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From: **Helmlinger, D Peter BG USARMY CENWD (US)**

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Date: Fri, Oct 12, 2018 at 1:22 PM

Subject: Response to Letters to Chief of Engineers

To: anorman2@gmail.com <anorman2@gmail.com>

Dear Ms. Eberling,

Thank you for your letter dated Aug. 14, 2018 to Lieutenant General Semonite and subsequent email to Major General Spellmon. As the Northwestern Division (NWD) is most familiar with the issues you raise in your letter, I am responding on behalf of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding these issues.

As you recognize, the issues you present in your letter are complex. I believe any effort to address your concerns through additional correspondence would leave you unsatisfied. However, let me provide a few points of clarity.

Over fifteen years ago, the September 2002 Record of Decision (ROD) memorialized the Corps' selected alternative based on the information available at the time and the analysis in the Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This decision was made in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. The opportunity for comment on this EIS closed in April 2000. The ROD remains in effect and actions under Alternative 3 have been underway for many years. The 2002 Study and EIS did not result in a decision to implement the dam breaching alternative (Alternative 4), nor would it have provided the authority or appropriations necessary to initiate a controlled breach if that alternative had been selected.

Clearly, the status of the data and information that was relevant to the analysis in the 2002 Study and EIS has changed in the over fifteen years since the Corps signed its ROD. The Corps, Bureau of Reclamation and Bonneville Power Administration issued the 2016 Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) Comprehensive Evaluation describing eight years of progress implementing NOAA Fisheries' Biological Opinion for operation of the FCRPS for ESA-listed salmon and steelhead. This publication details the agencies' accomplishments in dam passage improvements, habitat restoration, hatchery reform and predator management, as well as the status of various fish species. The 2016 Citizen's Guide summarizes highlights of the Comprehensive Evaluation. Both of these documents are available at www.salmonrecover.gov.

The Corps currently is complying with the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon's orders by developing the Columbia River System Operations (CRSO) EIS to provide an analysis under NEPA of the long-term coordinated operations, maintenance and configuration

of the 14 federal Columbia River System dams. This EIS will use existing and updated data and to analyze a range of alternatives to operate, maintain and configure the Columbia River System dams. Part of this EIS will analyze an alternative that includes breaching the four lower Snake River dams. This EIS also will analyze other measures that the public, regional stakeholders, states and tribes recommended through scoping. The draft EIS will be available for public comment in March 2020. This will be an opportunity for you to provide substantive input regarding the preferred alternative.

If you wish to discuss your concerns further, please contact my staff at 503-808-3712. They are available to respond to your questions.

Sincerely,

BG Pete Helmlinger, P.E.
Commander, Northwestern Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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