

**WA Dept. of Ecology's Public Hearing on  
Multiple Revisions to WAC 173-201A  
Water Quality Standards for Surface Waters of the State of Washington**

**Oral Testimony from John Flynn, Individual  
Received 9-16-2019 in Vancouver, WA**

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Transcription was provided by PostCAP LLC in Olympia, WA.

>>So the first person I have on the list is -- it looks like John Flinn. Please state your name for the record.

>> John Flinn. I live in Kalama, Washington. When I retired in 2010 my wife and I moved to Kalama in order to have better access to the Columbia River and its fishing opportunities. As we are all aware, salmon and steelhead populations had been in disastrous decline for quite some time. This precipitous decline has led to the listing of many populations of salmon and steelhead as these are threatened or endangered. In 2018 chinook, coho, steelhead and sockeye to the Columbia River totaled 665,000. Well below the ten-year average of 2.2 million.

The 2019 forecast of 349,600 fall chinook is questionable in that that Fish Passage Center at Bonneville dam has counted only 156,700 fall chinook year-to-date.

The total chinook count for spring, summer and fall chinook year-to-date is 262,417. I can speak from personal observation as a recreational sport fisherman on the Columbia River that salmon and steelhead returns have plummeted in recent years. Last year there was no spring chinook fishing opportunity below Warrior Rock, Bachelor Island.

This year the Boynton [phonetic] chinook retention was closed on August 20th. Surface water temperatures the first two weeks of the Boynton season ranged from 68 to 71 degrees, acting as a thermal block to fish staging off the mouth of the Columbia.

There are numerous reasons for this decline. Dam construction with its associated loss of habitat and spawning ground. Grand Coulee and Chief Joseph Dam built without fish ladders resulting in 1100 miles of spawning habitat lost. Including the subsequent loss of summer chinook population commonly referred to as June hogs.

Climate change, ocean warming. Ocean acidification. It appears that the blob is back where ocean water increases are reminiscent of 2014, 2015. The list goes on and on.

I am here today in support of increased spill volumes to facilitate outmigrating salmon and steelhead in their perilous journey down the Snake and Columbia River. Increased spill volumes would serve multiple benefits to outmigrating smolts. It would reduce the number of powerhouse encounters and reduce mortality rates. It would increase currents through the stock water reservoirs behind the dams, improving travel rates and decreased predation on

juvenile smolts. It would decrease the water temperatures through the reservoir created by the dams to improve survival rates. I encourage the Department of Ecology to adopt this rule change in Washington water quality standards to increase the total dissolved gas standards to 125% for lower Snake and Columbia River dams.

I believe that increasing spill over dam spillways would significantly improve the survival rate of outmigrating smolts with the anticipated benefit of increased adult returns. I believe that everything that can possibly be done should be done in order to prevent further decline and possible extinction of our iconic salmon and steelhead.

Thank you.