

Testimony of Ron Reimann

Subcommittee on Water and Power  
Oversight Hearing on "Electricity Prices and Salmon: Finding a Balance"

July 7, 2006

MY NAME IS RON REIMANN, I AM ONE OF THE OWNERS OF T&R FARMS. WE ARE A FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED FARM. WE ARE A DIVERSE FARMING OPERATION OF APPROXIMATELY 7600 ACRES OF WHICH 4600 IS IRRIGATED. OUR MAIN SOURCE OF WATER IS THE SNAKE RIVER.

WE BOUGHT OUR FARM IN 1973 AND PLANNED TO PUT IRRIGATION ON IT IN 1974. WE PUT DEVELOPMENT ON HOLD WHEN A WATER MORATORIUM WAS PUT ON THE LOWER SNAKE TO STUDY ITS BEST USES. WE ALSO RAN INTO A LITTLE ANIMAL CALLED THE KANGAROO MOUSE AND ITS HABITAT.

1975 IRRIGATION DEVELOPMENT STARTED. PUMPS, PIVOTS AND MAINLINE WERE ALL PAID FOR BY T&R FARMS WITH NO USE OF ANY GOVERNMENT MONEY .

WE STARTED WATER AND POWER SAVING METHOD IN 1979 USING AERIAL INFRARED PHOTOGRAPHY AND NEUTRON PROBES TO MEASURE MOISTURE CONTENT OF OUR SOIL. IN 1981 WE INSTALLED A 600HP VARIABLE DRIVE PUMP AT OUR RIVER STATION THAT WAS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND USED ON THE SNAKE OR COLUMBIA RIVERS. WE ALSO INSTALLED OUR FIRST LOW PRESSURE PIVOT.

WE USE GLOBAL POSITIONING TO FERTILIZE AND TO PLANT AND TILLAGE OUR GROUND. THIS EQUIPMENT GIVES US SUB-INCH ACURACY AND SAVES UP TO 35% ON FUEL COSTS. OUR ENTIRE FIELDS ARE TREATED THIS WAY. WE MONITOR SOIL MOISTURE, SOIL NUTRIENTS AND PLANT NUTRIENTS ON A BI-WEEKLY AND WEEKLY BASIS. WE USE COMPUTERS TO CONTROL OUR PUMPING AND ADJUST OUR PRESSURE AND WATER USE THAT ADJUSTS EVERY 8 MINUTES. WE HAVE USED ETHANOL SINCE 1985. WE HAVE DEVELOPED WILDLIFE PONDS AND PLANTED TREES AND BUSHES TO ENHANCE HABITAT. WE HAVE DONE THIS TO ENHANCE OUR FARM ENVIRONMENT.

WE HAVE REDUCED OUR ELECTRICAL POWER USAGE 46% PER ACRE SINCE 1979 AND WE HAVE REDUCE OUR WATER USAGE 33% PER ACRE.

FROM 1975 TO 2005 OUR ELECTICAL POWER RATE HAS INCREASED 280.92%, 81.3% OF THIS INCREASE HAS COME SINCE 2001. BECAUSE OF THIS WE ARE CONSTANLY LOOKING AT OUR POWER COSTS AND IN 2006 WE REMOVED A CIRCLE AND THE MAINLINE THAT PROVIDES WATER TO IT. IN ITS NINE YEARS OF EXISTANCE IT GENERATED \$1,601,700 ON LAND THAT PREVIOUSLY WAS CHEAT GRASS. FOR TAX PURPOSES THIS LAND UNDER OPEN SPACES WAS ASSESED AT \$1147.00 AN ACRE. IT HAS NOW REVERTED BACK TO GROUND AT AN ASSESED VALUE OF \$8.00 AN ACRE. THIS IS MONEY THAT IS LOST TO THE STATE AND LOCAL ECONOMY OUR "OTHER SOURCE OF POWER", GAS AND DIESEL HAS INCREASED 355.67% AND 624.54% RESPECTIVELY.

ON THE OTHER HAND OUR COMMODITIES SUCH AS WHEAT HAS DECREASED 26%. POTATOES HAVE INCREASED 4.53% THE FACT THE WE ARE STILL HERE IS AMAZING TO US NOT TO MENTION OUR BANKER!!! WE HAVE SURVIVED BECAUSE WE HAVE BECOME MORE EFFICIENT AND HAVE INCREASED OUR CROP YIELDS.

THE SNAKE RIVER IS THE HEART AND BLOOD OF OUR FARM. WE ARE TRULY FORTUNATE TO HAVE A SOURCE OF ENERGY THAT IS AS EFFICIENT AS HYDRO-POWER. WHAT OTHER SOURCE OF ENERGY DO WE HAVE THAT HAS NO EMISSIONS, NO WASTE, NO HAZZARDOUS CLEANUP. A RENEWABLE SOURCE THAT CAN BE USED FOR RECREATION, FOOD PRODUCTION, TRANSPORTATION, FLOOD CONTROL AND WILDLIFE. IN THIS DAY AND AGE WE NO LONGER CAN AFFORD TO JEPORDIZE THIS AMAZING POWER SOURCE BY COURTS AND JUDGES THAT KNOW NOTHING OF THIS GREAT NATURAL RESOURCE. SPILLING WATER TO FLUSH FISH DOWN THE RIVER IS SENSELESS AND ENVIRONMENTALLY UNSOUND.

WE NEED TO PUT SOME COMMON SENSE INTO THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT. WE CANNOT CONTINUE TO LEAVE FAMILIES SUCH AS MINE OUT OF THE EQUATION. I AM JUST AS IMPORTANT AS A FISH AND I CAN DAMN WELL TELL YOU THAT MY THREE YEAR OLD GRANDDAUGHTER IS MORE IMPORTANT!!!! YOU CAN PATCH A ROOF USING TWENTY DOLLAR BILLS BUT IT OBVIOUSLY IS TOO COSTLY AND ONLY A TEMPORARY FIX. WE HAVE TO APPROACH THIS PRACTICALLY NOT JUST TRYING TO BUY OFF THE PROBLEM.

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT IS A TOOL NO DIFFERENT THEN A SHOVEL PUT TO COMMON SENSE USE IT CAN PRODUCE BUT IN THE WRONG HANDS IT CAN JUST AS EASILY DESTROY. LETS PUT OUR DAMS BACK TO USE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.