

July 8, 2009

The Honorable Mike Crapo  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Jim Risch  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senators Crapo and Risch:

As business owners and residents of the Lewiston/Clarkston Valley, we have much at stake in decisions about Snake River salmon and steelhead recovery and the future of the four lower Snake River dams. We therefore appreciate and thank you for your recent statements calling for a collaboration to find agreement on a long-term salmon recovery plan that involves all interests, and puts all options on the table.

Our towns, sitting on the banks of the reservoir behind Lower Granite Dam, have perhaps the most to gain or lose in any final outcome. We recognize, perhaps more clearly than others who do not live here, that major questions confront our communities in either case—if the lower Snake dams stay, or if they go.

If the dams are removed, Lewiston and Clarkston will lose a seaport and require major transportation investments in rail and highway infrastructure to replace it. Our cities will also need assistance—with waterfront development, for instance—to adapt back to the free-flowing river that once existed here.

If the dams stay, Lewiston and Clarkston will need significant assistance to deal with the growing sediment, and rising reservoir level, behind Lower Granite dam, including the likelihood of the highly unpopular action of raising levees and local infrastructure built to operate at current levee elevation, to address flood risk. And these issues will in turn affect our critical need, which exists in any future scenario, for local economic development.

A final issue that requires discussion under all options and scenarios is uncertainty. Our residents and businesses have lived with significant uncertainty about the lower Snake dams for a decade now, during which little progress has been made towards resolving the salmon recovery issue. If the salmon fail to recover with the dams in place, it seems likely the future of the four lower Snake River dams will remain uncertain for years to come. And, like it or not, many other interests downstream and upstream, are having and will have major influence on any decisions.

We therefore support your call for collaborative discussion of all options and their effects. In addition to the Ports of Lewiston and Clarkston, we believe city officials as well as representatives of the business community must be part of those discussions. We ask your

help in ensuring that occurs. We want to participate in an informed, open discussion, with what is at stake for us in any future scenario on the table.

Under any scenario, Lewiston and Clarkston will need long-term plans for creating the transportation infrastructure and economic development that can attract new businesses, capitalize on our tremendous natural assets, and provide opportunities for our children so that they can stay in, or return to, their hometowns.

After an honest assessment of costs, benefits, and uncertainties, we may decide the dams should go. We may decide they should stay. We may remain of different minds. But we all agree that long-term uncertainty, without an informed resolution, is the worst option of all. We therefore thank you both for your leadership towards a resolution, and we look forward to participating with you and others in collaboration to achieve it.

Sincerely,

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cc:

Senator Patty Murray  
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Senator Jeff Merkeley  
Senator Ron Wyden  
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Representative Mike Simpson  
Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers