

WA Dept. of Ecology's Draft EIS and Short-Term Modification to Total Dissolved Gas Criteria
for WAC 173-201A

Oral Testimony from Colleen Weiler, on behalf of the Whale & Dolphin Conservation

Received February 13, 2019

I am here on behalf of the Whale & Dolphin Conservation and you have my contact information as well on the sheet. Thank you for the opportunity to comment today.

Restoring salmon runs is important to many who rely on healthy salmon in the Pacific Northwest and also for the endangered southern resident orcas who rely upon Columbia basin salmon in the late winter and early spring.

These orcas are salmon specialists, particularly on Chinook, and one of the primary threats to this population is a lack of food throughout the range.

Increasing spill is an important component of increasing salmon survival through the eight dams in the Columbia and Snake rivers and adjusting the total dissolved gas criteria gives the Department of Ecology the flexibility to maximize salmon survival.

This action was recommended by the Washington Southern Resident Orca Task Force as one of the best near-term measures to increase salmon survival leading to better abundance for the orcas.

We support extending this action beyond the short-term modification to help salmon survival and request the timing be accelerated to raise the TDG criteria this year to 125 percent. Modeling shows that increasing TDG to the levels of 125 percent increase the small to adult return ratio significantly over the recovery goal of a minimum of two percent. And increasing juvenile salmon survival helps bring more adults back to the area to feed the southern resident orcas.

Thank you.