure dams and salmon can continue to coexist, and we stand firm in our support of sound science and reliable data to make informed decisions,” says Michelle Hennings, Executive Director, Washington Association of Wheat Growers.

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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, Nevada, and Northern California. 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 improves communities and the natural environment, and we encourage science-based solutions that help hydropower and salmon coexist and thrive.