



# Washington Association of Wheat Growers

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 1, 2015

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## **Years Later, Dam Removal Still an Issue in PNW**

Their marketing might suggest Patagonia can create a Better Sweater®, but that doesn't make them experts when it comes to the Snake Columbia River System. Efforts by the California-based clothing company to reinvigorate the dam breaching debate with its Oct. 3 flotilla protest not only goes against the last dozen years of scientific studies by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, it defies common sense.

The Oct. 3 protest, sponsored by Patagonia, is intended to galvanize support to breach the dams on the Snake River. In January 2014, NOAA Fisheries issued a supplemental biological opinion confirming that improvements at federal dams, along with habitat and hatchery rehabilitation, are working to protect salmon and steelhead species listed on the Endangered Species Act.

“Eliminating clean hydro power would destroy Washington’s position as an environmental leader in clean energy and sustainable farming,” said Todd Myers, Environmental Director at the Washington Policy Center. “Washington’s hydro energy combined with our efficient farming mean we can feed the world in a way that uses fewer resources and is carbon free. The clean energy from these dams would be replaced with carbon-intensive energy and the crops will be grown elsewhere where yields are lower, requiring more water, more fertilizer, and more energy. This is just the latest example of where environmental activists say climate change is our most important environmental challenge but then hypocritically advocate a huge step backward on carbon emissions and sustainability.”

“Those who complain about the Snake River dams simply create opportunities to once again highlight how the dams benefit our region. Not only do the dams aid with producing and transporting wheat and other agricultural commodities, they are a critical source of low-cost, clean energy for families and employers,” said Senate Majority Leader Mark Schoesler, R-Ritzville. “I don’t mind that the criticism is coming from out-of-state this time, but I have to ask: shouldn’t a California-based company be focused more on the huge issues surrounding water management in its own backyard?”

“The river is one of the most important economic lifelines to the inland part of the state and has a great impact on our rural economy,” said Rep. Joe Schmick, R-Colfax. “It has multiple uses including recreation, fishing, kayaking, and boating and barge traffic. Folks need to remember that the average four barge tow of grain takes almost 700 trucks off the highway. From an economic standpoint, removing the dams would destroy the local economies of the small rural towns that depend on the river.” The dams also provide flood control protections in addition to generating over 40% of the region’s power.

Rep. Mary Dye, R-Pomeroy, stated, “The Columbia Snake River system is the largest wheat export gateway in the entire US. Breaching the Snake River dams would end barge navigation, and force the 10 million tons of commercial cargo valued at \$3 billion onto our road and rail infrastructure.”

“We are all working together to increase fish populations while maintaining clean energy production, economic uses and recreational activities. We are very appreciative of the continual support and dam infrastructure re-investments from our Congressional delegation,” added Washington Association of Wheat Growers President Larry Cochran.

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