

Newhouse 'outraged' by White House dam breaching draft reports

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

Washington Congressman Dan Newhouse says he is "outraged" by the White House's recent draft reports studying breaching of dams on the lower Snake River, and that agriculture was "completely ignored."

Environmentalists have long argued that the four dams must be removed to promote salmon recovery, but agricultural stakeholders say those arguments don't consider the larger environmental threats to the fish, or the broader impacts to the environment and economy.

"The Biden administration has shoved science to the wayside, ignoring the multiple, multi-year, multi-million-dollar federal studies that have all come to the conclusion that breaching our dams is not the answer," Newhouse told the Capital Press.

"Even worse," he continued, "it appears that the Biden administration's (Council on Environmental



U.S. Rep. Dan Newhouse

Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Quality) has been working behind closed doors with plaintiffs in the ongoing lawsuit over the (Columbia River system operation) environmental impact statement, all while promoting a supposedly open

and transparent stakeholder listening process meant to develop a regional solution for salmon and the river system."

Newhouse charged that "it seems pretty clear" that the Biden administration is

"working hand-in-hand" with Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and Sen. Patty Murray's "politically motivated" efforts to breach the dams, "and Central Washington communities are going to pay the price."

Breaching the dams requires congressional authorization, Newhouse noted.

"This decision is before Congress and no one else," he said.

Newhouse said he will continue to educate his colleagues, and that the science says not only do the lower Snake River dams and salmon co-exist, but "dams are not the biggest problem that salmon face."

"There is much more to this argument than the dam-breaching advocates would like to include, and I will continue to educate on all sides of this issue," Newhouse said.

Newhouse said he has extended an invitation to lawmakers to tour the dams before, and he will continue to invite any member of Congress, Inslee or President Joe Biden to visit the dams and hear directly from the Army Corps of Engineers, which operates the dams every day.

"I would also encourage them to come and meet with the farmers, irriga-

tors, transportation industry, shipping industry, and ratepayers throughout our region who rely on the Lower Snake River Dams," he said. "After analyzing the science, understanding the impacts, and witnessing the benefits that the dams provide, they would have a very difficult time justifying the actions that they have taken and the position they continue to uphold."

Inslee toured the Snake River in Asotin County in 2014, said Mike Faulk, press secretary for the governor's office.

Newhouse noted that the report is not an environmental impact statement.

"In fact, it is merely an opinion from the White House, and at this point, we don't even know if this opinion was written by scientists at all," he said.

Congress will continue oversight on the issue, and will be asking questions of the White House and CEQ moving forward, Newhouse said.

Regional quarantine expanded as more cases of bird flu found in Central Oregon

By **GEORGE PLAGEN**
Capital Press

BEND, Ore. — The Oregon Department of Agriculture is expanding a regional quarantine around Bend, limiting the movement of poultry and poultry products after confirming another case of highly pathogenic avian influenza.

On July 19, ODA and the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service detected bird flu in a non-commercial backyard flock of about 40 ducks and chickens, marking the fourth case in Deschutes County and ninth case statewide.

Because the farm sold eggs, it is classified as poul-

try rather than a backyard flock by federal definitions, requiring an expansion of the quarantine that was first established July 12.

Birds on the property were also euthanized to prevent further spreading the disease.

The quarantined area — which already encompassed the city of Bend and outlying areas — has now been extended by about seven miles through the middle of Redmond, including the Deschutes County Fairgrounds.

Dr. Ryan Scholz, state veterinarian for ODA, said additional surveillance will not be completed in time for the Deschutes County Fair and Rodeo, scheduled



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press File

More bird flu has been found in backyard flocks in Central Oregon.

for Aug. 3-7. He is working with Deschutes County 4-H on a plan that will allow

participants to exhibit and sell market birds.

However, a show for

breeding birds will not be possible.

A regional quarantine for bird flu covering part of Lane County in the Willamette Valley was issued May 17 and lifted June 7.

ODA says there is no immediate public health concern due to bird flu, and the disease does not affect poultry meat or eggs, which remain safe to eat.

Commercial poultry farmers and backyard flock owners should increase biosecurity to protect their birds, such as limiting visitors, cleaning and disinfecting equipment, keeping domesticated and wild birds separated and watching closely for signs of illness.

Symptoms in poul-

try may include diarrhea, incoordination, lethargy, coughing, sneezing and sudden death.

As of July 21, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports bird flu has infected more than 40.1 million poultry in 37 states, as well as 1,890 wild birds in 44 states. Only one case of human transmission has been reported, at a commercial farm in Colorado.

To report possible cases of bird flu in domestic birds, call ODA at 503-986-4711. For wild birds, call the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife at 866-968-2600, or email Wildlife.Health@odfw.oregon.gov.

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