

IN THE SENATE

SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 109

BY AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL

1
2 TO THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES IN CON-
3 GRESS ASSEMBLED AND TO THE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION REPRESENTING THE
4 STATE OF IDAHO IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

5 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and the House of Representatives of
6 the State of Idaho assembled in the Second Regular Session of the Sixty-fifth
7 Idaho Legislature, do hereby respectfully represent that:

8 WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Idaho recognizes the Columbia-
9 Snake River System as part of the United States Marine Highway network; and

10 WHEREAS, the Columbia-Snake River System and its tributaries, col-
11 lectively and in its entirety, is a multiuse system providing navigation,
12 transportation, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, hydropower gener-
13 ation, flood control, and irrigation to the citizens and industry of the
14 Pacific Northwest; and

15 WHEREAS, the Columbia-Snake River System and its tributaries, func-
16 tioning collectively and in its entirety, provide a vital contribution to
17 the state's economic well-being and to the quality of life of our citizens;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, the State of Idaho reasserts and confirms sovereign control
20 over all water resources within the state; and

21 WHEREAS, the decline of anadromous fish is due to many factors, includ-
22 ing increased predation, unfavorable ocean conditions, and harvest; and

23 WHEREAS, due to the efforts of northwest families, farmers, ranchers,
24 organizations, and businesses investing billions of dollars in fish passage
25 and habitat improvements, the system is meeting or exceeding the Endangered
26 Species Act's required 96 percent juvenile fish passage survival rate for
27 spring migrating fish and 93 percent for summer migrating fish downstream
28 through the lower Snake River dams; and

29 WHEREAS, due to the efforts of the state, Nez Perce Tribe, and Idaho wa-
30 ter users in entering into the 2004 Snake River Water Rights Agreement, up to
31 487,000 acre feet of Idaho's water is used for flow augmentation for salmon
32 and steelhead in the lower Snake and Columbia Rivers, with water being re-
33 leased through a willing buyer, willing seller arrangement. The 2004 agree-
34 ment provides protections to Idaho water users in the form of a 30-year bio-
35 logical opinion and provides economic benefits to water users participating
36 in the flow augmentation program; and

37 WHEREAS, agricultural and industrial applications of water have a legal
38 priority within the state; and

39 WHEREAS, the Port of Lewiston, Idaho's only seaport, is part of the col-
40 lective Columbia-Snake River System and is an asset to the State of Idaho and
41 an asset to the Inland Northwest region, providing global competitiveness
42 and connectivity for regional products, economic development investment,
43 and multimodal transportation; and

1 WHEREAS, the Columbia-Snake River System acts as a top wheat export
2 gateway in the United States, with approximately 10 percent of all United
3 States wheat exports barged through the four dams on the Snake River and
4 about 50 percent of all Idaho-grown wheat barged from Lewiston to Portland
5 and then onto export markets around the world; and

6 WHEREAS, barging is the most fuel-efficient, environmentally friendly
7 mode of transportation; and

8 WHEREAS, hydropower is the most efficient, environmentally favorable
9 form of electrical generation, with the combined lower four Snake River
10 dams producing 1,000 megawatts of carbon-free, renewable energy annually
11 and 3,000 megawatts for peak power emergencies, providing electricity to 22
12 rural Idaho utilities serving more than 137,000 Idahoans; and

13 WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Idaho believes that any actions
14 to degrade the functionality, in whole or in part, to remove or breach dams on
15 the Columbia-Snake River System or its tributaries, or to take water from the
16 state for anadromous fish enhancement efforts would inflict on the citizenry
17 of the state a loss in economic and trade opportunities, a loss of recharge
18 waters for the state's aquifers, a loss of navigation and transportation,
19 an increased risk of floods, an increase in electrical rates, a shortfall
20 in power generation, a loss of recreational opportunities, and a threatened
21 quality of life for Idaho citizens.

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the Second Regular Ses-
23 sion of the Sixty-fifth Idaho Legislature, the Senate and the House of Rep-
24 resentatives concurring therein, that Idaho opposes the removal or breach-
25 ing of the dams on the Columbia-Snake River System and its tributaries, has
26 sovereignty of its water resources, prohibits contributions of water from
27 Idaho's reservoirs for flow augmentation except those expressly authorized
28 by state law, contends that efforts for further recovery of anadromous fish
29 must be based on sound science, and supports maintenance and multiple-use
30 benefits of the Columbia-Snake River System. Additionally, the Idaho Leg-
31 islature recognizes and supports the international competitiveness, mul-
32 timodal transportation, and economic development benefits provided by the
33 Port of Lewiston.

34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate be, and she is
35 hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the
36 President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of
37 Congress and to the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho
38 in the Congress of the United States.