

July 11, 2022

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DAMS ARE ESSENTIAL TO WHEAT FARMERS

Wheat Growers Challenge Scientific Accuracy, Economic Impacts of LSRD Report

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) filed public comments in response to the Draft Lower Snake River Dams (LSRD) Benefit Replacement Report published on June 9. On behalf of over 4,000 members, WAWG urged Senator Patty Murray and Governor Jay Inslee to reconsider the direction of the Joint Federal-State Process regarding dam breaching, citing the lack of feasibility of recommendations outlined in the report, along with the overall inaccuracy of scientific data used to formulate recommendations.

The consequences of implementing the report's recommendations could wreak havoc on Washington's state economy. As the nation's largest wheat export gateway, the Columbia-Snake River System is critical for the transportation of over 60 percent of Washington wheat. This river system is not only key to supporting overseas export markets, but also for supporting nearly 4,000 jobs.

"Dams are essential to wheat farmers, and to the Washington economy at large. Without the extensive network of inland waterways, it would be incredibly difficult, and drastically more expensive to transport wheat in an efficient way" said WAWG President Howard McDonald. "The impact of dam breaching is wide-reaching and long-lasting. The oversimplified recommendations in this report won't achieve salmon population recovery goals but will surely devastate the wheat industry."

In addition to the inevitable adverse economic impacts, the convoluted and rushed process in which this report was written leads to recommendations with notable lack of scientific integrity.

"As farmers whose top priority is the stewardship and health of land, water, and natural resources, Washington wheat growers fully support salmon recovery efforts. However, those efforts must be backed with sound science, not political motivation," said WAWG Executive Director Michelle Hennings. "Dam breaching is a decision that will have significant adverse impact on the economic conditions of wheat farmers who are already struggling with complicated supply chain issues and rising input costs. Decisions such as this one, must be made carefully, through consideration of environmental and economic impact and the review of sound evidence—factors that seem to have been omitted from this process."

WAWG stands ready to implement science-based, feasible solutions to ensure the health of salmon populations.

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About WAWG: Education and outreach are the heart of Washington Association of Wheat Growers activity, all of which is aimed at helping Washington wheat families. Since 1954, WAWG has been dedicated to the enrichment of the Washington wheat industry as a nonprofit trade association, which depends on volunteers, membership dues and donations to carry out activities as representatives on the state and national levels. WAWG monitors state, transportation, research and natural resources policy and partners with the National Association of Wheat Growers to monitor national farm policy. Visit wawg.org for more information.