



Columbia Riverkeeper
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April 13, 2020

Washington State Department of Ecology
Attn: Angela Zeigenfuse
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Sent via email to angela.zeigenfuse@ecy.wa.gov.

RE: Proposed Permits for Eight Federal Dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers

Dear Washington State Department of Ecology,

Columbia Riverkeeper is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to protect and restore the Columbia River, from its headwaters to the Pacific Ocean. Since 1989, Riverkeeper and its predecessor organizations have played an active role in reducing pollution, protecting salmon, and advocating for a healthy Columbia River. On behalf of our 16,000 members in Oregon and Washington, Columbia Riverkeeper transmits the collected, attached 409 comments gathered through our website and public outreach.

The comment letter signed by the attached list of people states:

Gov. Inslee and the Washington Dept. of Ecology have an historic opportunity to help the Pacific Northwest's struggling orcas and salmon. Despite the pandemic, the Trump administration gave Washington state a tight deadline to decide if and how it will exercise state authority to protect struggling orcas and salmon.

Dear Gov. Inslee, Director Watson, and the Washington Dept. of Ecology,

Washington has a rare opportunity to help struggling orcas—and the Columbia and Snake rivers' iconic salmon runs. I urge you to exercise Washington's authority under Clean Water Act section 401 to help ensure the Columbia Basin's federal dam operators address rising water temperatures, protect salmon, and help save the Southern Resident orcas from extinction.

Starving orcas need Chinook salmon. Under the state's Clean Water Act authority, you can help orcas. The Southern Resident orcas are on the brink of extinction, partly because they cannot find enough Chinook salmon to eat. Orca scientists point to the steep losses of the once large returns of Columbia River spring Chinook as being particularly harmful to the survival and reproduction of the orcas. Despite these declines, salmon biologists also view the Columbia and Snake rivers as among the best Chinook salmon restoration opportunities anywhere on the West Coast.

More than one-third of the salmon and steelhead populations in the Columbia Basin vanished during the last century. With your leadership, Washington can help struggling Columbia River salmon runs—and the orcas they sustain.

The signers in the attachment submit the above comment for your consideration. Many added their own personalized comments, which are included in a table to ease your review. Please consider these as individual comments.

Sincerely,

Kate Murphy
Community Organizer
Columbia Riverkeeper