

# Republicans introduce bill to stop dam spills

Water could be saved for other uses on rivers

By **NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS**  
Associated Press



AP Photo/Nicholas K. Geranios  
**A fish is seen in a viewing window at the visitors center of the Lower Granite Dam on the Snake River near Almota, Wash.**

SPOKANE, Wash. — Republican Congress members from the Pacific Northwest are upset with a federal judge's order to spill water from four Snake River dams to help speed migrating salmon to the Pacific Ocean.

They say the water could be saved for other uses and are denouncing the spill, which began April 3, and a push by environmentalists to remove the four dams to increase wild salmon runs.

"Dams and fish can coexist," U.S. Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers and Dan Newhouse, whose Washington state districts include the dams, said in a joint statement.

The four dams, built in the 1960s and 1970s, provide hydropower, flood control, navigation, irrigation and recreation benefits, supporters say. But the giant dams are also blamed for killing wild salmon, an iconic species in the Northwest.

McMorris Rodgers and Newhouse have introduced

a bill that would prevent any changes in dam operations until 2022. The measure was co-sponsored by Republican House members from Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Nevada, along with Democratic U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader of Oregon.

It passed the House Natural Resources Committee on Wednesday and heads to the floor in the coming weeks.

"Without Snake and Columbia river dams and the many benefits they provide, life in central Washington as we know it would be unrecognizable," Newhouse said.

Hydropower is the Northwest's lifeblood, said Republican U.S. Rep. Raul Labrador of Idaho.

"For a liberal judge to ignore the broad scientific

consensus of the federal government and the states of Idaho, Washington and Montana is unconscionable and must be stopped," he said.

The increased spill will cost some \$40 million in lost power sales, and could hurt transportation and barging on the rivers, flood control and irrigation systems, Republicans contend.

But Democrats argue studies of the dams, including whether they should be removed, must go forward.

Democratic U.S. Sen. Patty Murray of Washington state recently sent a letter to House and Senate leadership saying the river's management must include salmon recovery.

The letter criticized the bill to prevent changes in dam

operations. It was signed by Murray and Democratic U.S. Reps. Adam Smith and Pramila Jayapal of Washington.

"The Columbia and Snake river system is essential to the Pacific Northwest's culture, environment and economy," the letter said.

The four dams — Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose and Lower Granite — span the Snake River between the Washington cities of Pasco and Pullman. Together they produce about 4 percent of the region's electricity.

Replacing that power would require the equivalent of two nuclear power plants, Labrador said.

Environmental groups disagree.

A new study contends other renewable sources could replace the dams' power for a little more than \$1 a month for the average Northwest household.

The study "explodes the myth that we can't have both wild salmon and clean energy," said Joseph Bogaard, director of the Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition. "We can remove these four deadly dams, restore one of our nation's great salmon rivers and improve the Northwest's energy system."

But supporters of the dams say wind and solar power are

too unreliable to replace the lost hydropower.

The Columbia-Snake river system holds more than a dozen imperiled salmon runs, and the federal government has spent more than \$15 billion since 1978 on efforts to save the fish.

But those efforts have pushed wild salmon, orca and other fish and wildlife populations closer to extinction, Bogaard said.

Removing the dams is the only way to save the salmon runs, conservation groups say.

"Salmon are in desperate need of help now," Earthjustice attorney Todd True said.

Advocates for fishermen also hailed the decision to increase spill, saying it will produce larger adult salmon returns.

Proposals to remove the four dams have percolated in the Northwest for decades, and have devolved into a largely partisan issue with Democrats generally on the side of the fish and Republicans for keeping the dams.

The latest skirmish began in March 2017, when U.S. District Judge Michael Simon of Portland ordered the dams to increase spill beginning this spring. Federal agencies have estimated increasing spill until mid-June will cost electric ratepayers \$40 million in lost

power revenues in 2018 alone.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected an appeal of Simon's order.

The dams operate under a plan created by a collaboration of federal agencies, states and tribes during the Obama administration to protect salmon.

But Simon found it does not do enough. He ruled a new environmental study is needed, and it must consider the option of removing the dams. Simon also wrote that wild salmon were in a "precarious" state.

That was disputed by Terry Flores, executive director of Northwest RiverPartners, a group that includes farmers, utilities, ports and businesses.

Flores contended spilling so much water from the dams injects high levels of gas into the water, which can kill fish. The churning water at the dams also can prevent the next generation of returning salmon from accessing fish ladders and keep them from reaching spawning streams, she said.

"It's a bad plan that will cost families and businesses, do little to help, and may even harm protected salmon, and add tons of carbon to our air," Flores said of the spill. "We shouldn't throw good money at a bad plan."

## Hammond man who was accused of ramming boat during Buoy 10 dies

Criminal case dismissed

By **JACK HEFFERNAN**  
The Daily Astorian

A Hammond man accused of assault and reckless endangerment after a boat crash during the Buoy 10 fishing season last year has died, ending the criminal case.

Marlin Larsen was allegedly driving a fiberglass 31-foot Bayliner Trophy up the Columbia River with two other passengers when it collided with an aluminum 20-foot Weldcraft. The three passengers aboard the Weldcraft leaped into the river seconds before the collision.

The Weldcraft passengers — Bryan Maess, Roni Durham and Christopher McMahon — were all pulled from the river by nearby boaters and treated at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria for minor injuries. Footage of the incident that severely



Clatsop County Sheriff's Office  
**A boat was severely damaged after a crash last year during the Buoy 10 fishing season.**

damaged the boat was shared in January on Facebook by Angling Oregon, a website operated by McMahon.

Larsen was charged with three counts of fourth-degree assault, three counts of recklessly endangering another person and reckless operation of a boat.

A death certificate, however, reveals Larsen, 75, died in February at Mercy Medical Center in Roseburg, where he also owned property.

Clatsop County Circuit Court Judge Cindee Matyas ordered last week that the criminal case be dismissed.

Each of the Weldcraft pas-

sengers, however, filed lawsuits against Larsen in connection with the incident that severely damaged the boat.

The lawsuits claim Larsen was not paying attention to the boat he was driving, causing lingering injuries to the plaintiffs.

Following a motion filed by McMahon's lawyer, Circuit Court Judge Dawn McIntosh ordered that the suit be transferred to a representative of Larsen's estate, and a four-day trial has been scheduled for October. Maess has yet to file a similar motion, but a trial in that case is scheduled for the same time as McMahon's.

Durham filed his lawsuit earlier this month against Larsen's estate. A trial date has yet to be set in that case.

Watch a video of the crash:  
<https://youtu.be/agWmkZY31Q>

## County judge blocks company's attempt to restock Atlantic salmon

Associated Press

SEATTLE — An Atlantic salmon farming company cannot restock a net-pen farm while it challenges Washington state's termination of its license to operate, a judge has ruled.

The Seattle Times reported that a Thurston County Superior Court Judge last week denied Cooke Aquaculture's request for a preliminary injunction while its lawsuit against the Department of Natural Resources plays out.

One of the company's pens collapsed last August at its Cypress Island farm, releasing more than 300,000 Atlantic salmon and causing widespread concern that the fish could spread diseases and compete with native fish.

In December, Public Lands Commissioner Hilary Franz ended the company's 10-year aquatic lands lease, saying the Canadian company had violated the terms of the lease. The company filed a lawsuit in January contending it was not in default of its net-pen lease and there was no basis for terminating its contract.

Judge John Skinder's rul-

ing means the state won't have to allow the company to restock the net-pens.

The company removed the collapsed pen but has two remaining pens at its Cypress Island farm. The company wants to restock with nearly 800,000 juvenile Atlantic salmon.

Joel Richardson, vice president for public relations for Cooke, declined to comment about the court ruling.

"Today's decision is a win for the people and waters of Washington," Franz said in a statement. "I encourage Cooke to drop this baseless lawsuit and work with us to safely and quickly wind up its operations at this site."

The company has also sued over termination of its net-pen leases at its Port Angeles farm. The state is allowing the company to grow its existing stock of fish at that site and harvest them by June 2019, then remove its operation there.

Washington lawmakers last session passed legislation signed by Gov. Jay Inslee that phases out Atlantic salmon net-pen farming, with no new leases allowed after the current leases expire in 2025.

## Perry promises to not sell off BPA assets without congressional approval

By **JADE McDOWELL**  
East Oregonian

Cheap electricity has helped bring industrial development to the Pacific Northwest, but utility companies fear decisions regarding the Bonneville Power Administration will increase rates.

Some good news came last week, when Energy Secretary Rick Perry told U.S. Rep. Greg Walden that his department will not move to sell off the Bonneville Power Administration's assets without going through Congress.

The idea to privatize BPA, which provides wholesale power to electric utilities across the Pacific Northwest, was proposed by the Trump administration last summer. It received strong pushback from Oregon lawmakers.

"It is the one idea — bad idea — that unites all of us in the Northwest," Walden told Perry, according to a video of Thursday's hearing before the congressional subcommittee on energy in Washington, D.C. "I'm afraid this move could do nothing but harm my constituents, drive up electricity costs, and hurt consumers across the region."

The Republican asked Perry if he could assure him the Department of Energy "will

leave Bonneville alone unless Congress provides explicit authorization."

"Yes, sir," Perry replied.

U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader, D-Oregon, also spoke against privatization of the BPA during the hearing, noting that the BPA takes no appropriations from Congress, but rather operates solely on the revenue it earns from wholesale power sales. He stated that the wholesaler provides half the electricity used in the Pacific Northwest and three-fourths of the region's high-voltage transmission grid.

"Selling off these transmission assets would fragment the grid, be devastating to the region and provide a meager one-time asset that would not have any long-term beneficial effects with regard to our economy," he told Perry.

The fate of Bonneville Power Administration has repercussions on local utilities such as Umatilla Electric Cooperative, which gets 85 to 90 percent of its power from BPA.

Steve Meyers, a spokesman for the cooperative, said in an email that customer-owned utilities in the region are concerned about the consequences of taking the system out of the hands of those who best know the system and the region's

power challenges, and selling it to companies focused more on increasing profits.

"Further, there is concern that the value of the BPA system would transfer from the people of the Northwest to the U.S. Treasury," he wrote. "Our ratepayers have paid to build and maintain the system, and we don't want to see it sold to fund the federal government."

Even without privatization of the Bonneville Power Administration, local utilities — and, by extension, their customers — will likely see rate increases anyway based on a recent ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The court ordered more water to be spilled from dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers between April and June, with the goal of helping more fish — particularly salmon — pass through the dams unharmed. However, putting more water through the spillways diverts it from turbines producing electricity.

In a statement earlier this month, BPA said the order created a "new multimillion dollar obligation for the region's ratepayers." The power retailer has said it will likely make up the difference by adding a "spill surcharge" to the bills of the utility companies that purchase wholesale power through BPA.

WANTED

Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber

Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA

Contact: John Anderson • 360-269-2500

### 2051 N. Roosevelt Drive, Seaside

The State of Oregon, through the Department of Transportation, is offering for sale to the public an unimproved 20,828 sq. ft. in Seaside Oregon.

The property is zoned Commercial General (CG) and Conservation Aquatic (A-2).

The property has been appraised at \$230,000, and is being sold through a Sealed Bid Auction process. The State of Oregon will review any reasonable offer, but has the right to accept or reject any all offers. If you are interested in purchasing this property, please fill out and submit a Bid Form and Sales Agreement, and submit with your deposit (10% is recommended) by the scheduled auction date of May 9th, 2018 at 3:30 pm. Bid Forms and additional information may be reviewed and downloaded here: [www.odotproperty.com](http://www.odotproperty.com)

Your offer can be submitted by surface mail or hand delivered. No fax or electronic bids will be accepted.

**Mail or hand-deliver your bid to:**  
Oregon Department of Transportation  
Right of Way Section – MS 2  
Attn: Steve Eck, Senior Property Agent  
4040 Fairview Industrial Dr. SE  
Salem OR 97302-1142  
503-986-3638

**On your mail package, please make a note: Sealed Bid Offer / File: PM204A-002**

