



Connecting whales and people
in the Pacific Northwest

October 30, 2017

Dear Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council,

A few facts seem pretty clear.

Southern Resident orcas are starving chronically and sporadically, leading to stillbirths and early deaths, compounded by toxic pollutants in their bodies.

Southern Residents depend mainly on Chinook salmon and those salmon are at historic lows and still dropping.

While every restoration effort, dam removal, and harvest reduction helps, by far the largest possible increase in salmon would result from breaching the 4 lower Snake River dams.

Mothballing and breaching the 4 lower Snake River dams is the fastest, cheapest and easiest action compared to other alternatives of restoring Chinook. But breaching needs to start no later than 10 January 2018 in order to save SRKW.

The Army Corps of Engineers has the authority and the funding at this time to begin breaching the 4 lower Snake River dams under their 2002 EIS, as Option #4. Career officials in DC understand the cost savings from removing the dams and would support that.

The Army Corps in DC won't order the Walla Walla District to begin breaching without hearing the instructions from the Washington delegation, namely Gov. Inslee and senior Senator Murray given sufficient political support to counterbalance the pro-dam lobby.

Gov. Inslee and Sen. Murray won't provide that support without widespread support and public awareness that breaching is needed to avoid the extinction of multiple salmon populations and Southern Resident orcas, and it is within their power to instruct the Army Corps to commence breaching in the coming year. So to provide the greatest increase in Chinook and other salmon for the starving Southern Resident orcas, it would be most effective to direct our sense of urgency and our educational efforts toward informing the public that dam breaching could begin in January 2018 with the support of Gov. Inslee and Sen. Murray.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

-- Howard Garrett
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