



**Northwest Sportfishing
Industry Association**
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June 14, 2004

Robert Lohn, Regional Administrator
NOAA-Fisheries
525 N.E. Oregon Street
Portland, OR 97232

Brigadier General Wm. Grisoli
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
220 N.W. 8th Avenue
Portland, OR 97209

Stephan J. Wright, Administrator
Bonneville Power Administration
905 N.E. 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97208

Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association, I am here to strenuously object to the politically motivated proposal to reduce protections for summer outmigrants in the Columbia basin. NSIA represents over 300 businesses here in the Northwest and beyond. We are dedicated to the preservation, restoration and enhancement of sport fisheries and the businesses dependent upon them.

Many, if not all, rely economically on the health of salmon and steelhead runs in the Columbia. We are convinced that this watered-down proposal is still going to kill thousands of smolts with no proven or certain offsets. This does not sit well with sportfishing business owners and their employees. NSIA has signed on to specific and technical comments in our role on the board of Save Our Wild Salmon.

This afternoon, we are here to express three fundamental concerns.

1. **The Process.** BPA is proposing to significantly reduce spill levels outlined in the Biological Opinion. Doing so through a politically motivated lobbying campaign has left your entire proposal under a black cloud of suspicion. You have completely destroyed public trust. Alterations to the Biological Opinion that increase risk to listed populations should be subject to an assessment with the States and Tribes, then independent review, such as the ISAB or the National Academy of Science. These assessments and peer reviews should be made public before public hearings. Then the Federal Executives should make a decision and it should be reviewed and approved by the Judge.
2. **Flow and Spill are the backbone of the so-called aggressive non-breach biological opinion.** NOAA Fisheries, BPA and the Corps insisted this region accept the non-breach approach, even when the

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science recommended another path. Now the three agencies stand before us asking us to accept diminishment of the BiOp's most critical measures. Remember, we already have a "turn off the spill" test from the 2001 fraudulent energy crisis. The out migrants exposed to NO SPILL are NO SHOWS. Other emerging data is suggesting that barging and trucking are not working and that in river migrants are out performing barged fish. The latest and best data is telling us that fish belong in the river. Now is not the time to degrade river migrating conditions.

3. Our final concern revolves around what seems to be a never ending effort by Bonneville to balance past financial blunders on the backs of fish and the fishing/tourism industry. In addition to WPPSS, and the energy manipulations of 2001, BPA recently paid out \$1.8 **billion** to the aluminum industry. Many of these companies took the money and declared bankruptcy.

Now for around \$20 million you want to take away what is certain and known to benefit fish, and you show us measures that cannot be guaranteed to replace what we are giving up. You slice away at fish protections, for pennies a month on regional electric bill. This proposal has given the Federal regulators a black eye, and has added to your credibility problem. There is absolutely no confidence or trust in the sportfishing community to proceed with this proposal. Your process to date and history of broken promises leave us no choice.

If you wish to regain our trust and good will, you will remove this proposal and move forward in good faith on the measures outlined for salmon recovery that are in the Biological Opinion. If we are supposed to have faith in the aggressive non breach approach, then implement it aggressively.

Phil Donovan
Oregon Government Affairs

Liz Hamilton
Executive Director