

**From:** [Alida Bockino](#)  
**To:** [Species Conservation](#)  
**Subject:** Comments for Governer Littles Task Forck  
**Date:** Saturday, October 5, 2019 7:58:51 PM

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Dear Lawmakers,

I am gravely worried and concerned about the serious declining condition of the Salmon and Steelhead fish runs over the past 50 years. These strong, intrepid and amazing animals have been a part of the NW forever. Now, due to human intervention, they are rapidly becoming extinct.

Not only are salmon vital to Orca whales for their survival, but they, and the steelhead, are vital to the people who catch and eat them on their journey from the ocean back to their spawning grounds. They have also created a huge economic benefit to the many cities along their route by making a booming fishing industry.

Now, these animals are in grave danger. Once they are gone, they will never be restored. But if we act wisely now, we can still turn this tragedy around and restore the fisheries.

We must act responsibly and with vision for the future. The four lower Snake River dams must be breached to enable the smolts to return to the ocean. These dams are no longer needed for power and are an economic burden on taxpayers. Please use common sense and study the science and make the right choice. Breach the dams, save the Snake, save the Salmon, Steelhead and Orcas.

Thank you for making the right choice.

Alida Bockino  
Oct 5, 2019  
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**From:** [Bonnie Schonefeld](#)  
**To:** [Species Conservation](#)  
**Subject:** Governor's Salmon Working Group Comments  
**Date:** Sunday, October 6, 2019 11:24:10 AM

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I attended the working group meeting in Lewiston, ID on September 20. Public comment time was limited so I am submitting my comments in writing.

This was the third meeting of the working group. At this point in time the group should be far enough along to identify some of the actions that are needed. Instead, the group is still asking, "What is our mission?" Several members of the group commented on the fact that they are tasked with making recommendations without addressing the elephant in the room: dam removal/breaching. Group members also wanted to hear more information from actual scientists on the issue of salmon survival.

There was discussion about funding for habitat improvement on the Selway River. Idaho, including the Selway River, has prime habitat to sustain salmon recovery. What Idaho lacks is SALMON. Without the ability to return to their natal streams to spawn, salmon will never recover.

I listened to comments from farmers and the wheat growers association about added expenses of getting wheat to market without the ability to barge. What about the cost to taxpayers who are subsidizing that barge transportation? Every grain barge that leaves Lewiston costs the taxpayers \$25,000 in subsidizes. The taxpayers would be money ahead to pay the farmers the difference in barging vs. rail/truck costs.

For over 20 years every biological opinion regarding salmon recovery has been overturned in court as being inadequate to achieve recovery. Every. Single. One. Without the ability to change the narrative to include an option for dam removal, this working group is wasting time and money. By wasting time we are losing the ability to return salmon to Idaho streams and we are assuring the extinction of the species. ALL other options have been tried and found failing by the courts.

What this group needs to be discussing is a timeline and mitigation involved in removing the lower four Snake River dams. For over 20 years the taxpayers/ratepayers have poured countless millions of dollars into so-called "recovery" that has not worked. These dams were made for breaching, which is why they are built with a portion of earth berm. It is time to retire these dams and **let our salmon come home.**

Sincerely,  
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*"Working to maximize profitability for Idaho wheat producers."*

September 25, 2019

Mr. Scott Pugrud  
Administrator, Office of Species Conservation  
304 N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 149  
Boise, ID 83702

Dear Mr. Pugrud,

This is a follow-up to the recent meeting in Lewiston of the Governor's Salmon Workgroup and the request for written comments.

The wheat industry in Idaho is one of the pillars of the state's economy and it would be a grave error to destroy the means by which our growers get their crop to market. We encourage your working group to carefully consider the following thoughts as you proceed:

- Wheat is grown in 42 of Idaho's 44 counties and about half of Idaho's annual wheat harvest is exported. Without an economical way to move wheat to export markets, export bushels would instead glut the domestic market driving down prices. The result would be financial distress on 4500 Idaho farm families and hollowing out of farming communities throughout the entire state.
- Within the last five years, wheat-buying teams from countries representing more than 35% of the world's population have made visits to Lewiston. This includes teams from Japan, The Philippines, Indonesia, China, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Peru, Chile, Colombia, Mexico.
- Without river barges, farm incomes will drop, and transportation costs will go up as growers become captive to railroads. Barges keep a cap on railroad costs.
- Rail has been suggested as a replacement for barges on the river. It would have taken more than 35,140 rail cars or 135,000 trucks to carry this cargo in 2017. In comparison, just 244 four-barge tows moved the same amount of wheat.
- Barging wheat from Lewiston is one of the most efficient and environmentally-friendly modes of transportation available. Using rail to move the wheat would nearly double the number of particulates going into the sensitive Columbia Gorge airshed.
- The river system moves wheat from other states besides Idaho. Nearly half of all the wheat exported from the U.S. goes out through Portland and 10% of the nation's wheat goes through the four lower Snake River dams. The Columbia Snake System accounts

for approximately three times the amount of wheat exported more than does the Mississippi River System.

- U.S. agricultural exports is one of the leading ways that our balance of trade has improved. Agriculture is Idaho's largest base industry and is export driven. Agricultural export dollars ripple throughout Idaho's economy, creating \$27 billion in sales (21% of total economic output), more than 126,000 Idaho jobs (14% of state employment), and more than \$10 billion of state GDP (16% of GDP). (Source: Eborn and Taylor, The Financial Condition of Idaho Agriculture, 2018)
- Idaho's economy is driven by agriculture, and Idaho farmers are good at their jobs – Idaho growers produce far more than can be consumed in our state. According to the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, every resident of the state would have to eat 195 slices of bread a day to consume all the wheat grown by Idaho farmers. Idaho's wheat industry is reliant on the Port of Lewiston and the Columbia Snake River System to move about half of the wheat we grow in Idaho to consumers around the world in an economical, efficient, and environmentally sensitive manner.
- The charts on salmon runs presented to the salmon working group in Lewiston on Sept. 20, 2019 show the drops in salmon numbers occurring before the dams on the lower Snake River were built. By the time the final Snake River dam was built at Lower Granite, salmon numbers were increasing modestly. Science is not indicating that removal of the four Snake River dams will move the needle on salmon recovery; further, numbers of androgynous fish are down across the board on rivers with and without dams.

There are myriad reasons why salmon numbers are down. Overfishing and changes in ocean temperatures are global problems. Predation and invasive species are a regional problem. Salmon runs are down in comparable ranges on both dammed and undammed rivers.

Before we destroy one of Idaho's premier industries, along with losing power generation and flood control, we should look at the bigger picture and benchmark the Columbia Snake River System to what is happening elsewhere with salmon.

Sincerely,



Ned Moon  
Chairman  
Idaho Wheat Commission