



# Washington Association of Wheat Growers

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## **WAWG Testifies on the Importance of the Lower Snake River Dams**

**RITZVILLE, WA** (June 26, 2023) Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG) testified today in front of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries regarding the importance of the Columbia Snake River System, and the Lower Snake River Dams in particular, for wheat farmers in the state of Washington.

“Farmers, including myself and my family, rely on barge transportation to ship goods to market. Not only is the Snake River System critical for Washington state, but farmers across the country rely on its transportation benefits as well,” said WAWG Executive Director Michelle Hennings.

Any disruption to the Lower Snake River System could impact the efficient movement of crops for export and therefore, negatively impact the strong trade relationships that the United States has cultivated over the years. In fact, more than 55 percent of all U.S. wheat exports move through the Columbia Snake River System. Specifically, 10 percent of wheat that is exported from the United States passes through the four locks and dams along the Lower Snake River.

Additionally, dam breaching would create challenges in meeting climate-related goals. The four lower snake river dams provide irreplaceable hydropower benefits that help to deliver a reliable, low-cost energy source for around 750,000 homes. In addition, barge transportation on the Columbia Snake River System is the most fuel-efficient mode of transportation compared to trucking and rail.

In her testimony, Hennings also emphasized the importance of dams for the future generation of farmers.

“For the younger generation hoping to start or take over a family-owned farm, the benefits provided by the dams, especially the irrigation and transportation benefits, are critical to the economic viability of the business. If the dams were to be breached, the higher transportation costs could drive many family farms out of business,” said Hennings.

WAWG looks forward to working with Congress to ensure the four lower snake river dams remain functional, while finding data-driven and science-based solutions to salmon population health and recovery.

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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 at 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](http://wawg.org) for more information.