PUBLIC MEETING SESSION
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
DRAFT LOWER SNAKE RIVER JUVENILE SALMON MIGRATION
FEASIBILITY REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
WITH FEDERAL CAUCUS CONSERVATION OF COLUMBIA BASIN FISH
"ALL-H PAPER"

OUTLAW INN
1701 HIGHWAY 93 SOUTH
KALISPELL, MONTANA
WINCHESTER ROOM & COLT 44 ROOM

PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2000
7:30 P.M.

COURT RPORTER: BAMBI A. GOODMAN, RPR, CRR, CSR

GOODMAN REPORTING
P.O. Box 1182
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THE MODERATOR: At this point we're going to start the public comment off with elected officials. And our first one is -- excuse me for names, I'm undoubtedly going to mispronounce tonight. But our first one is Aubyn Curtiss. And then after that, another elected official who's asked to speak is Rita Windom.

MS. CURTISS: Madam mediator and members of the caucus, since all the legislators here are not going to be speaking, I wonder if one of those would kindly relinquish me a minute of their time. And I was wondering about Representative Jackson.

MR. JACKSON: Yes. Verdell Jackson.

THE MODERATOR: Is the panel comfortable with allowing a four-minute comment time?

MS. CURTISS: For the record, I'm representative Aubyn Curtiss of House District 81. Libby Dam and Lake Koocanusa lie within my district. I'm also one of the Montana's representatives on the Four-State Legislative Council. While only 12 Montana counties lie within the Columbia River Basin, Libby and Hungry Horse reservoirs store a vast amount of the water coveted for downstream purposes. Council members take seriously their responsibility to uphold the constitutions of their individual states and to protect their individual state's resources.

The most critical concern to Montana council members relates to Montana's constitutional ownership of all Montana's waters and apprehension that our water rights could be literally sold down the river to provide a nonscience-base solution to problems caused by failed policies. HJR 11, which I sponsored in the '99 legislative session, which passed overwhelmingly, recognized the problem and urged our congressional delegation to advocate that any new or revised policy should recognize Montana's responsibility to manage its own resources. Other states are taking similar actions.

States want and are entitled to a place at the table when federal decision making involves state issues. So far, the principal of dual sovereignty has been totally overlooked. We have yet to see any role the state legislatures might have in policy making for the Basin, even though any new policies will have the potential of robbing Montanans of our resources, customs and culture to benefit downstream interests.

We have struggled with the Three Sovereigns, the Columbia River Forum, the Multi-Species Framework, and now we are here commenting before the Federal Caucus. The names have changed, but the players remain pretty much the same; four governers and their eight representatives, about 13 sovereign Indian tribes, and approximately nine federal

regulatory agencies. Will the product of any of those parallel processes be considered by the legislative bodies of the four states, or has the intent always been to bypass states' rights? Is there significance in the fact that this hearing is being conducted only by the Federal Caucus?

We do not need a new federal entity dictating river governance policies. The Northwest Public Power Council has been mandated by federal and state laws to fill that role. And a good working relationship exists between it and the Bonneville Power Administration, the functions of which are necessary not only to provide energy but are necessary to provide a stable, sustainable economy in the Basin.

What we do need is a clear-cut, common-sense policy to be adopted by the agencies to avoid gridlock among themselves and duplication of regulatory authority. Already billions of dollars have been spent to remedy conditions brought about by failed policies, policies which encourage salmon predators to thrive under federal protection and exempt tribal fishing activities, including gill netting, from compliance with the Endangered Species Act. It is reprehensible that an 80-percent overlap exists between enforcement of the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act. That is only the tip of the iceberg. Existing policies, together with ongoing offshore salmon fishing,

inhibit the ability of fish to return upriver to spawn. No amount of additional expenditure for dam breaching or draw downs from other dams like Koocanusa and Hungry Horse can possibly restore the salmon population, if the above negative factors are not first addressed.

At issue here, tonight, is the economy of the states in the Basin as well as protection of our resources. It is irresponsible to consider breaching of dams, adding millions of dollars more cost to taxpayers to achieve a goal which has more to do with political pressure from the Sierra Club and the National Wildlife Federation, Trout Unlimited, Patagonia, and others than it has to do with resource protection. It is even more irresponsible to put at risk thousands of water users and energy consumers who depend upon the present system for sustainability.

Finally --

THE MODERATOR: You'll really need to finish up.

MS. CURTISS: Thank you. I really take exceptions to the ads that are being used in the New York Times and all over to influence people to testify on behalf of dam breaching.

THE MODERATOR: Next speaker is Rita Windom.

MS. WINDOM: Thank you for coming and hearing our comments. I represent the Lincoln County Board of

Commissioners.

The Kootenai River, on which I live, has two fish species that are currently listed under the Endangered Species Act: the endangered Kootenai white sturgeon, as you mentioned, and the threatened bull trout. We also, though, have the west slope cutthroat and burbot, which may very soon be listed. Libby Dam is the only federal project that can be operated to benefit these species in the Kootenai. Yet, unfortunately, these fish have been effectively relegated to a lower status than those listed anadromous species. This is now the time to fully consider the needs of the species in the Kootenai River Watershed. We in Lincoln County have specifically requested, we have testified in favor of a balanced operation that benefits all Columbia River fish while maintaining local recreation, flood control and power production and, more specifically, the congressionally authorized project purposes. To this end, we want you, the federal agencies, to implement the Integrated Rule Curves, or IRCs, and sturgeon tiered flow approach developed by Montana and the variable flow or VARQ strategy for system flood control that has been developed by the Army Corps of Engineers.

We firmly believe that this combination of dam operating strategies provides the flexibility to keep Libby Dam elevations higher than the IRCs when it is safe, in

terms of flood control, and it affords a more natural annual flow pattern in the Kootenai River. Specifically, VARQ will enable our dam operators to hold more reservoir water during average and dryer years so that spring flows can be augmented for sturgeon and salmon without impacting reservoir refill. Also, the reservoir will refill in more years due to the IRC/VARQ operation, benefiting the reservoir and increasing the number of years in which water is available for summer flow augmentation. We can be good neighbors by releasing the reservoir storage from the top ten feet from full pool to enhance the river downstream and salmon rediscovery. Drafting more than ten feet in the reservoir is harmful to the reservoir and the river. We ask that you be sure that the release of reservoir storage is gradual during late summer and fall so that the river remains at a constant, albeit higher, flow. Unnatural river fluctuations are especially harmful to the fish and recreation in the Kootenai River during summer and fall. This operating strategy we know to be sustainable from year to year, and it places the listed Kootenai River fish on an equal footing with the listed species in the lower reaches of the Columbia River. And we ask that you take our request under utmost consideration; thank you.

THE MODERATOR: At this point, then, I'm going to move to the sign-up sheets for people that have

asked to make public comments tonight. I'm going to call the first three people. They are Rich Day, John Alton and Bruce Tutvedt, I believe, the last one.

MR. DAY: Good evening. My name is Rich Day. I work for the National Wildlife Federation in Missoula, Montana. And I'm here tonight representing the National Wildlife Federation and its 4 million-plus members and supporters. I ask that you submit my comments to both the Corps draft EIS and the Federal Caucus for All-H Paper.

The National Wildlife Federation fully supports the breaching of four lower Snake River dams. We call on this administration and your agencies to pick an alternative that has this removal option and the restoration of wild salmon and steelhead runs as its centerpiece.

We need wild salmon and steelhead for our children, for our economies and for our way of life. No other alternative has been put forward that is as certain that we have salmon in our futures. We no longer have time to wait. The wild salmon and steelhead don't have time. We're looking at the extinction of the Snake River stocks in our lifetime, if we don't act now. That's just incredible.

But what is just as incredible is that we can still have time to change this tide to right the wrongs of the past and to save these fish for our futures. Make no mistake about it. If we delay this decision and if we wait

and spend another 3 billion dollars on studies, these magnificent fish will go extinct. We will have studied them to death.

And, realistically, what are the other options? The governor of Oregon has said it best, and I quote, "If not the dams, then what?" end of quote. Will we stop all fishing? Will we continue to rely on grossly expensive technical fixes that don't work? Will we ask irrigators in Idaho and Montana to give up thousands of acre feet of water to provide for additional water flows? Will we draw down Libby and Hungry Horse reservoirs to increase flows and cool water?

These are the draconian measures, not dam removal. These measures will have drastic effects on a much larger scale than will removal of the four lower Snake River dams. And yet the many scientists that have been looking at this issue over the last several years don't believe that any of these options will have the success that dam removal would have on bringing back our wild salmon and steelhead. So why would we put so many in harm's way, when there is an option that will have lesser effects than our higher certainty of success?

It's simply common sense. The four lower Snake River dams should be removed to protect and restore our wild salmon and steelhead populations.

This is not to say that this option will not have consequences for some communities. It will. We all know that. And that is why the National Wildlife Federation and other organizations support the construction of a transition package that will invest in the effective communities to help make these communities whole.

Instead of debating whether we should follow the science and what is necessary for the salmon to survive, we should be spending time thinking about those communities and what they will need to continue to thrive. Let's begin to put our efforts there. The clock of extinction is ticking for the future or our wild salmon and steelhead.

Let's breach these dams. Lets bring back our wild salmon and steelhead and save our communities. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: John Alton.

MR. ALTON: Thank the panel for the opportunity to speak tonight. My name is John Alton. I'm a native Montanan; born and raised here in the Flathead Valley. I currently serve on the board of directors of the Flathead Electric Cooperative. We serve approximately 47,000 customer accounts in Flathead, Lincoln, Lake, and Sanders counties.

My comments tonight reflect my personal concerns as well as the concerns I have as a board member of the cooperative. Our board has pledged a commitment to our rate

payers to maintain the most reliable service at the lowest possible cost.

These concerns are directly related to some of the proposals being suggested as possible solutions to the recovery of the steelhead and salmon runs in the Snake River. The one alternative that heads up my concerns is the so-called breaching of four dams on the lower Snake. There's no question in my mind that the impact on the rate payers in the Pacific Northwest would be devastating.

The impact would be a double whammy to agriculture and all related industries -- business and industries that use the river transportation system out of Lewiston, Idaho. In the northwest, particularly in Montana, our economy hasn't reflected the boom that other parts of the nation are enjoying.

Along with the negative effect on our economy, the blowing out of these dams couldn't help but do irreparable damage to the environment. Engineering studies have indicated that blowing out of the earthen ends of these dams will take about eight years, including draining the reservoirs. Millions of cubic yards of accumulated sediment, clay, rocks, dirt, and other debris will be washed downstream destroying any existing fish habitat, possibly never recovering.

Fish passages that are already in place work

satisfactorily, but there are so few fish returning due to other sources. These include uncontrolled ocean harvest, predator kill by seals and terns which, incidentally, are protected, all of which increases the problem. Gill netting in the river system and even sport fishing also take their toll. Due to the above reasons, the National Marine Fishery Services predict that dam removal will have little effect on upstream migration.

Scientific studies are now in progress and address the All-H solution: harvest, habitat, hatcheries and hydro. Until a comprehensive plan is adopted, with science as the determining factor, the dam removal option, with relatively no value to fish recovery, would seem entirely inappropriate. I would urge everyone to contact our northwestern congressional delegation and make them aware of the futility and the economic downturn that would result from blowing out the Snake River dams. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Sir, if you want to leave your written comments to court reporter.

Next will be Bruce Tutvedt, I believe it is, then Bruce Farling and then Wilbur Anderson.

MR. TUTVEDT: I'm Bruce Tutvedt. And members of the Corps, I'm a lifelong resident of Flathead County also. I'm a farmer from Kalispell representing the Montana Grain Growers and the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee.

These groups encompass over 3,500 farming families across Montana. We would like to address the economic and environmental impacts of Alternative 4 for breaching of the dams, as they would affect Montana.

Breaching the dams will cost Montana producers 50 million dollars in increased freight rates. The DREW Transportation Work Group's work analysis is deeply flawed. Railroads always charge what the market will bear. One only has to look at Montana's history to see this. Probable market rates must be used in the absence of competition, not opportunity costs. The maximum freight rate charged by railroads is the total of truck and barges to Portland. When either truck rates or barge rates increase, the railroad will move to capture increased profits in this new less-competitive market. There are 220 million bushels of wheat and barley shipped out of Montana yearly at a cost of well over 200 million dollars. A 25-percent increase in freight cost in Montana is a probable outcome of the breaching of the dams.

Montana agriculture is in a world market that will not allow price increases because of a change in infrastructure in the Columbia Basin. The producer, not the market, will incur all negative price changes from a change in infrastructure.

Montana is 50th in the nation in earned income and

highly dependent on large-tract agriculture. Farm families in Montana are in a financial crisis, some making decisions to forego health insurance for their families because of income. There is no extra money. A mid-size farm in Montana could see a $12,000 drop in income with Alternative 4.

Large-tract farms in Montana are at financial crossroads. Either we continue, or we succumb to small-acre subdivisions and put subdivisions on every river, if we want. I guess if that's what we want to argue. On our farm, we recently observed 13 bald eagles feeding on wild ducks and geese. Coyotes and pheasants abound. If you choose the breaching alternative, you raise agriculture's freight rates and electric rates. Many farms will lose the fight to stay in business and subdivide. With the loss of agriculture, so goes our great heritage of habitat for all wild animals. The northwest is heavily dependent on our economical hydroelectricity. With our expanding population and economies, we are on the verge of needing more electricity. Hydropower is clean, renewable and affordable.

Small changes in dam operation will have devastating effects for quality of life on people and animals of the northwest. The power to ruin forever, large portions of Montana rests in your hands. Please go slow and make sure whatever choices look at the total human and

environmental costs of whatever alternative you chose.

The Montana Grain Growers and Wheat and Barley Committee are seeking balanced solutions. We are willing to take an honest look at improving habitat, harvest, hydropower and hatchery operations, but we are opposed to any options that include dam breaching. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Next is Bruce Farling, then Wilbur Anderson, followed by Francis Rosse.

MR. FARLING: Good evening. I'm Bruce Farling, executive director of Montana Trout Unlimited, which represents nearly 2,100 conservation anglers in the Big Sky state. I'll only take a few minutes here. I'm just going to comment tonight on the Army Corps draft EIS. And also, because I have a personal interest, in my lifetime -- a small portion of my lifetime, I have actually seen several different small populations of Snake River spring/summer chinook disappear in places that I once fished for them. Between 1974 and 1985 they disappeared.

Our review of the scientific and economic documentation related to recovery of Snake River stocks of chinook salmon, sockeye salmon and steelhead, including technical reviews prepared for our organization on the long-term viability of spring/summer chinook, the Cumulative Risk Initiative and the inadequate Corps's DREW economic

studies, leads us to conclude that by far the best approach to salmon/steelhead recovery in the Snake is one that requires partial removal of the four lower Snake River dams. For the record, I'll be leaving those analyses that we did, which I believe you guys have probably already gotten.

Because this alternative has the highest probability for success, a conclusion also reached by hundreds of respected scientists and fishery managers, it is also the best path for Montanans. It means BPA customers here, residential and industrial, will finally see money from their power bills dedicated to anadromous fish recovery that has a realistic chance of success, instead of continuing to see it go to the same technological fixes, such as barging smolts, augmenting flows, eliminating sport and commercial harvest, and increasing hatchery product introduction that have failed for the past 30 years. It means that the National Marine Fishery Service's demands that Montana reservoirs augment Columbia River flows for flushing smolts will be less compelling. And it would also mean we might be able to manage for our IRCs here. And I recognize the augmented flows from Montana are meant to mainly benefit Columbia River stocks. We believe if you pretty much take care of the salmon and steelhead for the Snake River stocks, which is a large portion of the production of the Columbia Basin, I think we've got a pretty

good political argument to keep our water in Montana. We think the water should stay in our state. And that can be better achieved politically if we use dam breaching to recover a major component of the Columbia Basin's overall anadromous fishery. We encourage you and Governor Racicot to acknowledge this.

Finally, it's clear we should no longer be discussing whether or not to breach. We should be concentrating, instead, on how best to move the money currently being wasted on futile recovery Band-aids into programs that soften the short-term economic disruption incurred through partial dam removal. Unlike the thousands of commercial and Native American fishermen who have lost their livelihoods and traditions to salmon-killing dams, we have a golden parachute we can use in this case. We care about people and salmon, and we believe they're intricately connected. The only interests who seem to be endorsing job losses today are those who want to keep the dams and do it by further curtailing commercial and recreational fishing. This issue is not about jobs versus salmon. It's about jobs and salmon versus dams we can live without. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Next we'll hear from Wilbur Anderson, then Francis Rosse, then I believe it's Caryn Mishe.

MR. ANDERSON: My name is Wilbur Anderson.

I'm a native Montanan. I'm retired manager of Vigilante Electric Cooperative of Dillon, Montana. I currently serve on the Glacier Energy, Incorporated board of directors at Cut Bank, Montana. I live south of Kalispell here about 12 miles. I'm past president of the Northwest Public Power Association and served on the Public Power Council Executive Committee. I'm also on the board -- served on the board of trustees for the Council of Cooperatives in Montana for 10 years. I spent over 31 years in the public power field.

Glacier Electric serves 5,160 members, and Vigilante serves 4,061 members. Vigilante purchases its power from Bonneville Power, and Glacier Electric purchases power from Bonneville and from the Montana Power Company.

The ratepayers of both systems have helped pay over 3 billion dollars spent in the region on salmon recovery in the past 15 years. The people of Montana do not benefit from salmon recovery dollars spent in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. Where are the goals and objectives that justify these expenditures in the northwest?

The real issue here is salmon recovery, not dam removal. There is absolutely no justifiable science for dam removal or breaching on the lower Snake River in Idaho. Breaching dams in Idaho would provide no benefits to Montana ratepayers, only higher costs for about 1,000 megawatts of replacement power needed in the northwest. Current studies

show that the northwest may have a power shortage within the next three to four years.

Montana ratepayers would also pay additional costs for shipping grain crops that are not profitable at current prices. The lower Snake River provides shipping by barge, and it is essential that this continue to be available.

The success for the salmon recovery plan must be comprehensive and include effective protection for listed stocks. The killing of listed stocks and the use of gill nets, offshore and in the rivers, must be stopped. The survival rates for juvenile spring and summer chinook passing the eight dams is as high as it was before the lower four Snake dams were built. The public needs to know that there are other approaches to salmon recovery that provide equal or more biological benefit for less cost.

This idea of breaching dams is crazy and has no merit or public benefit. Thank you for your attention.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Francis Rosse, then Caryn Mishe, then Karl Shrader.

MS. ROSSE: My name is Francis Rosse. I live in Columbia Falls. I'm, by trade, a professional engineer. I happen to be on the board of Flathead Electric, which is what makes me aware of the situation. I am here more as an ordinary citizen, though, than for Flathead Electric,

because this causes me a great deal of concern when I hear things like we're going to breach the dams.

Those dams were built with perhaps not as much in flood control, but when we start talking about breaching those dams, the next step is further dams down the river. Those dams produce power for all of Montana -- or equivalent power for Montana and Idaho combined. If we take that power generation away, what are we going to replace it with; coal fire plants; gas plants; oil? What's that going to do to our environment? That's not an option that I want to see.

Also, I think that it's very certain that we are going to have in the next few years power shortages, with us flushing more water down the rivers during times when we cannot generate. We have no need for that power; we've got to make that power up somewhere else.

One of the other things that is of concern to me -- I love to fish for salmon, so I go to Canada frequently to fish for salmon. Salmon are on the decline all along the British Columbia coast. Most of those salmon are not obstructed by dams. I have to ask the question, will the dam removal correct the salmon problem? Because the problem exists elsewhere where there are no dams. I think the problem is greater than the dams.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Next is, I believe, Caryn Mishe, then Karl

Schrader and then Amie Wexler.

MS. MISKE: My name is Caryn Miske, and I'm here representing the Environmental Law Group of the University of Montana as well as Save Our Salmon and Idaho Rivers United.

For 12,000 years salmon successfully migrated up the Snake River. These fish prevailed through all types of hardship, including an ice age. But in less than 40 years, four dams have significantly contributed to the decline of the species. The salmon population has declined by 90 percent since these four dams went in in the early '60s.

The Independent Scientific Advisory Board for the Columbia Basin salmon stated in February of 1988 -- this is a direct quote, "It is impossible to reconcile a maximum transport approach to salmon recovery with protection of the remaining diversity of salmon and steelhead population in the Snake River Basin." In other words, trucking salmon has failed. The other approach is what have been identified are not likely, according to this scientific advisory group, to work.

There's been a lot of comment in the room this evening regarding the fact that there has been no scientific evidence. My understanding is there is scientific evidence and there have been scientific studies by unbiased scientists that show that dam breaching is the best chance

that salmon have to prevent extinction.

Breaching the four dams is the only way to save the salmon. Without this, the spring and summer chinook, fall chinook, sockeye and steelhead will all be extinct by 2017. However, salmon is not the only species that will benefit by dam breaching. If these dams are breached, less Montana water will be required to feed the dams. This will mean that more water will stay in Montana for our fisheries. And more water means better fish habitat for bull trout. If we want to see salmon and bull trout in our lifetime and in our future, dam breaching does make sense. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: If people have written statements, would you bring them and drop them off with the court reporter when you're done?

Karl Schrader, then Amie Wexler and then Joseph Brady.

MR. SHRADE: Honorable panel, my name is Karl Shrade. I operate a small family farm north of Kalispell here. I also serve as a trustee of Flathead Electric.

After reviewing the year of decision and the Federal Caucus, I have concluded on my directive the primary goal in habitat recovery is that there must be a way to find a win-win solution. And breaching dams is not one of those solutions.

When the Drawdown Regional Economic Workgroup

composed of economic advisors tells me that increasing my electric rates and increasing my cost to ship my ag products to market, and I want to quote, "...this increase would be expected to have little social or economic affect..." this is a blatant disregard of reality for those who are on the bottom or lower end of the income scale. This is not a win-win situation; this is one culture against another.

After reviewing further documents, there were a number of questions that came up that I think need to be addressed and revised in the EIS. Does continued harvest by use of gill nets improve listed salmon recovery? Do seals on the west coastline have the same priority as listed salmon? How much does ocean habitat affect salmon recovery? Does impacting the power system, by breaching, decrease the amount of dollars spent on recovery? Will we continue to make debt payments on a system that is breached? Is sediment erosion -- if sediment erosion from logging is considered detrimental, what will 150 million cubic yards of sediment behind the breached dams do for recovery?

I personally cannot comprehend why anyone would go to the extreme measure of breaching. Let us use an alternative that continues to provide traditional economic benefits while reducing the impact to fish, wildlife and its habitats. Alternative number 6 seems to be -- seems to accomplish this goal. Thank you. I didn't hear a mention

of Alternative 6. Where did it go? Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Amie Wexler, followed by Joseph Brady, followed by Mike Workman.

MS. WEXLER: My name is Amie Wexler, and I'm representing the National Wildlife Federation. And I am here to support the removal the four dams on the lower Snake River and bring back wild salmon and steelhead. My comment addresses both the Corps EIS and the All-H Paper.

Let's be clear about what we're discussing here tonight.

The question about whether we should remove the four dams in the lower Snake River is no longer a question of science. The federal agencies' own science shows that breaching these dams is the best way to ensure the restoration of wild salmon and steelhead. And it is a shame that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the only federal agency that has the courage and integrity to acknowledge this science.

It is not a question of law. The only option presented thus far that clearly meets all federal laws, including both the Endanger Species Act and the Clean Water Act, is partial removal of these four dams.

It's not a question of keeping our promises and meeting our treaty obligations. Again, the only option

presented that clearly meets these moral and legal duties is partial removal of these four dams.

And, finally, it is not a question of economics. Studies show that removing these dams will be good for this region. It will bring thousands of new jobs and restore an industry that has been devastated by declines in wild salmon and steelhead populations.

The only question that is here is whether we have the political will to do what is right and take out these dams. The people of this region, and of this nation, want these dams removed, and they want their salmon back.

We've heard that sometimes the people must lead for our leaders to follow. Well, let me submit to you that the people are leading. And these banners show where the people are going. The organizations and individuals on these banners have all endorsed dam removal as the best option for recovering wild salmon and steelhead. Some of these national groups I mention have members in Montana: Trout Unlimited, U.S. Public Interest and Research Group through the Montana Public Interest and Research Group, Sierra Club, and National Wildlife Federation. Montana organizations that have endorsed dam removal are: Alliance for the Wild Rockies, American Whitewater Montana, American Wildlands, Cold Mountain - Cold River, Flathead Resource Organization, Medicine River Canoe Club, Missoula Urban

Demonstration Project, Montana Environmental Information Center, Montana River Action Network, Native Forest Network, Predator Conservation Alliance, Montana Wildlife Federation. All these organizations and many more, the millions represented on these banners, have supported dam removal as the best and only way to recover these salmon. Thank you for coming here tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Joseph Brady, then Mike Workman and Ross Titus.

MR. BRADY: My name is Joseph Brady, and I'm here representing the salmon.

The fish numbers have declined by 90 percent. Are we going to wait until it's a hundred percent? This is a chance to right some of the mistakes our forefathers made in the past. We have to take the responsibility for these actions. I listen to both sides of the story, and one argument that seems to come up is that we'll hurt the economy. If the wild salmon come back, it would boost the economy all along the Columbia River and all of its tributaries. It's time for humans to quit being so selfish and start thinking about other living things and share our planet. So, therefore, I am for breaching the dams or anything else that will fix this problem for the salmon. Remember, extinction is forever.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Next is Mike Workman and Ross Titus, then Russ Crowder.

MR. WORKMAN: I'm Mike Workman. I'm vice-president of the board of trustees of Lincoln Electric Cooperative.

Our cooperative serves over 2,800 members in northwest Montana from our headquarters in Eureka. We currently purchase the majority of our power from Bonneville Power. And our members have already contributed significantly to the over 3 billion the region has spent on salmon recovery in the last 15 years. In addition, our members have contributed, through lost businesses and recreational opportunities and quality of life, because of the increased drawdowns of Lake Koocanusa.

We believe that if the region is going to recover salmon, they must have an effective plan, and that plan will establish and follow clear and achievable goals. It will recognize the complexities of the salmon and the river system and set priorities to maximize the chances of recovery.

In addition, any plan should take into account the impacts that it will have on the humans living within the region. We do not believe that breaching the four lower Snake River dams has been shown to have a reasonable chance of recovering the salmon runs, and we are opposed to

including it in any recovery plan. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Next is Ross Titus, then Russ Crowder, then James Conner.

MR. TITUS: Ross Titus. I haven't seen the draft Environmental Impact Statement yet, so I won't start giving advice at this point, but I will a little later in a written form.

But the one thing that I've been concerned about is the evidence that the debate so far has been mostly on the cost of the removal of the dams or parts of the dams. And I hope that if I'm not wrong, that the final EIS will at least cover the benefits to be derived not only to the salmon but to the economy from the breaching of the dams, namely the restoration of a sustainable commercial fishery on a local basis and also the improved recreational fisheries that would be allowed by return to a real river, and also other benefits derived from perhaps reducing or eliminating some of the subsidies that are associated with the present dams. I won't make any other comments now until after I've read that EIS.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Russ Crowder, then James Conner, then Brian Marotz.

MR. CROWDER: My name is Russ Crowder. I'm

here today representing the organization Montanans for Property Rights, and I'm going to comment specifically on one aspect of what I'm reading in the alternatives.

And I'd like to start with Alternative 1 under habitat -- the habitat measures contemplated by biological objectives and managing human activities between regional, federal Rare and water quality standards. As I thumb through, this alternative would place priority of the significant intent habitat improvement on both public and private land. All the alternatives have something like this in that. What does that mean? That's our question as a property rights organization. Does it mean what's happening right now with National Marine Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the northern rivers of the Klamath, Trinity system, I assume that doesn't have any dams, but also doesn't have any salmon because the Indians are netting all the salmon before they get up into the Klamath. Right now, the federal government is in the process of attempting to take control of all property, both public -- state lands and private lands, 500 feet on each side of both those rivers, Klamath and Trinity Rivers, and every stream and tributary that flows into those rivers. Is that what this means? We don't know.

But I'll tell you something. Anybody that's not promoting this new-age environmentalist nature-worshiping

agenda that our bosses are promoting in Washington will tell you that the problem with the salmon isn't the dams. The problem is you're putting too many of them in cans.

Now, I would like to state for the record that our organization totally agrees with Representative Aubyn Curtiss on this. And I would also like to say, specifically to Ms. Darm and Mr. Olney, if this means what I think it means and you come to Montana expecting to take control of all private property within 500 feet on each side of our rivers and streams, be ready to fight for it.

(Applause.)

THE MODERATOR: Next is James Conner and then Brian Marotz, and then I believe we're going take a short break because we're about two hours into the meeting. So let's hear from James Connor. James Connor? Then let's move on to Brian Marotz.

MR. MAROTZ: Good evening. I'm Brian Marotz. I'm not going to make your job any easier, because I'm going to go off of this script a little bit; sorry.

After hearing some of the things I heard tonight, I'm going to leave this with you. But hear this. What we're talking about tonight -- and most of my comments will address the All-H Paper. We're talking about things that go a lot further than just Snake River dams, as the colonel so eloquently stated at the beginning. We're talking about

hydropower, habitat, hatcheries, and -- what's the fourth one? Harvest.

Well, in Montana, of course, the local concerns are two very inextricable things. We've got hydropower, which means a lot of habitat in our rivers, and so we've repeatedly testified in favor of the Integrated Rule Curves, and you're expecting to hear that. And one of the comments tonight was that the Integrated Rule Curves are perhaps not consistent with what's being done or suggested by biological opinion mainly during summer, and that's correct.

I think what it's really boiled down to is summer and then the actual April drawdown and refill. And I think we can have all of these if we implement the VARQ flood control, which does this, for those who don't know. If you have less drawdown in average and less-water years, you will have a smaller hole that you need to fill when the runoff hits. You don't need to have as large of a hole because of a less-than-average water year. So you don't need that for flood control. When the runoff hits, that means you put less of it into the reservoir's storage and you pass the rest through, and that creates a more natural spring hydrograph within flood constraints. That also allows us to make a more natural flow in the river downstream. And if the flows are flat during the summer than elevated, what it ends up with is a benefit to salmon downstream and bull

trout and white sturgeon in Montana.

So we're advocating the IRC/VARQ. VARQ allows us to allow work when you can safely and when it's economically feasible and flatten those flows out downstream. Our recommendations are based on a lot of years of science, and I've got a lot of detail. If anyone cares to hear it, I'll fill you in. And it's sustainable from year to year. So it's something that works across the board from the Columbia Basin water perspective, and it helps salmon and resident fish. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

We're going to take about a ten-minute break. The first three people are, when we come back so you'll know and be sure you're in the room, Larry Hanson and Tom Negal, I believe, and Carol Miller. So we'll start again at 20 to 9:00.

(Proceedings in recess from 8:25 p.m. to 8:40 p.m.)

THE MODERATOR: Are we ready for getting through the rest of the comments? I think we're about a third of the way through now.

And Donna Darm has indicated she'd like to make a comment to the group before we start.

MS. DARM: Thank you, Jacqueline.

I just wanted to say Jacqueline mentioned that

we've had a number of these public hearings throughout the region, and the issue of dam breaching is something that's very emotional and tends to be contentious. And I've been really impressed with this group here tonight. You've been tremendously respectful of one another, listening to one another's points of views, and I want to let you know how much the panelists appreciate the fact that you really are listening to each other and respecting one another's views. And it speaks well of the community. So thank you.

THE MODERATOR: With that said, we'll go to our next comment from Larry Hanson.

MR. HANSON: They're all gone. Thirty years ago, approximately, to the best of my recollection, this same discussion was held; same issues, same concerns and the same sets of dams. Thirty years ago. We had the nitrogen problem on the big dams in the Columbia with the downstream juveniles. It's been there 30 years.

I'm glad to see there's some progress made. I hope it can be throughout all the dams. The proof in the pudding, we as a society haven't done a damn thing about that, until we get to a crisis that everybody here in this room doesn't want to see happen. I don't want to see dams breached, but I don't know if there's another alternative. I don't think there is.

Let's look at some of the proof. The return rate

in the fish going to Idaho is one-third of one percent. That's basically one fish per every 300 released. And that return rate is the same, whether they're barged or just let flow through the dams.

It's my opinion, based on an early study of about 30, 35 years ago, that wild chinook salmon could not be reared in holding pens. They all of a sudden reach a certain size and just die. I think the Santiam* had a good hatchery program where they hatched -- raised the fish, fingerlings, released them into the upper Santiam River. And I think that's a major part of the problem. So the proof of the pudding is barging doesn't seem to work. There has to be a very high mortality shortly after they're released. They're alive when they leave the barge and the truck. But that traumatic experience probably doesn't let them last very long.

The other fact that's true is that the Yakima run is pretty healthy. And they're passing four dams. The Yakima is not as good a habitat as the upper Salmon River and the upper Snake River. So I think, basically -- the other point that I wanted to make that I asked the question next door is, the dams can be restored at a later date when we're a lot smarter. I don't think we have a choice. And I don't think we can afford to wait five, six years. Thank you very much.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Next we're going to hear from Tom Nesvacil, then from Carol Miller and, after that, Jack Stanford.

MR. NESVACIL: I'm Tom Nesvacil. I work at the aluminum plant, CFAC. I also am a board member of Montanans For Multiple Use.

I'm against the dam removals. One of the reasons is that about ten years ago, our plant had to cut back about, oh, 30 percent of our operation because of the power loss due to the cold temperatures in California and on the coast. These dams helped supply some of the power at that time that we needed. We tried to get power from Canada and places like that. We had trouble getting access to the transfer lines to bring power into our plant. Most people don't realize that there's about 15 aluminum plants along the Columbia River that operate in the Pacific Northwest that generate a lot of income, use of quality metal that just about everybody seems to like to use. So I'm against the dam removals. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Carol Miller, then Jack Stanford, then Sherman Lee.

MS. MILLER: My name is Carol Miller, and I'm representing the Lake Koocanusa Coalition. We're 400 members of local citizens and concerned citizens. We live

in Rexford, Montana.

I'd like to comment on the All-H Paper. And I'd like to read an excerpt from the biological assessment regarding recreation considerations. And I'll quote. This is from the biological assessment. "To support high levels of recreational use that occurs at the John Day project, about 17 recreational areas/facilities (federal and local) are located along Lake Umatilla. Presently there are 13 boat ramps with 26 launch lanes, 160 picnic sites, and 242 individual camp sites. For the period 1987 to 1991, the average number of visitors per year to the recreational sites along the John Day pool was 2,272,000. August is the peak months for visitation to the project, with about 350,000 visitors. The plan of operation at John Day does not specifically provide for special regulation of the reservoir in the interest of recreation, but the stable pool levels enhance the popularity of these recreational sites. The Corps of Engineers cooperates with Oregon and Washington state park departments and a variety of local entities such as counties, cities and port districts to build and manage a system of water related recreational facilities," unquote.

The above text illustrates the disproportionate level of concern that the biological assessment provides to the authorized purpose of recreation. A commensurate level of consideration was not provided for the recreational

interests at Libby and Hungry Horse or for the unimpounded river reaches below them. The federal government should be held accountable for this inequitable treatment. Like Lake Umatilla, August is a peak month for visitors to Lake Koocanusa. However, unlike Lake Umatilla, which enjoys a stable lake level, Lake Koocanusa is drawn down 20 feet making much of the recreational facilities unusable.

We should be provided with the same level of assistance in developing recreational use of both Libby and Hungry Horse dam as well as the river reaches below them that is provided by Lake Umatilla behind John Day Dam. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Jack Stanford, then Sherman Lee and then, after that, will be Bob Elias.

MR. STANFORD: Hi, I'm Jack Stanford. I'm the director of the Flathead Lake Biological Station that's right down here just a little ways. Tomorrow or sometime, you're going do drive right by that lake, and I want you to look out across it. It's a very important lake to those of us up here. And I've been working on that lake, now, for almost 30 years. And the very best science that exists in the entire Columbia Basin is in relation to the eutrophication problems in that lake. It's still one of the cleanest lakes in the world and one that we value very, very

highly around here.

The problem is gradual nutrient loading in the lake. And as materials come into the lake, it causes the lake to grow algae in the summertime. And the worst time of the year is in August. That's when we have big blooms of algae in the lake, or when we've had them in the past. It's only occurred twice, two years in the period of record that we have, but they've been significant blooms.

Now there's been a strategy for many years to reduce the loading of nutrients into Flathead Lake to maintain that clear, clean water that you're going to see when you go by there tomorrow. And the problem with your flow augmentation plan or procedure, aside from discussions about whether it works or not, is a piece of science that I would like to put on the table tonight. And that is, if you pull Hungry Horse in the summer and move large volumes of water into Flathead Lake in August and September, you're putting it in right at the time when the lake has the least amount of nutrients in the upper water column. That's because the algae have picked it up through summer growth, and either at that point they're going to move into a pollution bloom or they're not. So the last thing we want in that lake in the summertime is a nutrient load. And that's exactly what you give us when you pull Hungry Horse in August.

Now, if you can shape the curve along the lines of what Brian Marotz has talked to you about, that impact is reduced but not entirely. So you're going to have to go home and put this on the radar screen. Because the drawdowns at Hungry Horse in the summertime are going to violate the TMDL actions for Flathead Lake, and that's something we worked a very long time on. And I assure you the science is one hundred percent on that issue. Thanks.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Next, Sherman Lee, then Bob Elias, then Richard Griffin.

MR. LEE: Good evening. My name is Sherman Lee. I'm co-chair of the Koocanusa International coalition.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service convened an international blue ribbon recovery team for the Kootenai River white sturgeon in 1994. They made specific recommendations for flow provisions out of Libby Dam. The primary harm to the white sturgeon is the modification of the hydrograph, especially in spring and summer, by Libby Dam. Since no other federal project can provide the requested sturgeon flows, the priority at Libby Dam must be to meet the sturgeon flow objectives first and then the salmon flow objectives; not the other way around.

This blue ribbon sturgeon recovery team unanimously supported and recommended the IRC concept for

sturgeon recovery. Reservoir drawdowns in Libby of 115 feet are typical in all years. Even the summer drafts for salmon augmentation of 20 feet are very significant in terms of the areas dewatered. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should accept the recommendations of this blue ribbon international panel in entering their biop call for the implementation of IRC.

The harmful effects against both the Kootenai whiteriver sturgeon and the bull trout are backed by sound biological science, as listed in the biological assessment, and should tell you not to continue with a 20-foot summer draw down.

The federal courts require the feds to consider the IRCs at every relevant stage of the decision making process, but they've also been ignored. The question is why. I was told by Cynthia Hendrickson that the August drawdown was required by National Marine Fishery Service for the purpose of improving river flow to John Day dam.

As you've heard here this evening, the Corps of Engineers, with the National Marine Fishery Service blessing, recommended not proceeding with John Day drawdown to increase stream flow because they provide only minor change in fish travel of a day or two. Simple hydrologic calculations show that the maximum expected benefit from Montana flow augmentation is in the range of one day or

lower. This benchmark of one or two days is justification for not drawing down -- if this benchmark of one or two days is justification for not drawing down John Day, it certainly should provide the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service a standard for modifying, suspending or delaying Libby and Hungry Horse drawdowns.

Montana's offered a compromise IRC with a 10-foot draft, thus providing some flow aumentation still providing the entire range of IRC related benefits. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should acknowledge the marginal change in fish travel time, the independent science of harm to bull trout and sturgeon, the intent of the court mandate and, thus, recommend and adopt the IRCs.

Finally, the Northwest Power Planning Council has included there's a 24-percent chance the northwest won't have enough electricity to meet demands during the next four winters. They're short by -- just four sentences to go. They're short by 3,000 megawatts, enough power to fuel three Seattle's. That's without removing these four dams that are in question tonight. It only makes sense to adopt a 10-foot drawdown, leave the extra water in our region to be released according to IRCs and VARQ, thereby providing more water to bring the October through January period to meet this short electric -- this electrical shortfall. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Bob Elias, followed by Richard Griffin, followed by John Winnie.

MR. ELIAS: My name is Bob Elias, and I am a fishing guide. And I have the privilege of guiding on the Kootenai and the Flathead. I also was raised in a place called Carmel by the sea, California. And we had a real vital run of steelhead there when I was a small boy. And it's gone through some trying times. I've had the privilege of fishing for salmon steelhead all the way up to Alaska.

And I'm concerned, because our resident fish have been relegated to a lower status than the anadromous fish. It appears to me that there is a lot of attention given to the glamorous species of the salmon and steelhead. I'm concerned about the west slope cutthroat, I'm concerned about our bull trout, I'm concerned about the sturgeon.

And when I'm sitting on that river in the middle of the summer and something happens. The bite goes off, I see logs floating down the river, I'm below Pressentine Bar on the main stem of the Flathead, and I watch the banks just dropping in on me and cottonwoods coming off the banks. That doesn't seem to be a real natural thing to occur during the middle of the summer.

Montanan's have repeatedly testified in favor of a balanced operation that benefits all Columbia River fish while maintaining local, recreation, flood control and power

production. To this end, we want the federal agencies to implement the Integrated Rule Curves, or IRCs, and sturgeon tiered flow approach in the Kootenai only developed by Montana and the variable flow, or VARQ, strategy for system flood control developed by the Army Corps of Engineers. This combination of dam operating strategies provides the flexibility to keep reservoir elevations higher than the IRCs when it's safe, in terms of flowed control, and affords a more natural annual flow pattern in the rivers downstream.

I've witnessed this. Unnatural river fluctuations are especially harmful to the fish and recreation in the Kootenai and Flathead rivers during the summer and fall.

I'm grateful to be able to have my livelihood on the river, but I'm going to suggest a couple of things for our children so they don't have to have the same hearing in 30 years. If you've ever been on the Columbia River, around Hood River or you've ever been around Browning or you've ever been on the highline, it's real windy. There are alternative sources of energy. There are alternative sources of electricity. And I'm going to suggest that we consider some of those in the future. Because I don't want to pass these problems onto our kids.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Richard Griffin, John Winnie, and then, I believe, it's Warren McConkey.

MR. GRIFFIN: Hi, I'm Richard Griffin. I want to thank you all for being here tonight. I was sitting back there feeling pretty guilty about you, then I flashed back on my discussion with my tax accountant this week, and I felt my guilt all away. Thanks for being here.

First of all, I want to tell you that I've lived, fished and worked in Astoria, Oregon; lived, fished and worked in Portland, Oregon; lived, fished and worked in Columbia River Basin; lived, fished and worked in Spokane; lived, fished and worked in Thompson Falls and Noxon, Montana; lived, fished and worked now here in Kalispell. There are several conclusions you can draw from that. One might be this old dog salmon is about all spawned out and ready to die, which is probably true because I'm at the headwaters now. The other one might be that I can't hold a job, and that's probably true as well.

But in the interim I also spent about almost 20 years in Alaska, and I learned a heck of a lot about salmon, a lot about salmon. And one thing I learned is that salmon need good, clean, fast-moving water. You don't get that with dams in the river. Now, you'd think from that statement that I'm in favor of breaching the dams in the Snake River. I am certainly not. Because I'll tell you why. That's not going to do the job.

I would also like to crawl back into history and

live with someone like David Tompson who worked the entire tributaries of the Columbia River. And I'd like to run shoulder to shoulder with him, but I'd have to give up a few things. The first thing I'd give up is my Tahoe. Second thing is my house, which has electrical and gas heat. And then I'd probably have to give up some of the food that Tutvedt and other people raise. And, certainly, I'd lose my wonderful wife. And that's most important to me. Because she wouldn't tolerate any of that kind of stuff.

But the point I'm trying to make is, if we believe that we breach the dams on the Salmon River that we're going to possibly save the water in the Flathead and other tributaries up here in the north, that's not true. These salmon need more than that. Because you have Portland and -- Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington pumping heat and all their effluents into that river system where those salmon have to pass by, and you're not going to do away what that. You're got going to get enough water to flush that stuff down the river and solve the problems that we're discussing this evening. So I'm opposed to breaching the dams.

I also want to speak out in favor of some other species. If you start taking the water away from the people in Columbia River Basin, you're going to dry up the potholes which kills a lot of fish, you're going to drive the

pheasants out of there, that everybody loves. If you start fooling around with the Snake River, you're going to do way with the chuckers, which I love to kill, and you're also going to be doing a lot of things to damaging species that have taken up residence over the years, and they're very important to not only the people but also, I think, to the environment in that area. So you're going to mess with a lot of things. We mess with the dams building. When you take the dams out, you're going to mess with some species that I don't want you to mess with. So please leave them alone, do your best to do the best for the salmon, which I believe, personally, are going to be gone some day anyway.

Spend my tax money on that, that's fine, Colonel, I appreciate that, you're doing a good job. And I thank you for your EIS mentioning the fact that we've got not indigenous species living down there that are just as important to me, personally, as salmon. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Next is John Winnie, then Warren McConkey, then Sheila Keller.

MR. WINNIE: I'm John Winnie. I'm president of the Flathead Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

I had a talk this morning with a reporter who came, hearing that our chapter was in favor of breaching the dams. And he asked me, Well, what's in that for Montana?

And, of course, I fell right into the pattern; right? New recreational opportunities, we'll be able to go fishing again. And what else? Well, we'll get a fair return on our dollar. We'll be, at least, paying these increased money for electrical power and light, but the portion that goes for salmon recovery will be used in a way which will effectively give us salmon recovery. And we might not have to give as much water away downstream if those dams are breached. Perhaps that's true, maybe it's not.

When I got thinking about that answer afterward, as you always do, that wasn't the thing I really wanted to say. I realized that really what I thought was that the question really assumes that you can't give Montanans too much credit. You can't give them credit, for example, for going down over the Lolo Pass and going down the Lochsa River, and looking into that river and saying, You know, these fish, right, aren't there the way they used to be. And that's important to us. The assumption seems to be that because that river is in Idaho, that Montanans just don't give a damn about those fish. I think -- I think it's true, that that's selling Montanans short.

The problem here is, really, native fish and how to recover them. And if Montana's native fish are important, our bull trout, our west slope cutthroat, our red band rainbow, but salmon are also part of our northwest

heritage, and they're important too. Our position is we ought to do our best to recover them both.

Now, what have we tried? Well, first of all, I believe, and we believe, that this is going to have costs. Salmon recovery is going to get costs. You can't get it for free; there's no free lunch. But to avoid these costs in the past, what have we done? We've barged them, we've trucked them, we've hatched them, we've even tried to teach them to climb ladders, and it hasn't worked. And the result has been that now we have a prediction of extinction, at least on some of these chinook populations, within 20 years. The best science that we have, two separate panels, is telling us that the best alternative now is to breach these dams.

So our position is basically, maybe this is the time to take, for a change, the option that the best science recommends. Maybe it's time to just let these fish do what they do best, just go home under their own power. We believe it's time to breach these dams and let the recovery begin. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Warren McConkey, and then Sheila Keller, followed by Jane Fritz.

MR. MCCONKEY: I'm Warren McConkey. I'm the general manager of Flathead Electric Cooperative here in

Kalispell. We serve electricity to 50,000 customers, including this building.

And I think that a lot of people would be really shocked if we would just look at some surveys of a lot of those people, a lot of them that are not in this room here tonight. A lot of young mothers at home trying to take care of their kids and just barely getting by. And any economic downturn in those folks is a serious impact. And they're concerned about the economics of living in the northwest.

I want to start by thanking you for coming to Kalispell to hear our concerns. I hope you, somehow, find some realty in setting goals and a strategy to solve the salmon issues in the northwest. I do challenge you to get beyond the emotional crusading that's going on about this issue, get the facts, get the science. But even more importantly than that, accept the realty that we need to adapt best management practices to what we have to work with. Accept that we have a society inhabiting the northwest ecosystem. Use some common sense to manage what we have in the year 2000, and forget about re-creating a false hope that a 1900 river system can still be re-created. It can't. There are way too many people living here. And like you say, dumping effluent, driving up and down the roads and worn out rubber getting in the rivers, whatever it is, there are a lot of people living here and you can't get

rid of all of them.

Tearing down dams is ludicrous. We have to move forward. We have a developed society that lives here in the northwest and, yes, we are all part of the northwest society. So here in Montana we are a part of the Columbia River, as well.

The first step in a constructive habitat management plan is to set a priority of what goals you're seeking to achieve. Decide which they are and which goals are at cross-purposes with each other. And a lot of the goals out there are at cross-purposes. Face the fact that they are.

Yes, we've wasted three billion dollars, and I can say that I think it's been wasted by fisheries and habitat managers that are not focused on a single goal. And I don't know for sure what that goal is, but if it's hatcheries, then we need to focus on hatcheries. If it's natural fish, focus on natural fish. But pick a goal, not two or three. You can't please every fishery's desire out there.

The other main area that I'm obviously concerned about is energy. The loss of 3,000 megawatts of energy in the Columbia River system is an enormous amount of emergency. It's even more than that because it's peaking energy. And if you take away the peaking capacity of those four dams down there, it's a serious matter to the Hungry

Horse and to the rest of the hydrosystem where we get our peaking generation from. And see I'm out of time, so I need to quit. But I do encourage you to use some common sense, move forward with a set of goals instead of trying to shoot at everything.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Sheila Keller, then Jane Fritz and, after that, Brian Peck.

MS. KELLER: I'm Sheila Keller from Kalispell. I am with Montana Women in Timber, but I'm not testifying specifically on their behalf tonight.

Breaching of these dams is the most drastic, irrational and irreversible option for salmon recovery than packing the entire economy of the region and beyond. There is already a prediction of a power shortage, and breaching may eventually prove unnecessary, with developing technology.

I would like to address habitat tonight. The U.S. Forest Service has documented, and foresters from Steve Mealy in Idaho to regional forester Dale Bosworth, have said we have a forest health problem. Our forests are overstocked with shade tolerant species, especially Douglas fir that intercept and consume tremendous amounts of water. When there are 600 mature trees per acre, instead of the hundred ponderosa pine that might have existed historically,

and with the scenario repeated across the entire region, the impact on instream flows is very significant. Yet we are prevented at every turn from restoring our forests with common sense, science-based, silvicultural methods that would help augment and create more natural stream flows.

The Swan River is a stronghold for bull trout, and yet it is one of the most heavily managed and roaded drainages in this area by Plum Creek, the state and the Forest Service.

Is fire the answer? Dr. Victor Kaczinski, a fishery specialist who has worked on salmon recovery, has said there is no activity more detrimental to salmon recovery than the catastrophic wildfires that have burned and will burn in the future. For instance, rains following the 1989 Tanner Gulch fire in the upper regions of the Grande Ronde River in the Blue Mountains of Oregon, resulted in 100 percent fish kill for more than 36 miles downstream. This was in prime salmon spawning habitat and impacted at least five generations. We know that the 1910 fire literally boiled the water in streams, killed fish and sickened people who drank from it after running through miles of ash. We can take steps towards salmon recovery if we take steps towards recovering our forests and forest health. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Jane Fritz, then Brian Peck, then I believe it's Eugene Graf.

MS. FRITZ: Good evening. I want to thank the panel for being here tonight. I'm from Clark Fork, Idaho. I just drove 125 miles to come over here to say a few words. And it's an unusual thing for me to get up and give testimony, because I'm a journalist. And over the course of the last five, six years, I've done many stories on environmental issues. It's sort of my beat. I produce for public radio, for national public radio.

And why am I here tonight? And I guess it's because I'm one of those emotional crusaders that was spoken about earlier. And it's for two reasons. And I'd like to just share a very brief excerpt of a story that I wrote as sort of a personal reporter's notebook for MPR three years ago. I have not done a salmon story in the last three years. Let me put my reading glasses on, because I'm at that age where I need them.

This is 32 years ago that we're talking about. And we're talking about the Salmon River. I'm from Idaho. And it's the only river, that I know of, that doesn't have a dam on it. And I'm very grateful for that.

"I first saw this wild river as an 18 year old fresh out of high school. My best friend, her sister and I drove cross country looking for adventure. The sign in our

car window read, 'Idaho or bust,' puzzling most folks along the way. But I knew better. I grew up with my father's amazing stories about fishing Idaho's spectacular Salmon River; it's known as the River of No Return."

It's interesting, because I'm here for my father, I guess, who's been dead now for ten years. But I grew up in Ohio, not in the Pacific Northwest. I've lived here in for 20 years in the Pacific Northwest. But he fished for steelhead, of all things, in the Salmon River of Idaho. And I suppose that's one reason I fell in love with his stories that I came out west. And for that reason, I guess, it's an emotional thing for me to be here. There's lots of reasons. Being a journalist, I've heard them all.

I have the distinction of saying two summers ago I got to see the last wild Redfish Lake Sockeye, personally, in a story that I was doing. And all I can say is when I saw the fish, I wept. And I don't know why.

I would just like to complete my statement by reading the last paragraph of my story, if I can. I was listening to the story driving, and I'm going to give you the script as part of my comments; okay? But I wept coming here and it's just -- I don't know. But it's for that fish, that last fish that I saw and those few chinook that I saw.

"I still come to that place to connect with the memory of my father who first told me about it. It's still

the most beautiful and peaceful place I know. But every visit is a bittersweet one. The river's name has become almost a mockery of what it once was.

"Years ago my father told me that the Salmon got its nickname - 'The River of No Return' - because it one, incredibly wild river. I only hope that some day I don't have to tell my daughter that it was because the fish for which it was named never made it back." Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Next is Brian Peck, then Eugene Graf, then Dave Skinner.

MR. PECK: Hello, I'm Brian Peck from Columbia Falls. Thank you for the opportunity to testify tonight on this very important topic. I don't know how to follow that last one. That was pretty amazing.

I'd like to advocate, unequivocally, for breaching or bypassing the four Snake River dams. We've seen 30 years of politically correct but ecologically unsuccessful efforts relating to salmon and steelhead recovery, including smolt barging, significant restrictions on commercial and sport fishery harvest, huge hatchery operations, and upper reservoir drawdowns. It should be abundantly clear that none of these Band-Aid approaches has worked. And fish stocks continue to decline. It's time to belatedly do the biologically and the legally correct thing and breach these dams.

Over 200 scientists, organizations and fish and wildlife departments have told you that while all four Hs play some role, it's clear that the big limiting factor is these dams. Some have estimated it will cost one billion, over ten years, or a hundred million per year, to accomplish just the breaching. While this seems like a lot, certainly to all of us in this room, we need to remember that we're currently putting 400-plus million per year into programs that don't seem to be working and haven't for years. Let's put that towards what scientists say is the best available chance for successfully recovering these species by bypassing the dams. And I suggest we use some of that 400 million a year for towns like Lewiston and some of the farmers and irrigators to mitigate any potential fallout from this.

Partially breaching can be reversed. Extinction of these species cannot. Five percent of power generation would be lost, and northwest ratepayers would still pay substantially less than the rest of all Americans. It may allow you, may allow you, to forego some of the drawdowns at Hungry Horse and Libby and avoid pitting salmon against bull trout and sturgeon, which I would suggest we should never be doing. It's supported by 200 scientists that addresses your federal court mandates to overhaul the entire recovery plan. May best serve your treaty obligations to the Columbia River

Basin tribes, and avoid what I have heard are potential multi-billion-dollar lawsuits in that regard.

So I would hope that you would give all Americans back another stretch of free-flowing river with free-ranging salmon, and give them a shot at it. We know they did it before we intervened, and I suspect they can do it again.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Next is Eugene Graf, then Dave Skinner and, after, that Gene Atherton.

MR. GRAF: Good evening. I don't have a written report, nor do I represent a commercial or a political entity. I'm speaking for myself, from my own experience.

About 20 years ago a nephew of mine, who happens to have a master's degree in fishery biology and is a conservation officer in Idaho, invited me to go over there to do some steelhead fishing. I had never seen a steelhead, nor had I seen a salmon in the water. I went with him, and I tell you, I had a great time. We got about -- there were three of us in the boat. We got about 10, 15 or 20 hits. Not that we caught them, but we had that many strikes. Then I fished the following year and we did a similar situation.

Then about -- then I moved away from the area, and about five years ago moved back, and I went out there and fished again. And it was two years ago was the last time.

We got about five strikes, three of us. And I said to Steve, I said, you're in the same waters and you know where the fish are, being a conservation officer. He said, Well, it's the dams. I said, Those dams have been there for years. He said, Not those Snake River dams.

So the point is, it wasn't the whole total of dams, this is just, as he put it, those four dams were the straw that broke the camel's back. So, obviously, I promote the idea of eliminating the dams. And I hope that it will solve the problem. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Next is Dave Skinner, then Gene Atherton, then, I believe, it's Verdell Jackson.

MR. SKINNER: My name's Dave Skinner. I'm with Montanans for Multiple Use. I just happened to prepare this little sheet of notes on my hydroelectrically powered computer.

I just went to this here decision document, and basically looking at 1, 2, and 3, I think they're all unacceptable. Like Alternative 1, they talk about no hatcheries, no mitigation aside from aggressive restoration on public and private lands. And I can see the implications for timber harvest for agriculture basically gutting the entire economy. And this assumes that natural rivers are the best way. And, again, you know, the guy from Flathead

Electric said we got a society here.

Then we got wood mitigation for significant economic costs. Well, I'd like to know who's going to mitigate and who's going to pay those costs. And it's going to be -- it's certainly not going to be the high-dollar environmental groups that have banners and salmon suits and things like that.

Ecosystem and steward primarily for native fish and wildlife. Well, I tell you something. I kind of like fishing for regular rainbows and brown trouts and brookies and that sort of thing. If fact, I caught a 24-inch one up on the Middle Fork of Dolly Varden Creek. That has been a while back, but I like fishing for those sort of things.

I think what we need to do is look at Alternative 4, start looking at what's going to work before we start throwing billions of dollars. At John Day Dam, three billion dollars. In general, I find the claim that half a billion dollars a year in increased tourism will result from the dam breaching, that's kind of fallacious that would mean that you got 500,000 fish a year, spending a thousand bucks a day just to stand someplace along the river with a fishing pole.

Now, I think the added expense of northwest power users is going to be considerably more than the quarter billion dollar figure that's been bandied out about by the

Idaho statist -- statesman. In the best case, what you got is 250 million dollars of perpetual economic loss spent just on fish and fishing. Never mind the private properties instructions and all that.

Now, you look at the fish habitat, you look at the fish population, we're talking 16 million fish a year, under ideal circumstances. Divide that 250 million dollars in net economic losses, that's $15 per fish, if we catch them all and if they all come back.

To me, I mean, the numbers aren't making sense here, if we're going to foot the bill. I don't know. I just would say we need look to Alternative 4 to see what works, and then blend Alternative 4 with Alternative 6 with active management, with Alternative 7, and come up with something that makes some common sense. Thanks.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Gene Atherton, then Verdell Jackson, then Jim Cross.

MR. ATHERTON: Good evening. I'm Gene Atherton. I'd like to thank you for your allowing me to speak to you. And like one of these last gentlemen that just spoke, I also do not represent a special interest group. I'm just a northwestern Montana guy that is here to speak what, I think, are my feelings on the subject.

Of most import to me is the economy of the area.

And I have been looking at and reading the news media is, frankly, about all the information I've had relative to the salmon recovery and what we are and aren't doing. I learned this evening, from listening to the colonel, that, surprisingly, it sounds like we are making some headway without breaching dams on the recovery of the salmon. But not to get into that subject for a moment.

While I have been a resident here in northwestern Montana, or in the northwest five states, I have seen within the last 20 or 25 years, an attempt to preserve other species. At least one of those species, actually a number of species, drastic acts were taken, what acts that I considered to be drastic, which may or may not have preserved the species. I have not really heard any data on it, subsequent to the acts being taken. But what I have realized is that the acts had tremendous, and I mean tremendous, adverse economic impacts on my family, my friends and my neighbors here in northwestern Montana. And I'm, obviously, referring, in great deal, to the timber industry in this area. And I don't mean to isolate simply that industry. But in an effort to take drastic acts to find a solution for the preservation of species, we greatly harmed human beings that live in this area.

I am concerned, and therefore opposed to, breaching the dams. I am concerned that breaching the dams,

only being one of a number of alternatives, is about the most drastic. And I am concerned, like the drastic acts of specie preservation that I've seen in the past, that it is going to have severe and adverse economic impacts on my family, my loved ones and my neighbors in this area. And I think it will be horribly shameful if that is allowed to happen.

Salmon preservation deserves top priority, and it has been top priority in your studies ever since you started. Please keep it there. But while you keep salmon preservation at the top priority level, please consider those of us that reside, work and live in the five northwestern states and the economic impact that it's going to have on us. Thank you very much.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Next is Verdell Jackson then Jim Cross.

MR. JACKSON: I'm Verdell Jackson. I'm a state representative, and I think I gave up my time. But I would just like to make a request.

I found out about this today. I have never received information. And being a state legislature. And I would think that something this important, that some information could have gotten to us. And I would hope that you would involve us in this decision, that you wouldn't just bypass us, that you would give us the courtesy of

getting the material and the report. We would like to study it. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: I think, also, people should -- there's some info in your packets that you can order any of the documents that you heard about tonight. Which, of course, isn't to your issue of not getting enough notice about this tonight. Thanks for your comment.

Jim Cross. After that I'm going to make a wild guess and, I think, it's Kurt Krueger maybe. And then Clarice Ryan. Jim cross.

FROM THE FLOOR: I think Jim stepped out. He might be back.

THE MODERATOR: We'll try to come back to him. Let's go on to Kurt Krueger.

MR. KRUEGER: My name is Ken Krueger. I'm a director with Flathead Electric, currently, and I'm past Flathead County Commissioner and involved with the State Rural Electric Program as well.

Over 3 billion dollars have been invested in the region for salmon recovery since the '80s. You heard that many times. Still the region's rivers remain a focus of debate. What vision does this region have for its rivers? What do we want for our salmon population? How many do we want to harvest? Put forth a logical set of goals and follow that.

I will tell you we need our dams for navigation, we need our dams for low-cost hydroelectric electricity, and we need our dams for flood control. We in the Pacific Northwest need these benefits so we can enjoy a way of life available to the rest of America. Yes, we have low-cost energy. We have high-cost transportation, freight into the area. One, perhaps, offsetting the other. We want our salmon, and just throwing money at them, as in the past, will not produce a workable recovery plan. By insisting on a plan that addresses all elements, the region can restore salmon runs and at the same time maintain the environmental and economic benefits of the Columbia River system. It does not have to be either or. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Is Jim Cross back in the room now? Let's go then to Clarice Ryan. And after that Bill Myers, and then Richard Kuhl.

MS. RYAN: I'm Clarice Ryan, and I'm with the Montanans for Multiple Use. I have been 16 years in the energy business, eight of it with Southern California Gas Company, eight of it with Northern Illinois Gas Company. So I'm very interested in that aspect of what we're facing with this dam removal. I'm also very interested in sustainability, preserving our natural resources and the future generations which we've been hearing so much about.

And it seems to me that the future generations depend not only on salmon but also on other natural resources that are necessary for our existence. We've seen mining curtailed, we've seen our forestry being curtailed, we've seen our government coming in and making all kinds of intrusions, and now they want to take away the most -- the cleanest renewable source of energy that is available. And that is hydro. You aren't burning anything. It's just coming as rainfall and falling down and generating electricity. If -- we are already talking about a shortage of energy. What other alternatives do we have? Fossil fuels is the first thing you think of; natural gas, coal and oil. And here we have Al Gore talking about carbon dioxide and the global warming. And we start hearing, seeing the salmon butting their heads against global warming. And when you start using natural gas to generate electricity, you do that at 30 percent or less efficiency. That's not even counting the transmission lines. So we're using up our natural resources to generate electricity which we could have basically almost for free from the earth.

And then the other alternative is nuclear energy. And I have not found a single person yet in the nuclear energy field that has solved the problem of nuclear waste. Are we going to dump it in the ocean to kill the rest of the fish in the ocean? It just doesn't make sense. You can't

look at one species at a time. I'm also a dietician. And low cholesterol is in its heyday. Eat more fish. It's wonderful for you, it's healthy. And 15 to 20 years ago I went into the fish markets, there were 15 to 20 species of fish that I could pick from. Now we have ranch-raised salmon, ranch-raised cat, we have cod, and we have the New Zealand fish where it hasn't been depleted yet. We have all these nets out in the ocean soaking up all these fish. If you're concerned about fish, you might take a look at what's going on in our oceans before you dump the nuclear waste.

So, anyway, there's a lot of aspects that we need to look at, rather than targeting just one thing. And I get the feeling that it's the people of Montana that are being targeted. I've gone through comment period after comment period, since the middle of December, dealing with all kinds of things; off-road vehicle things, forestry things, and now it's salmon. So I'll make one more comment, and I don't think you want this one. I'll send you another one. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Bill Myers, then Richard Kuhl, then Kerrie Byrne.

MR. MYERS: Bill Myers from Bigfork, Montana. I'm against breaching the dams. I testified ten years ago regarding the IRCs, Integrated Rule Curves, and submitted extensive comments at that time. I have not had a

chance -- because I just found out about this hearing recently myself -- I haven't had a chance to really study what's going on regarding this matter, but I do have some definite comments regarding this.

First of all, regarding the power supply. We here are blessed with a very abundant, clean and renewable energy supply. That is the water source that you're using from these dams. We are faced with a choice, if we have to replace that energy supply, of coal, nuclear oil, natural gas. Those aren't good alternatives. We have a very clean source here that we're talking about eliminating when we eliminate these dams. It will affect us here in the Flathead Valley, even though it's hundreds of miles away. When people talk about a minuscule number like five percent of the power of the northwest power supply grid, that may seem minuscule but it still will affect us. And especially when we all know the population increases in demands in the coming years will require more energy sources, not less.

Here in Montana we are often considered a natural sacrifice zone. Our water, our natural resources are taken elsewhere, and this is a good example of it. And we are concerned. Even though I know these dams are being talked about as run of river dams, here in Montana our dams are often used to provide downstream river flows. Some may dispute this, but as a person who owns three businesses in

Bigfork that are all water related, dependent upon the water levels in Flathead Lake and the Swan River, I'm acutely aware of when the level of that lake changes even six inches to supply water downstream. Some of you may say Well, we're not talking about Kerr Dam. But I can also assure you that when water is moved from Hungry Horse upstream through Flathead Lake that you'll be going around tomorrow and eventually down through Kerr Dam and downstream through the Columbia, which I happen to have gone over to Vancouver, Washington last week and seen the entire series of dams, it's an impressive amount of water that flows through this entire system. And a lot of it comes from the headwaters here. When Flathead Lake levels are affected, it affects our businesses here.

It seems like you're pitting the bull trout against the salmon. It's not a win-win. Unfortunately, we're faced with some tough choices right now. I proposed combining some of the alternatives to aid in salmon recovery. I'm not opposed to salmon recovery. I'd urge you to choose alternatives that will work and keep our clean energy supply.

Folks, these dams do exist. We're not talking about new dams here. If we were talking about new dams, I'd have an entirely different view on it. But we're talking about existing resources. They're concrete, and all the

turbines and energy to build those dams are already in place. I would urge you to keep them, because we're talking about an energy supply which is clean, renewable and abundant in the northwest. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

Richard Kuhl, Kerrie Byrne and then Loren Kreck.

MR. KUHL: My name is Richard Kuhl. I live at 867 Main Street, here in Kalispell. I guess it's with some humility that I approach this microphone, because we've been arguing about dams and salmon for 150 years. Folks in Oregon were arguing about them in the 1840s, not just a few years after they arrived in covered wagons. So it seems to me that we've got a major problem here.

The current ratepayers -- and I'm also, by the way, I'm a consumer of Flathead Electric electricity. We have a major problem here in the sense that I'm paying for, through my current rates, et cetera, salmon recovery now, and I'm getting a damaged product. We're not getting salmon recovery, even though we seem to be paying more and more each year.

Also, every few years, and you can trace the history of this back up to about 1870, that government agencies just like yourself have said Well, we're producing more fish in our hatchery. We're trucking more fish by the dams. But despite all those optimistic pronouncements, we

seem to be getting less and less fish back to the headwaters.

In the 1970s I worked out of White Bird, Idaho, and, frankly, I opposed the Lower Granite Creek Dam at that time. So I don't have any compulsion about urging its removal now. I worked in the headwaters of the Solway River where I saw in a place called the salmon hole where the Indians used to gather to smoke the salmon that returned. All through the 1970s we got less and less fish back in the salmon hole, and now it's empty of salmon. I even worked a few days in -- actually a week or so in a little hatching channel in Indian Creek on the upper Salmon. Another failed attempt. No matter how many eggs we hatched and how many fry went down, very few made it back.

So I'm not a great believer. I guess I support the breaching of the dams, but I also know that it's not -- that's not the only thing that's going to bring the salmon back. This is a very, very complicated issue. I think we've got to quit blaming each other and all take some responsibility. We all consume things in this world, so we're going to have to accept responsibility for our own actions. And it seems to me that just breaching the dams alone is not going to do the job. I agree with some of the earlier speakers, we need a coordinated plan that's going to have some reasonable chances for its success. Given that

plan, I'm more than willing to spend some extra dollars to bring the salmon back. Right now I'm paying a lot of dollars and not getting salmon back. That doesn't make sense to me. So I would urge you to take a more holistic approach. Breach the dams, but also back that up with a plan that will at least give a better chance of bringing back the salmon than is occurring now. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Kerrie Byrne, then Loren Kreck, and then we'll go back to Jim Cross.

FROM THE FLOOR: Kerrie had to leave. She teaches.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for letting us know that.

Loren Kreck? How about Jim Cross, then.

MR. CROSS: My name is Jim Cross. I am a resident of the Flathead Valley. I'm also an associate director for the Montana Wildlife Federation, and I wish to present the following testimony on the conservation of the Columbia Basin fish.

The fishery of the Columbia Basin system is truly a part of our nation's cultural, historical and natural heritage. Salmon are at the heart of the northwest Indian culture, and were a life saver to the Lewis and Clark expedition of nearly 200 years ago. We are talking about a national treasure, and I believe we have a responsibility to

protect, preserve and even restore that treasure, when we have reason to believe our efforts to create an abundant and economical source of hydropower have seriously impacted that treasurer. And it seems rather clear that the Snake River salmon population has declined drastically since the four lower Snake River dams were built.

Since the lower Snake River dams were constructed some 25 years ago and longer, the understanding of cumulative effects has vastly improved. Since barging, trucking and fish ladders experiments that have cost at least 3 billion in the last 20 years have not stemmed the steady decline in returning Snake river salmon, I strongly encourage you to accept the conclusions of the scientists who believe that to save the fish, the four dams on the lower Snake must be removed. This conclusion also is supported by the Idaho Wildlife Federation, the Oregon Chapter of the American Fishery Society and the governor of Oregon.

Not only does the removal of the dams have a greater potential than any of the alternative experiments conducted in the last 25 years to restore and maintain the Snake River salmon run, it could reduce the demand for Montana water in the Columbia River system. This action would benefit our native trout species, some of which are in a threatened status and would truly be an act of conserving

fish in all waters of the Columbia Basin.

Sacrificing our fishery resource through extreme reservoir drawdowns at particularly productive time periods to meet flow targets on dams in the lower Columbia River is hardly a desirable measure of success in conserving fish in the entire Columbia Basin. We must remember that the Columbia Basin is a water system composed or interrelated drainages all of which have their respective importances, and these importances should be recognized and preserved in the management of the total system. If the waters of Montana are needed downstream, such flow augmentation measures must meet a test of accurate providing benefit. If you clearly plan to conserve fish or the Columbia Basin, you must select a balanced operation that benefits all Columbia River fish. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Next, let's here from Steve Thompson, then Ward McCartney, then Cesar Hernandez.

MR. MCCARTNEY: Steve also had to leave.

I am Ward McCartney. I'm in from Whitefish. I guess one of the things that has been neglected this evening are the salmon fishermen. They're one of the true small business people in our country and they've been eliminated because there aren't any salmon left for men to make a livelihood from. So I think that needs to be brought up.

The other thing is that I'm a rate payer for

Lincoln Electric. And I had one of the board members up here -- we've had several from Flathead Electric speak tonight. And I guess my concern is, we spent 3 billion dollars without success, without recovering the salmon. Why do they want to continue on that route? Why don't we breach the dams, take an alternative route, and that will probably save us rate payers -- and the study have shown it will save us electrical rates. And I guess the concern is that they won't have enough electricity in the future. And I think that's true. The population in this country is going to double in 50 years, unfortunately. But if they're truly concerned about it, then they would force the rate payers, the new ones, to build some super good sense standards. I'm a contractor, I've been through the course with them. It saves -- it's a good deal and saves power for the whole region. But they haven't taken that bold step yet. So when they do -- and the other concern we've heard is from the grain growers in the local region.

Unfortunately, Montana's only served by Burlington Northern Santa Fe. The Lewiston area is also served by BNSF and Northern Pacific as some competition. It's actually cheaper to ship grain from Nebraska to the west coast than Montana, even though the mileage is less. Plus, there's two competing railroads. So even though the barges will be gone, the railroads will be there. And they should be very

competitive. And I might point out to the grain growers that they're barging that grain from Lewiston area at taxpayers' subsidized rates. The barge guys don't pay anything to use the dams. And so they're unfairly trying to compete with growers in the Lewiston area. By forcing the Lewiston grain growers to use what we have to in Montana, it actually levels the playing field for the growers here. Because their transportation costs probably will come up and there won't be that unlevel playing field between the grain growers. And it will actually be better for the growers here in the state. So I'm for breaching the four dams and hope you make that decision. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Cesar Hernandez and then J.B. Stone.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you for being here and waiting us out.

I'd like to plagiarize a couple gentlemen and spruce up their words. The first one is Adlai Stevenson. He said, "We travel together," fish, birds, quadrupeds and people, embellishment there, "passengers on a little spacecraft, dependent on its vulnerable resources of air, soil," and water, "all committed for our safety to its security and peace, preserve from annihilation only by the work, care, and I will say the love we give our fragile craft" and each other.

"We cannot maintain it half comfortable," man, "half miserable," fish, "half confident," fish, "half despairing," fish, "half slave," fish, "to the ancient enemies of mankind, half free in a liberation of resources," man, "undreamed of until this day. No craft, no crew can travel safely with such contradictions. On their" or our "resolution depends survival of us all," fish, birds, quadrupeds and humans.

The other person I'd like to plagiarize, again, or maybe just quote, is Chief Sealth of the Duwamish tribe. He said, "If all the beasts were gone, men would die from the great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts happens to man."

The last part I'd like to say is, I've got two alternatives of my own. We all know that big cities like Seattle have huge buildings with lots of lights on them. Turn off the lights. How many lights are we going to see tonight when we drive home that are not doing really anything? Turn off the lights. Breach the dams. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: J.B. Stone.

MR. STONE: My name's J.B. Stone, as the lady stated.

You know, I was sort of feeling sorry for myself having, to work all day. Didn't get off until 8:00 -- all

except for this poor lady that has to pound this keyboard up here. She's probably the toughest one of the bunch.

I'd like to see the hands of the people sitting at the table here who collect a government check, work for the United States of America. Is there anybody at that table? The guy in the green suit there, I got to think he's taking a check. I was in the Navy, Colonel. Don't feel too bad about working for the government, even though it's the poorest government we've ever had. I think we can do a lot better.

What I hear -- I hear some rather specious arguments tonight on the part of people who claim to be environmentalists. What's amazing is you don't have the benefit of living here. And I see the same people at many of these meetings -- last time I saw them they were timber experts. And before that they were grizzly bear experts. And I kind of wonder, you know, how they can know so much and I know so little, except that I'd like to see my way of life continue, as would many of the residents of the Pacific Northwest. I don't think we have to tear anything down, including those dams. I think it took 150 years to get our customs and culture to where they are today. And I don't hear anybody saying what the cost to this society is going to be, in real dollars, if all of these save-the-fish concepts are taken to their fullest extent. I'd really like

to see what the impact, the dollar-and-cent impact on the people of the Pacific Northwest is going to be. Because we're living in a very fragile society here. Montana's one of the lowest, if not the lowest, per capita income states in the country. And that being so fragile, you can't just make sweeping changes and expect it not to have an effect on people.

I'm one of those people -- the species I'm most in favor of is homo sapiens. Because without homo sapiens, I don't have a whole lot of fun. My life isn't worth anything. And I like all those other homo sapiens that I helped defend when I was in the United States Navy. I worked very hard to get where I am here tonight. And I don't see that some sort of agency cat fight, like who's going to get to take the most away from the American public, is going to serve any purpose that's going to improve anything. So I heard something called common sense being brought to your attention earlier. And I'd like to second that. And say that I really, really do like salmon. On thinly sliced onions on bagels and cream cheese. And without a society that's able to produce and ship those products, I'm not even interested in seeing you people have a job. Because I have to earn the money that gets you here tonight.

And, finally, the public in this area was not made

aware -- fully aware that you were going to be here. And I think that's a great disservice. The small ad that was in yesterday's paper did not indicate the severity or the scope of what you might achieve. We had a state representative here asking you to do a better job of telling us the truth. That's what I'd like to hear. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

That's the last name that I have on the sign-up list that were brought to me. So if no one else has anything else for the public comment, that will be the end of the public comment for tonight. I want to thank you for your participation and your patience with me as I mispronounced your names. And I want to turn it back to the panel for any final comments.

(Proceedings concluded at 9:50 p.m.)