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March 1, 2018

Re: Support H.R. 3144 to Protect the Northwest's Economy, Environment, and ESA-Listed Salmon

Dear Members of the Northwest Congressional Delegation:

Blachly-Lane Electric Cooperative joins Northwest RiverPartners and our fellow northwest electric cooperatives in thanking you for your bipartisan opposition to misguided components of the President's FY19 budget proposal related to the Bonneville Power Administration's transmission assets and rates. We value that the delegation recognizes BPA's transmission and power generation assets as a pillar of the Northwest economy and critical to our region's carbon-free electric energy production, and your united concern for constituents in the region.

Your bipartisan commitment to protecting BPA's statutory mission and the longevity of the Federal Columbia River Power System allows us to ask you for support of H.R. 3144. The bill will protect the region's access to renewable, carbon free, and reliable federal hydropower while mitigating hydropower impacts and protecting Endangered Species Act listed salmon.

H.R. 3144 would allow the NEPA process to continue as the Court has ordered, with a comprehensive and transparent review of federal hydrosystem operations, while postponing costly and potentially harmful experimental spill and hydro operations in the interim.

BPA faces uncertainty as escalating fish and wildlife costs and related litigation negatively impact its power rates. Keeping BPA sound and competitive serves to shield the agency from political attacks coming from outside the region. H.R. 3144 provides vital near-term certainty by temporarily retaining the federal hydrosystem operations plan supported by both the Bush and Obama Administrations that was extensively vetted by independent scientists, *only* until an ongoing NEPA review process concludes in 2021.

BPA estimates the Court-ordered spill experiment could cost its power customers an estimated \$40 million this year. NOAA Fisheries' Science Center modeling shows this additional spill would provide little or no added benefits to protected juvenile salmon or returning adults. The costs of this experiment to our electric cooperative members are far too great, and the outcome to fish far too negative.

Blachly-Lane provides safe, reliable electric service consistent with the values of its members

If that isn't enough, the spill operations will add 840,000 metric tons of carbon emissions by removing 815 megawatts of carbon-free federal hydrosystem generation and replacing it with fossil fuels. This large loss of hydroelectric generation simply can't be replaced by increasing efficiency, intermittent wind or solar resources. The Court-ordered spill undermines Oregon and Washington's progress toward our carbon-reduction goals.

Your support of H.R. 3144 will keep scientifically recognized ESA-listed salmon protection measures in place while allowing a rational, deliberative NEPA process to generate credible data for future potential dam operations and salmon-management strategies. H.R. 3144, contrary to critics' statements, will simply allow for a much-needed "time out" from over 20 years of litigation and allow the federal agencies to focus their limited resources on conducting the best NEPA process possible to comply with the court's order.

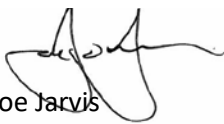
Also know that the region is not in agreement on the Court-ordered 2018 spill operations. The federal Action Agencies (BPA, Army Corps, and Bureau of Reclamation), RiverPartners, Idaho, Montana, Confederated Tribes of the Colville, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, and the Salish-Kootenai tribe, have appealed the ruling to the Ninth Circuit. The Court-ordered spill would abandon federal agencies' best science and expertise in favor of dictating from the bench an operational "experiment" for the complex and crucial federal hydrosystem. That is not a proper role for any Court.

We urge members of the delegation to support this commonsense bill with a continued bipartisan spirit. Your leadership is imperative to keep BPA's hydropower generation assets affordable and to improve the agency's competitiveness as quickly as possible. Without a competitive product to transmit over the wires, BPA will be challenged to meet its important statutory obligations of providing power and protecting fish and wildlife.

Passage of H.R. 3144 is critical to help avoid BPA's current perilous trajectory and further harm to the fisheries. Modest, practical action now will help BPA avoid the economic cliff it faces. To wait and later bail out the agency could impose enormous costs on regional ratepayers and taxpayers.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of one of the most crucial issues facing the Northwest in years.

Sincerely,



Joe Jarvis
General Manager

Cc: Terry Flores, Executive Director, Northwest RiverPartners