

March 19, 2018

The Honorable Dan Newhouse
United States House of Representatives
1318 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Newhouse,

The members of the Inland Ports & Navigation Group (IPNG) wish to extend their sincere appreciation for your leadership and stalwart support of navigation on the Columbia Snake River System.

IPNG is a group of twenty ports, shippers, terminals and other entities which are interested in the continued viability of navigation on the Columbia Snake River System while supporting a healthy environment and robust fish runs in the Northwest. For decades, IPNG has maintained a presence in litigation which could impact the existence of navigation on the river, ensuring the voice of Northwest navigation stakeholders is heard in the courtroom.

The Columbia Snake River System is a vital transportation link for the states of Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Oregon. The economies of these four states rely on the trade and commerce that flows in both directions of this critical commercial gateway.

The inland portion of the system is a 365-mile long marine highway from the Portland/Vancouver area to Lewiston, Idaho and Clarkston, Washington. The eight navigation locks and associated 14-foot inland channel are vital components to this river system, and significant assets to the nation's federal navigation infrastructure portfolio. Towboats pushing barges account for approximately 9 million tons of commercial cargo movement each year. It would take roughly 350,000 trucks to move that same amount of cargo, not to mention the empty backhauls.

The Columbia Snake River System is the nation's single largest wheat export gateway, transporting over 50% of all U.S. wheat to markets overseas. Barging plays a key role in this transportation system, helping to link our farmers with customers around the world. The four Snake River dams alone account for nearly 10% of all U.S. wheat exports in most years.

Our locks and dams move more than just cargo. Cruise boat demand has steadily increased over the last ten years and represents a growing market in the region. Each summer, thousands of passengers are enjoying the Columbia and Snake Rivers via cruises that travel the 325 river miles between Vancouver, WA and Clarkston, WA. Over 18,000 passengers visited in 2017, contributing over \$15 million to communities along the two rivers.

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We would like to signal our support for H.R.3144, which would hold the current river plan in place while the federal agencies move through the NEPA process and prepare a new plan for the Court by 2021. The 2014 Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) Biological Opinion (BiOp) was the product of the best available science, as well as significant collaboration between the federal agencies, four states and sovereign Northwest tribes. The 2014 BiOp had unprecedented support in the region, was deemed scientifically sound by the previous administration, and helped produce record fish runs.

We are very grateful for your efforts to highlight the good work that has been done by our federal agencies to balance the authorized purposes of the river system – navigation, hydropower, irrigation, flood control, and recreation – with the needs of our iconic Northwest fish runs. We will continue to strongly support robust salmon recovery efforts that preserve the multiple uses of the river system, and we thank you again for your leadership when it comes to our river system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Kammerzell".

Tom Kammerzell
Chairman, Inland Ports & Navigation Group (IPNG)
Commissioner, Port of Whitman County

Members of the Inland Ports & Navigation Group:

Clearwater Paper
Columbia River Pilots
Lewis-Clark Terminal, Inc.
Louis Dreyfus Company
Pacific Northwest Farmers Cooperative
Pomeroy Grain Growers
Port of Clarkston
Port of Kalama
Port of Lewiston
Port of Longview
Port of Morrow
Port of Pasco
Port of Ridgefield
Port of Umatilla
Port of Vancouver
Port of Walla Walla
Port of Whitman County
Shaver Transportation
Tidewater Barge Lines
Washington Association of Wheat Growers