



PRESS STATEMENT

**February 27, 2026
Vancouver, WA**

Northwest RiverPartners' Statement on Columbia River System Operations Ruling

Vancouver, Washington—February 27, 2026— Northwest RiverPartners and our coalition of utilities, ports, and community organizations continues to urge regional leaders to convene a collaborative, science-based process to protect and support Columbia River salmon populations and sustain our region's multi-benefit hydropower system - the largest source of affordable, clean energy in the Pacific Northwest.

On February 25, a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction ordering additional spill over federal dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers. That order, which includes measures requested by the States of Washington and Oregon, will drive up electricity costs, increase the risk of blackouts, and make our river transportation system less safe and reliable.

Hydropower is the backbone of the Northwest's economy, supplying nearly half of the region's electricity and providing reliable and affordable power to millions of homes, farms, and businesses. Federal dams in the Columbia and Snake River system also support navigation, irrigation, and flood control—benefits essential to the Northwest's economy and way of life.

"The court's order underscores the need for us to find solutions together, rather than through a federal judge," said Clark Mather, executive director of Northwest RiverPartners. "Our coalition remains ready to partner with sovereign entities and stakeholders to chart a sustainable path forward on behalf of the millions of people who depend on our vital hydropower system every day."

Between 2023 and 2024, retail residential electric rates in Oregon rose more than 15 percent, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Washington residential rates spiked more than 8 percent during the same period. We are concerned that the federal judge's order will increase energy bills and the risk of regional electricity blackouts at a time when energy affordability is the top worry among Pacific Northwest residents.

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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.