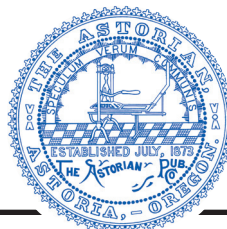


OPINION



the Astorian

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GUEST COLUMN

A future with salmon and clean energy

Together, we represent the leadership of the state of Oregon, the Nez Perce Tribe and the Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association.

For years, we have worked alongside the other stakeholders of the Columbia River basin to find a path forward that ensures the long-term economic and ecological health of our region.

So, we were surprised to see the Public Power Council's Sept. 26 op-ed in The Oregonian complaining about a lack of dialogue over the governor's support for breaching the four dams of the Lower Snake River. The group has been invited to and attended numerous meetings and forums



KATE BROWN



SAMUEL N. PENNEY



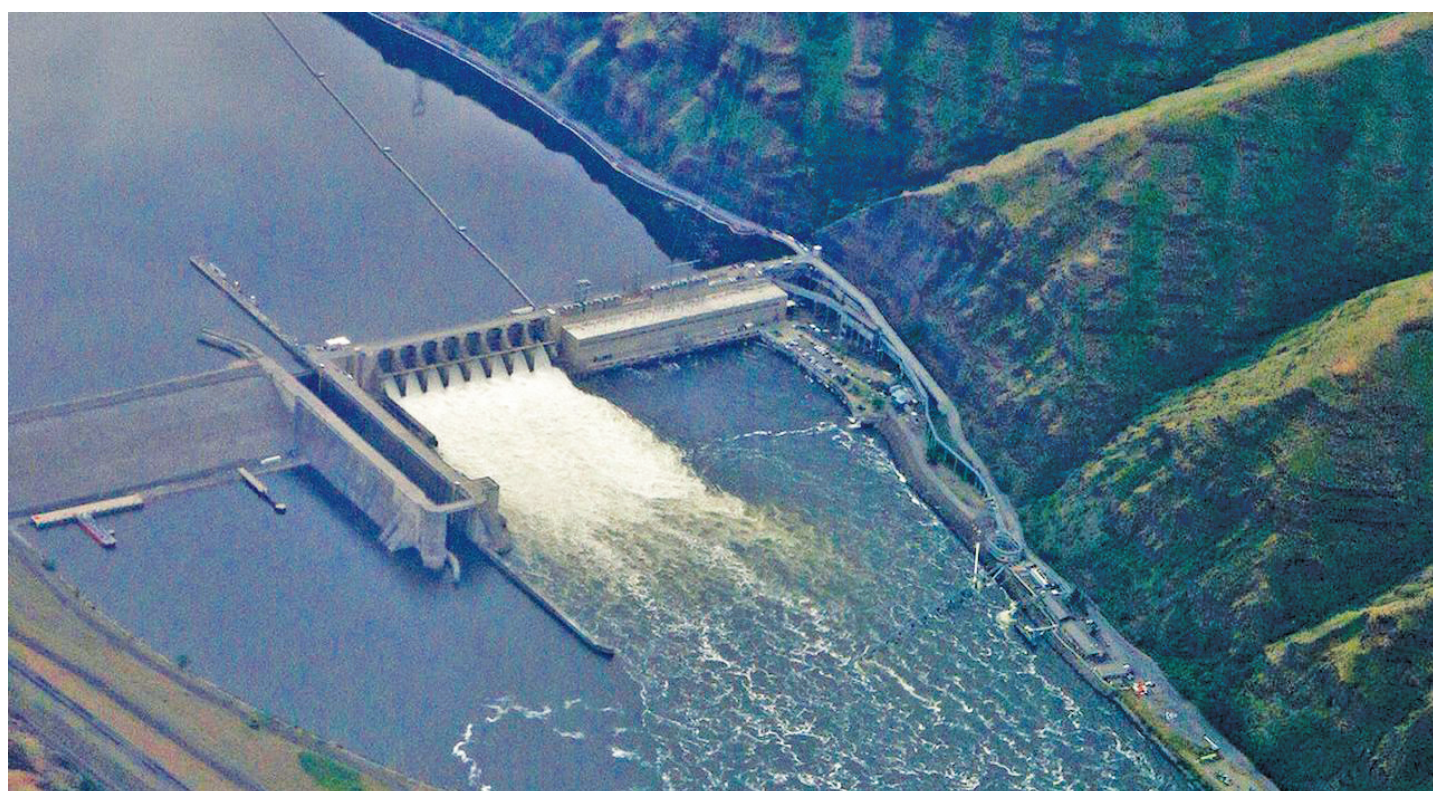
LIZ HAMILTON

over the years, including Columbia Basin Collaborative meetings, where it has been welcome to participate in working groups. We've heard the perspectives of the Public Power Council and shared ours — which includes a comprehensive solution that charts a stronger, brighter future for the Northwest.

The ecological vibrance of the Columbia and Snake rivers is intertwined with the economic prosperity of the region. For generations, we have harnessed our

rivers and developed our watersheds, seeking a balance between sustainability and prosperity. What is clear today is that the status quo in the Columbia basin is not working. Salmon and steelhead stocks continue to decline, with several now on the brink of extinction. We must also continually reevaluate our evolving clean energy portfolio to reflect emerging technologies. It is not an either-or choice: we can have a future with abundant and harvestable salmon and reliable clean energy.

Salmon and steelhead are keystone species critical to the region's ecosystem and economy, as well as subsistence and cultural health for tribal peoples who have fished the rivers since time immemorial. Abundant salmon and steelhead populations can coexist with a robust, growing regional economy that includes affordable and renewable power, water



Ted S. Warren/AP Photo

The Lower Granite Dam on the Snake River is seen from the air.

for agriculture, transportation of goods and jobs in the fishing industry, while being respectful of tribal culture, history and treaty rights.

Decades of development, including the dams and reservoirs placed between critical inland nursery areas and ocean feeding grounds, has had devastating impacts on wild salmon and steelhead. For nearly 30 years, several species have remained listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. Now, the climate crisis is compounding those impacts through warmer waters, lower river flows and deteriorating ocean conditions. Through it all, the federal agencies responsible for operating dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers have continuously failed to meet the minimum standards required by the Endangered Species Act.

This year, we find ourselves at a critical juncture — if we do not take action before juvenile salmon begin their spring migration, those stocks may never recover. Extinction is irreversible. We must act now.

Restoration of the Snake River through the removal of the earthen portion of the lower four dams is a necessary part of any long-term solution. Just as clear is that significant resources will

be necessary to invest in clean energy sources to replace the energy production the dams provide. That's one of the reasons U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson, a Republican of Idaho, called for \$33 billion in economic investment as part of his proposal, released earlier this year, for resolving the Columbia basin conflict. By striking the right balance, we can ensure robust and harvestable fish runs, a growing economy built on investments in clean energy and sustainable agricultural, commercial and recreational industries.

We would like to correct some misperceptions. First, litigation was not a path that the governor chose alone, nor was it our preferred option. Unfortunately, the federal government left us no other recourse. Rules enacted by the previous administration — and the resulting 15-year federal plan for operating the Columbia and Snake river dams — are inconsistent with the Endangered Species Act and federal laws, and fall far short of protecting our fish runs.

Second, our recent proposals do not conflict with the recent flex spill agreement, which was an interim step while the latest operations plan was completed. The flex spill agreement, by its express terms, terminated when the fed-

eral government issued the flawed operations plan.

Finally, no one disputes that the power generation of the Snake River dams must be replaced. That challenge is far from insurmountable — in fact, the dams provide a relatively small, though stable, amount of power for the region. The region as a whole is working to address power generating needs, reliability and greater integration of renewables. As clean regional energy supplies expand, combined with investments in storage and energy efficiency, future dam removal becomes a viable option.

None of this is simple or easy. We will need all our partners to make it happen, including the Public Power Council. But we cannot wait another year. If salmon and steelhead disappear from the region, the ecological and economic impacts can never be undone. That is what is at stake. Let's work together on a comprehensive solution and get this done.

Kate Brown is governor of Oregon. Samuel N. Penney is chairman of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee. Liz Hamilton is executive director of the Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Standards

The "Speak your mind" letter to the editor of Oct. 14 advised another letter writer of Oct. 7 to submit a more detailed example of the bias at The Astorian they were complaining about.

Now, I don't know the why of the complaint, but I do know The Astorian has edited some of my opinions in regards to what the editor described as unsupported factual claims.

Robert Potter does note something correctly with his "freedom of the press" statement, even though it is well documented that the "press" often passes along lies by quoting people.

However, that is not what The Astorian's letters to the editor policy is about. They have standards. One cannot just "Speak your mind" as Potter suggests.

ROBERT LIDDYCOAT
Seaside

A hazard

I was once a fireman, and I certainly respect and support both paid and volunteer fire-people, other first-line responders, medics, other hospital employees, teachers and other school employees.

I respect the mail and freight deliverers, grocery store employees, loggers and plumbers, too. But those noble occupations do not entitle you to be a hazard to the community you're supposed to be serving.

Get vaccinated against COVID-19; it's easy and simple. If you won't, don't let the door hit you between the shoulder and the heel.

JOSEPH WEBB
Astoria

Keep Cannon Beach safe

The Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association harms rural communities. Light must be shed on ORLA, the lobbyist responsible for fueling a fear-based campaign of misinformation surrounding the Cannon Beach food tax.

ORLA constantly fights to uphold the outdated transient lodging tax legislation, mandating the use of a percentage of local lodging tax funds to continue financing marketing efforts, even when destination marketing is no longer needed in overcrowded communities like Cannon Beach.

This same portion of lodging tax funds may be used for "tourism-related facilities," which has an overly strict definition that does not accommodate investments (congestion mitigation, first responder services) the food tax aims to support.

In other words, ORLA supports marketing Cannon Beach to bring more visitation, without taking into account visitor safety or how it impacts local livability.

ORLA has a history of investing its resources to fight legislation that would support local communities. In the most recent legislative session, they defeated bills aimed at increasing the lodging tax to fund something other than tourism promotion.

House Bill 2579 would have increased the lodging tax from 1.5% to 1.8%, and invested the increase exclusively for affordable housing in the county where it was collected. Wouldn't it be nice if firefighters and restaurant employees could afford to live in the communities they serve?

ORLA is a huge outside lobbyist that does not have the health and safety of small communities or its residents in mind. Please join me in keeping Cannon Beach safe and vote "yes" on the food tax.

AARON MATUSICK
Cannon Beach