

November 21, 2018

Mr. Chris Oliver  
Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Asst. Administrator Oliver:

I am sorry we were not able to meet in person on my recent trip to DC—it would have been very beneficial to connect with you. I have included the documents that I was planning to brief you on for you to review.

I am compelled to point out that the jack count being down 78% is a significant loss and a predictor of another bad year of adult returns in 2019. As I am sure you are aware, jacks have been getting smaller for the last two decades and we referred to them as “mini jacks” and lately “micro jacks”. These are immature chinook that barely spend a few months in the ocean before returning to natal streams or hatcheries. As such, these significant declines are not due to ocean conditions but are indicative of massive mortalities in the hydro system before ever reaching the mouth of the Columbia. Also, they are generally too small to be of much interest to sealions when the bigger adults from the previous years’ run are around. The point is, direct and latent dam passage and reservoir mortalities are the main cause of these low fish returns and why I wish to impress upon you the urgency of the situation that requires the Corps and BPA to begin breaching Lower Granite Dam this winter. Breaching each dam will prevent the deaths of 2 million chinook smolts, thus significantly increasing the number of adults available 14 to 18 months later for endangered orcas and harvest. Senior field biologists are telling me, and I have pressed the Corps leadership for the past year, that two dams need to be breached before the spring run.

Additionally, I was wondering if we could schedule a phone meeting next week? I would like Ken Balcomb from the Center for Whale Research to be included in our meeting, so please let me know of a day and time that will work for you, and I will coordinate with him as well.

Happy Thanksgiving, and I will look forward to connecting with you.

Sincerely,

James Waddell, PE, Civil Engineer  
USACE, retired