

Todd T. Semonite
Commanding General
US Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314

April 14, 2020

Dear General Semonite,

You may recall your comments to my letter read during an October 2016 EAB meeting. I pointed out the need to breach the lower Snake River Dams that year. You advised that the necessary process was beginning, the CRSO Review and new EIS, to take into account the many variables involved in such a scenario. I do believe the outcome has put us further back in terms of taking action on a solution to the financial and environmental problems associated with the lower Snake River Dams (LSRDs), when there is little time left to act. The past four years have experienced further dramatic decline in wild Snake River salmon runs, as well as notable deaths in the dwindling Southern Resident Killer Whale population. Bonneville Power Administration has risen electricity rates to cover their costs of operation, and rate-payers are losing along with the northwest ecosystem as this process draws out.

The Army Corps of Engineers is an institution I know to be held to the highest standards of public service and for this I am following through in my critique of the process through my analysis of the recent DEIS. While drawing on the 2002 Feasibility Study/EIS for a breach alternative, many assumptions stood uncorrected from the older breach plan, with additional fatal flaws that underplayed the benefits of breaching. For an example, I have attached a report I authored on claimed peaking power capabilities of the LSRDs. It addresses one of many inconsistencies that has surfaced in the DEIS and serves to mislead the public about the economic value they hold. It was unfortunate yet predictable for the evaluation to fail to support dam breaching, though it still remains the best available and untried option for salmon and orca recovery, as stated in the (still operable) 2002 EIS.

Based on my background of expertise on the LSRD projects, I have felt the urgency to expose the failed investments on the dams which has led to increased ratepayer burden and further decline of endangered species. I have been compelled to establish the NGO Dam Sense to communicate technical and scientific knowledge about dam breaching, and advocate for efficient restoration of the Snake River.

It is the superior power of yours truly to maintain the economic stability and environmental viability of USACE projects, otherwise placing them into non-operational or caretaker status. Under your authority alone the LSRDs can be secured by breaching, in time to save Bonneville and ratepayers from further financial stress, while recovering salmon at a *far lower* cost than the status quo. It is in your best interest to leave a legacy of intrepid leadership on this problem, that left unsolved, will harm future generations of Americans and the environment we depend on.

Sincerely,

Jim Waddell

PUD commissioner, Clallam County
Civil Engineer, USACE retired

*Written as a private citizen