

New federal effort tries to save dams along Snake River

Federal court has sought to protect salmon

By COURTNEY FLATT
Northwest Public Radio

A new bill in Congress would make sure Washington state's four lower Snake River dams stay standing. It's pushback against a recent court order to find "a new approach" to protect threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead.

That approach could include removing or altering the dams.

That's not something U.S. Rep. Dan Newhouse, R-Washington, thinks would be good for the Northwest. Newhouse introduced the legislation, along with four other Northwest representatives.

"Removing the Snake River dams would be harmful to our communities, the environment and our economy. This legislation is needed to support the critical role that Snake River dams play by providing Washington communities with clean, renewable hydropower," Newhouse said. The bipartisan legislation



Alan Berner/The Seattle Times

Water flows through the spillways of the Lower Granite Dam on the Snake River in Washington state. New federal legislation would protect dams amid a debate over endangered salmon and steelhead.

would keep a federal plan to protect salmon in place until 2022. Right now, the government has until 2021 to finish a new federal Columbia River biological opinion.

The opinion has been contested through lawsuits for more than two decades.

In the most recent deci-

sion U.S. District Court Judge Michael Simon rejected the government's plan for fish. It's the fifth time the plan has been rejected.

Simon ruled all options must be on the table, including a deep look at whether the four lower Snake River dams should be altered or removed.

"Despite billions of dollars spent on these efforts, the listed species continue to be in a perilous state," Simon wrote. "The (Federal Columbia River Power System) remains a system that 'cries out' for a new approach."

The bill would also effectively overturn Simon's deci-

sion to increase more spill over eight dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers. Simon ordered the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to spill more water over the dams to help juvenile salmon migrate out to the ocean.

Environmental groups strongly oppose the bill.

A news release from the groups said increased spill is the "most effective action in the near-term to improve survival of endangered salmon populations."

"This legislative proposal is misguided, counterproductive and based on an extremely poor understanding of the plight of our salmon and any realistic changes to how Columbia Basin hydro-system would operate to better protect salmon," said Bill Arthur, Sierra Club chairman of the Columbia-Snake River Salmon Recovery Campaign.

Too much spill can increase dissolved gas in the water, which can cause something akin to the bends in fish.

The bill was also introduced by U.S. Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers and Jaime Herrera Beutler, both Washington state Republicans — as well as Kurt Schrader, D-Oregon, and Greg Walden, R-Oregon.

"As we work to improve fish runs, we must not lose sight of the importance to the region of renewable hydro-power, recreation and transportation," Walden said. "The uncertainty created by ongoing litigation over operations impacts all of that."

State Senate approves audio recording grand jury proceedings

Oregon one of two states to use note takers

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The state Senate voted 21-7 Tuesday to require audio recordings of grand jury proceedings.

The bill modernizes the state's more than 150-year-old handwritten record-keeping process by requiring county district attorneys to electronically audio record grand jury proceedings and maintain and store copies of the recordings.

"This bill will bring our justice system into the 21st century, but it's about more than that," said state Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, who has spearheaded similar legislation for several years. "We're working on Independence Day right now. July Fourth is a beautiful day, and it's about freedom and liberty. We have a chance to ensure liberty, justice for all and an opportunity to ensure our criminal justice system remains above all reproach."

The bill heads for a vote in the House later this week.

The requirement will be gradually phased in for the state's 36 counties. The mandate triggers in March for Multnomah, Deschutes and Jackson counties, all of which have populations of 150,000 or greater. The state's other 33 counties will have to start the recordings by July 2019.

The bill provides about \$10 million for the cost of purchasing electronic recording devices and hiring staff to manage the recordings in



Capital Bureau

The state Senate on Tuesday passed a bill mandating that grand jury proceedings be recorded. The bill moves to the House, where it is expected to pass.

the three counties. The Legislative Fiscal Office has noted that there could be significant costs to the state in the 2019-2021 budget as the remaining 33 counties begin the recordings.

The prosecutor must provide a copy or transcript of the recording to the defense attorney within 10 days after a defendant is arraigned on an indictment. The defense attorney is prohibited from sharing the actual copy of the recording with the defendant and may not disclose personal identifying information about the victim, witnesses or grand jurors to the defendant. The recordings are otherwise confidential.

Prosecutors also may request a protection order from the court to redact certain information they believe could put a victim or witness in danger.

Sen. Kim Thatcher, R-Keizer, said the bill's main weakness is it disal-

'What domestic violence victim will be willing to share her story when she knows that a recording of her statement could be handed over to the man who beat her or her children just days earlier?'

Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marquis

lows hearsay testimony by law enforcement officers on behalf of witnesses. The only exceptions are for people with certain disabilities and minors.

"I really wish we had kept in protections for victims so case officers could testify on their behalf," Thatcher said. She said she voted against the bill because she felt it was rushed in the waning days of session, which must constitutionally end by Monday.

"I am all for recording grand juries but we need to proceed more cautiously when it comes to the victims," she said.

Forty-eight states and the federal court system already electronically audio record grand jury testimony.

Oregon and Louisiana are the only two states in the nation that still rely on handwritten juror notes, rather than audio recordings, as documentation of testimony in front of grand juries.

"I have found that no matter how skilled or how experienced the note taker is, there will be things that are inaccurate or left out inadvertently," said Prozanski,

a municipal prosecutor and former assistant district attorney. "As a felony prosecutor in Lane County I wanted my witnesses in front of the grand jury because I wanted them prepared to be able to testify in public in front of the Circuit Court. This process opens the grand jury process so that we have

a clear and accurate record of what witnesses say during the process, without interpretation. It's fair to prosecutors and the defense."

Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marquis, in a guest column in The Oregonian in June, wrote that he and other prosecutors would likely reserve grand juries for

unusual cases if they must be recorded. Prosecutors, he said, would instead conduct preliminary hearings, which he said take more time and could be costly for the state.

"Recording grand juries will have a chilling effect on justice," Marquis wrote. "What domestic violence victim will be willing to share her story when she knows that a recording of her statement could be handed over to the man who beat her or her children just days earlier? Even the most optimistic among us know how tragically that could end."

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.



About the Relay For Life Movement

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life movement is the world's largest fundraising event to end cancer, uniting four million people around the world to celebrate survivorship, remember lives lost, and fight back against this disease. Teams camp out and participate by taking turns walking around a track or path. Symbolizing the battle waged around the clock by those facing cancer, the event empowers communities and individuals to take a stand against the disease and take action by supporting the Society's lifesaving mission.

Join us for the Relay For Life of Clatsop County!

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- Learn about American Cancer Society programs and services.
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For more information, contact:

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You found us, enriched us and played fondly for the gleeful masses for 32 consecutive years in a show that is now slightly less colorful without its Maestro Banjo playing extraordinaire.

Dave, we love you and thank you so very much for your years of dedication and performance in a show that will not be the same without your brilliance.

Shanghaied in Astoria and the Astor Street Opry Company have dedicated this year's run to Dave Bennett, his wonderful wife Chris and family for sharing Dave with us, his extended theater family.

