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Letter to the Army Corps of Engineers Chief of Engineers Environmental Advisory Board

Submitted by:

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I would like to bring to the attention of the Chief of Engineers the negative effects that the four lower Snake River dams are having on the State of Idaho right now. Due to over 60% mortality of Idaho's juvenile steelhead, sockeye and Chinook salmon through the Snake and Columbia hydrosystem in 2015, we are experiencing the worst adult fish returns in decades. Sockeye salmon returns to Bonneville are at 28% of the 10 year average. Steelhead are at 33%. Chinook returns are lower than predicted again. This has resulted in numerous fishery closures in Idaho which is leading to lost economic opportunity by our small river communities. These closures threaten to bankrupt the businesses that employ hundreds of hard working Idahoans. Predictions for next year do not look any better.

Of the few adult salmon and steelhead that are returning this year, they have faced a series of new challenges provided by the Army Corps dams. Little Goose dam fish passage equipment failed this spring due to debris in the river. The failure resulted in four of six turbines being idled while repairs were made to the fish screens. This produced excessive spill for days, during the height of the smolt and adult spring Chinook migration, exposing them to deadly levels of dissolved gases. The root cause of this was the Corps decision not to repair the trash boom that failed in Spring 2014. Little Goose dam also has severe hydraulic issues which greatly slowed adult passage through the fish ladder system. And now that summer is here, temperatures in the reservoirs are rising. On July 4<sup>th</sup>, the forebay temperature at Lower Granite reached 65 F, the same temperature it reached on that day in 2015. Failure of the Corps to repair Dworshak dam turbine #3 is jeopardizing this years adult runs even further. Salmon cannot survive a repeat of 2015, but it appears that is where we are headed.

I would like to encourage the Army Corps to exercise its right to implement Alternative 4 in the 2002 EIS. Salmon, steelhead and Idaho businesses can't wait for the new NEPA process to conclude that the four lower Snake River dams need to be breached. Please act on these four dams now and evaluate the rest of the hydrosystem over the next few years. You have a golden opportunity to save our communities, save our fish, and save face. The Army Corp has the technology and know-how to keep the farms and orchards near Ice Harbor irrigated after the dams are removed. We have the technology to continue moving wheat to market affordably without barge transportation. But we don't have the technology, know-how, or the means to recover salmon and steelhead with the dams in place. You have proven that over the last several decades. Billions of our dollars have been spent and there is little to show for it. Continuing the status quo will be devastating for our state. It is time for change.

Respectfully yours,

John Twa

Boise, Idaho