

Mark Uhart

My name is Mark Uhart and I live near Kalama. Many of my neighbors are fisherman but not many fish are being caught these days.

In my quest to bring facts to the table, I read many peer-reviewed research papers on the aquatic biodiversity of our oceans and the effects of climate change on our fisheries. This includes the Pacific Ocean all the way to the coast of Alaska and the Bering Sea where salmon spend a good part of their life. Washington fisheries are not the only ones in decline. This year salmon returns in Alaska are so poor that many Alaskan communities are claiming fishery economic disasters and requesting government assistance. As of August 12th all sockeye, chinook, pink and chum salmon fisheries were below projections, with some areas completely closed to commercial fishing.

I reviewed the 2019 and 2020 Washington Coho Forecast Summary published by the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. The forecasted and actual returns for hatchery and natural Coho salmon went from a little over two million (2,013,316) in 2019 to just under 1 million forecasted (987,494) in 2020, less than half. Runs will likely be just above 50% of the 10-year average. Every production unit is forecasting significantly fewer natural fish. Although this is a snapshot, and only represents one of the 19 species, the running 10-year average indicates nearly all species of salmon and steelhead are in decline. Many species will be on the edge of extinction by 2050 as a result of climate change, and here we are still considering the approval of a shoreline permit that will speed up global warming. I'm in shock. What are we thinking?

And to think China is going to shut down coal-fired plants if this one comes online is wishful thinking. Do the research. This author discovered an open source document in mandarin and translated it to English. China's National Energy Administration released guidance to provincial governors for the construction of more coal power plants in 2023 (China National Energy Administration Bulletin No. 12, 2020.) It states, "In order to implement the requirements of the national coal power development policy for issuing and implementing coal power planning and construction risk warnings on an annual basis, strengthen the power and heat supply guarantee capabilities, and better guide local and power generation companies to approve and construct self-use coal power projects in the province in an orderly manner..." In order to achieve the goals set in their 14th 5-year plan, for 2021-2025, they will be building more natural gas refineries and coal power plants. So much for NWIW's assumptions.

I hope Ecology sees the SEIS for what it is. It is a scheme that underreports GHGs, avoids mitigation, and sells local jobs now for a climate emergency in the future that cannot be avoided anyway. Therefore, NWIW purports it an acceptable outcome. If this plant is approved, the Port of Kalama will be the ring in the bull's nose, waiting to be pulled at China's discretion.

I urge Ecology to deny the shoreline permit.