

Resolution to Protect and Restore Snake River Salmon and Southern Resident Orca

Whereas, Snake River wild spring/summer chinook salmon have not met the Northwest Power Conservation Council's recovery objectives, with smolt-to-adult returns at 1.1 percent since the year 2000 despite salmon recovery efforts at a cost of \$16 billion to ratepayers and taxpayers, and

Whereas, the Army Corps of Engineers agrees that breaching the dams has the highest probability of meeting federal salmon recovery objectives criteria, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's 2017 Snake River Recovery Plan for Spring/Summer Chinook and Steelhead admits that even a long list of salmon recovery actions will not lead to their recovery, and

Whereas, since 1999 the National Marine Fisheries Service's results demonstrated that Snake River dam breaching by itself is likely to lead to recovery of fall chinook and steelhead, and

Whereas, at least 80% of the diet of endangered Southern Resident Orcas is chinook salmon, and dwindling salmon runs have helped cause the decline of orcas to an effective breeding population of fewer than 30 individuals, and

Whereas, the Columbia Basin watershed, which includes the Snake River, produces more than 50% of the Southern Resident orcas' diet, and

Whereas, the four lower Snake River dams (LSRDs) return only 15¢ for every \$1 they cost in terms of jobs and other potential benefits of a free-flowing river, and

Whereas, the Pacific Northwest has a 16% surplus of energy with these dams generating less than 3% of regional power production, and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council has concluded that the region can meet expected increases in demand through at least 2030 with energy efficiency and planned new renewable energy, and

Whereas, the judges of the Ninth Circuit ruled on April 20th that breaching the dams must be evaluated, and meanwhile, the dam operators must increase spill in the spring to aid in salmon return; and

Whereas, the Army Corps of Engineers needs no new authority to place the LSRDs into a "non-operational" status and, further, has a fiduciary responsibility to do so, and

Whereas, breaching the dams can be financed through existing debt reduction and credit mechanisms as a fish mitigation action by Bonneville Power Administration and is significantly easier and less costly than originally planned, and

Whereas, the Southern Resident Orcas and wild Snake River Salmon are an integral part of the Pacific Northwest culture and economy, and after 30 years of failed mitigation efforts, further delays risk the extinction of our Southern Resident Orcas and wild Snake River salmon,

Therefore be it resolved, the 46th Legislative District Democrats of Washington calls for the Army Corps of Engineers to remove the earthen portion of the four lower Snake River dams, starting with the Lower Granite and Little Goose Dams;

Therefore be it further resolved, that the 46th Legislative District Democrats of Washington urge our elected federal and state officials to ensure a positive transition for the communities affected by the partial removal.