

Dear Director Bellon,

Southern Resident orcas are one of the most endangered marine mammals in the world. The Chinook salmon populations these whales once relied on, particularly those in the Columbia-Snake River Basin, are just a remnant of their former levels, leaving these whales with far less food to eat. The Columbia and Snake river chinook were once the largest and most abundant salmon species anywhere on the west coast, providing Southern Residents with a critical winter food source at a time when there are few other salmon species available. The decline of salmon populations across the Northwest is complex, but the most significant factor is the degradation of salmon habitat--particularly the damming of rivers. Dams and their reservoirs slow adult and juvenile salmon migration, making them increasingly susceptible to predation and lethally warm water. Large reservoirs on the Columbia and Snake rivers make it difficult for young salmon to quickly and safely migrate to the ocean where they can mature into adults. A highly effective, near-term step we can take that addresses part of this problem is to increase the amount of water spilled over the federal dams in the Columbia Basin. Decades of scientific research and observation have shown that spill is the safest way for juveniles to migrate past dams and reservoirs to the ocean and that higher levels of spill result in larger adult salmon returns in subsequent years. For over two decades, Washington's total dissolved gas (TDG) standards, which limit the amount of water that can be spilled, have been overly conservative and harmed salmon survival. The best available science suggests that eliminating the 115% forebay TDG standard as you propose and immediately increasing the tailrace TDG standards to 125% will maximize the benefits of spill without negatively impacting other species or the environment. Increasing spill to this level is estimated to result in hundreds of thousands more adult salmon, making spill one of the most effective near-term actions the state can take to provide more food for our starving orcas. More than 20 years of empirical data about the effects of dissolved gas on salmon support this conclusion. This data warrants raising TDG standards to 125%. Southern resident orcas are starving to death due to the lack of Chinook salmon. As a result, they are unable to find enough food to survive and successfully raise new calves. This situation requires an emergency response. I strongly urge you to increase the state's TDG standards to 125% in time for the 2019 outmigration and through 2021 as well.

Sincerely,

Amelia Bryan	Selah	WA	98942
Angie Andersen	Kennewick	WA	99337
Beth Call	Walla Walla	WA	99362
Betty Dickinson	Yakima	WA	98902
Beverly Vonfeld	Yakima	WA	98908
Brenda Lewis	Chelan	WA	98816
Carol Rockstad	Wenatchee	WA	98801
Cherie Warner	Pullman	WA	99163
Cheryn Zimmer	Yakima	WA	98908
Christine Mullie	Winthrop	WA	98862
Christopher Smith	Richland	WA	99352

Clifford Ballard	Mattawa	WA	99349
Crystal Hultberg	Pullman	WA	99163
Darlene Maurer	Cle Elum	WA	98922
Dave Popoff	Colville	WA	99114
Dave Robinson	Curlew	WA	99118
David Benson	Pullman	WA	99163
Denee Scribner	Ellensburg	WA	98926
Diane Dishion	Pasco	WA	99301
Doug Swanson	White Salmon	WA	98672
Dr. James L. Rowland, Ed.D.	Pullman	WA	99163
Elizabeth Johnson	Stevenson	WA	98648
Fay Payton	College Place	WA	99324
Florence Harty	White Salmon	WA	98672
France Morrow	Yakima	WA	98908
Frank Valenti	Leavenworth	WA	98826
Gene Shaw	Clarkston	WA	99403
George Bedirian	Pullman	WA	99163
George Thornton	Oroville	WA	98844
Grant Mcfarland	Chewelah	WA	99109
Gretchen Anna Sand	Kennewick	WA	99336
Harvey Neese	Clarkston	WA	99403
Holly Hewitt	Walla Walla	WA	99362
J. Eggers	Addy	WA	99101
Jacob Meyer	North Bonneville	WA	98639
James Davis	Wenatchee	WA	98801
James McBride	Walla Walla	WA	99362
James Mulcare	Clarkston	WA	99403
Janet Lindsey	Kennewick	WA	99336
Javier Madrigal	Pasco	WA	99301
Jeffrey Joswig-Jones	Pullman	WA	99163
Jill LaRue	Cashmere	WA	98815
Jill Ungar	Ellensburg	WA	98926
Joann Zugel	Leavenworth	WA	98826
John Kus	Kennewick	WA	99336
Joy Gohl	White Salmon	WA	98672
Joyce Weir	Newport	WA	99156
Katelyn Scott	Wellpinit	WA	99040
Ken Zontek	Yakima	WA	98908
Lee Musgrave	White Salmon	WA	98672
Lisa Read	White Salmon	WA	98672
Malisa Deochoa	Pasco	WA	99301

Marie Colvin	Kennewick	WA	99337
Mark Johnston	Leavenworth	WA	98826
Mark Koehnen	Quincy	WA	98848
Mary Cahill	Ellensburg	WA	98926
Mary Jo Coblenz	Richland	WA	99354
Mary Jo Fontenot	Walla Walla	WA	99362
Mary Jo Wilkins	Kennewick	WA	99337
Max Archer	Yakima	WA	98908
Melody Beck	College Place	WA	99324
Michael Nails	Malott	WA	98829
Michelle Skylstad	Omak	WA	98841
Mike Goodwin	Richland	WA	99352
Miranda Joebgen	Chelan	WA	98816
Miranda Stoddard	Pullman	WA	99163
Pat Nordby	Winthrop	WA	98862
Patricia Raamot	Pullman	WA	99163
Patti Harter	Ephrata	WA	98823
Paul Franzmann	Walla Walla	WA	99362
Paula Mackrow	Carlton	WA	98814
Robert Schnelle	Ellensburg	WA	98926
Ruth Lewis	Newport	WA	99156
Sandra Robison	Richland	WA	99354
Sharon Walbridge	Pullman	WA	99163
Stacy Parker	Ellensburg	WA	98926
Stacy Lester	Bothell	WA	98011
Stella Day	Leavenworth	WA	98826
Susan Janelle	Walla Walla	WA	99362
Susan Riddell	Yakima	WA	98908
Terry Lockett	Yakima	WA	98907
Tim Durnell	Rice	WA	99167
Tim Lynch	Richland	WA	99354
Yolanda Sayles	Bellevue	WA	98006