

States approve water quality plan for Hells Canyon hydro projects

Idaho Power

BOISE, Idaho — Idaho Power has taken a major step toward a new federal license for its largest hydroelectric project: Idaho and Oregon have certified the company's plan for meeting water quality standards in the Snake River as part of its operation of three dams in Hells Canyon.

Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act requires the company to produce a plan to meet state water quality standards as part of the relicensing process. Because Hells Canyon is on the Idaho-Oregon border, both states must approve the company's plan (commonly called a 401 certification).

The plan's recent acceptance is a significant move forward in the company's application to relicense Brownlee, Oxbow and Hells Canyon dams. Together,

those projects provide about 70% of the company's hydroelectric generation and are the backbone of Idaho Power's clean energy mix. The original license for the complex expired in 2005, and the company has operated the dams on a series of annual licenses since then.

Under the plan, Idaho Power commits to a wide range of water-quality improvement measures. Some have been developed and tested over the past several years, while others will be implemented when the company receives a new long-term license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

"Receiving the 401s from the states is a huge milestone for the company," said Brett Dumas, director of environmental affairs for Idaho Power. "This allows us to move forward with re-

licensing our most valuable asset. And it clears the way for a tremendous number of projects to improve the environment of the Snake River while Idaho Power continues to provide safe, reliable, clean energy into the future."

Idaho Power has proposed an extensive series of upstream river restoration measures, including the Snake River Stewardship Program, to address water temperatures in the Snake River. One major component of the company's plan includes projects to narrow and deepen key stretches of the Snake River between Walters Ferry and Homedale, which will improve natural river function and habitat. Working with landowners, the company has begun planting thousands of native trees and shrubs along tributaries of the Snake River to provide

shade. Both measures will help decrease water temperatures.

Additional steps include funding for improvements, such as pressurized sprinkler irrigation to reduce runoff from agricultural land, equipment to increase the oxygen in water released from Brownlee Dam and spillway modifications to minimize dissolved gases, which can harm fish.

The company has already launched a 10-year study of mercury levels in Brownlee and Hells Canyon reservoirs in coordination with the U.S. Geological Survey. The 401 plan also proposes lowering Brownlee Reservoir in unusually warm years to reduce water temperatures during downstream salmon spawning.

Both states accepted and reviewed public comments on the plan prior to approval. The cost of mea-

sures included in the plan is estimated to exceed \$400 million over the term of the license, which the company anticipates will be 50 years.

Idaho Power began the relicensing process in the mid-1990s with discussions involving a wide range of interested groups including state and federal regula-

tors. The next step in the process will be for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to update its environmental review that was completed in 2007. Idaho Power expects to receive a new license in 2022. More information is available at www.idahopower.com/relicensing.

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Fed may cut rates if needed in response to trade wars

By Martin Crutsinger
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Chairman Jerome Powell said Tuesday that the Federal Reserve is prepared to respond to the Trump administration's trade conflicts to protect the U.S. economy, signaling that the Fed will cut interest rates if necessary.

Powell's comments gave a lift to stock markets, with the Dow Jones industrial average up over 400 points at mid-day.

Speaking at a Fed conference in Chicago, Powell said, "We are closely monitoring the implications of these developments for the U.S. economic outlook and, as always, we will act as appropriate to sustain the expansion."

Powell didn't explicitly say what the Fed would do if it concluded that the administration's trade conflicts were damaging the economy. But expectations are rising that the Fed will cut rates at least once and possibly twice before year's end, in part because of the consequences of the trade war. There is also concern that the U.S. economy faces a growing risk of a recession, with American manufacturers showing particular weakness recently.

Trump has imposed far-reaching tariffs on imports from China, which has retaliated with tariffs of its own on U.S. exports. He has also threatened to impose an escalating series of tariffs against Mexico unless it stops a flow of migrants from Central America into the U.S. At a news conference in London, President Donald Trump reiterated that his import taxes on Mexican goods will take effect next week at a level of 5%, rising to a peak of 25% until Mexico complies with his demand to cut off Central America migration.

The Fed conference in Chicago is focused

on how the central bank can make its rate policy more effective at a time when inflation has remained chronically below the Fed's target level. In his remarks, Powell called persistently low inflation the "pre-eminent monetary policy challenge of our time," because it limits the Fed's ability to support the economy by cutting rates.

Powell said that in its first-ever public review of its operations, the Fed will aim to improve its rate strategies, the tools it uses to achieve its objectives and the way it communicates its actions to the public.

He called persistently low inflation the "pre-eminent monetary policy challenge of our time," because it limits the Fed's ability to support the economy by cutting rates. Next month, the economic expansion will become the longest period of uninterrupted growth on record, surpassing the 10-year expansion of the 1990s.

The Fed manages interest rates to achieve two goals: maximum employment and stable prices. Even though unemployment has reached a 50-year low of 3.6 percent, inflation has failed to rise to the Fed's target of 2%. The Fed regards that target as the optimal level for annual price increases and becomes concerned if inflation stray too far above 2 percent or too far below it. But the Fed's efforts to achieve the 2 percent target have so far failed even though it kept its key policy rate at a record low near zero for seven years. It began gradually increasing its policy rate in 2015.

After raising rates nine times, it declared in January that it would be "patient" in raising rates further. The policy rate at the moment is in a range of just 2.25 percent to 2.5 percent, meaning that the Fed has less room than usual to cut rates to stimulate growth.

CHAMBER

Continued from Page 1B and working with people are what helped her move into her current position, and she views the role as an opportunity to give back to the community. She has previous experience with the Chamber through volunteer work including many years serving as the lead director of the Eastern Oregon Beer Fest. Through her dedication of service

to Union County, she has gained a unique connection to the area and is excited to show others all the assets that it offers.


Moore-Hemann prides herself on being a good listener and helping members figure out exactly what they are looking for. She has a great eye for efficiency and is able to see the best way tasks can get accomplished.

"(I am) excited to collaborate with other industries and recognize the hard work


that community businesses are doing," she said.

Stop by the Chamber of Commerce office at 207 Depot St., La Grande, email info@visitunioncounty.org, or call 541-963-8588 to meet Moore-Hemann and to receive information on joining the Chamber.

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2019 EOLS Schedule of Events

MONDAY, JUNE 3	4-H Horse Show 9am	FRIDAY, JUNE 7	Cowboy Breakfast 6am
	Dog Show 10am		4-H & FFA Showmanship 9am
TUESDAY, JUNE 4	4-H Horse Show 9am		Queens Luncheon 11am
	Small Animal Show 10am		FFA Awards Presentation (Sale Barn) 1pm
	Queen's Coronation (Clubhouse) 7pm		Carnival 2-9pm
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5	Livestock Weigh-In 1-7pm		Main Street Parade 2pm
	Breeding Goat Showmanship & Conformation 3pm		PRCA Rodeo & Pari-Mutual Horse Racing 4pm
THURSDAY, JUNE 6	Cowboy Breakfast 6am		4-H Awards Presentation (Sale Barn) 6pm
	4-H & FFA Conformation 9am		Adult Dance (Clubhouse) After rodeo
	4-H & FFA Judging Contest 3pm	SATURDAY, JUNE 8 ★ Patriot Day ★	Cowboy Breakfast 6am
	Carnival 3-9pm		Livestock Auction 8am
	Happy Hour 5pm		Carnival 1-9pm
	Ed Miller Xtreme Bulls 7pm		PRCA Rodeo & Pari-Mutual Horse Racing 2pm
	PRCA Freestyle Bullfights		Adult Dance (Clubhouse) After rodeo
	Calf Scramble (during intermission)	SUNDAY, JUNE 9	PRCA Rodeo & Pari-Mutual Horse Racing 1:30pm

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