

Snake River dam speakers focus on impacts

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

PASCO, Wash. — Representatives supporting agriculture, fish and other uses spoke Jan. 13 during the third and final public workshop on the draft of Washington Gov. Jay Inslee’s study of the four lower Snake River dams.

Removal of the dams has been hotly debated for years. Proponents say taking them out would improve fish passage while opponents say it would hurt the region’s farmers, who rely on barges to ship their wheat to export ports downriver. Taking out the dams and their adjoining locks would make the river impassable for barges.

“We need to keep in mind that helping salmon thrive is a shared responsibility,” said Alex McGregor, chairman of the McGregor Co., based in Colfax, Wash. “I hope we can move past litigation, headlines and news clips that have prevailed over substance and working together.”

Farmers have done their best to be good stewards for fish, McGregor said, pointing to achievements such as voluntary conservation efforts.

Dam removal proponents have linked the dams to the wellbeing of killer whales



Pasco, Wash., farmer Nancy Clark holds up a sign supporting the lower Snake River dams Jan. 13 during a Know the Dam Facts rally prior to the final stakeholder public workshop in Pasco.

that spend most of their time in the Salish Sea and Puget Sound.

McGregor cited an Environmental Protection Agency study of the Salish Sea that states the decline of salmon is closely associated with the health of Puget Sound, with wastewater the main source of contamination.

“It’s time aggressive steps be taken to clean up contamination along Puget Sound,” McGregor said. “Toxin levels for Southern Resident killer whales are reportedly 4 to 6 times higher than their counterparts.”

“This is going to be a big lift — there’s no low-hang-

ing fruit left,” said Rob Masonis, vice president of western conservation for Trout Unlimited.

David Johnson, manager for the Nez Perce Tribe fisheries department, said his team is working to fix habitat but can only do so much in so many areas.

“Our harvest has been extremely curtailed,” he said, noting that in some years four tribes have to split 10,000 salmon for ceremonial purposes, and supplemented them with fish produced by hatcheries.

“The last couple years, we’ve had some horrible returns,” Johnson said. “I’m not going to blame these on



Audience members speak with David Johnson, department manager of the Nez Perce Fisheries Department, center, and Alex McGregor, chairman of the McGregor Co.

the dams, these are largely related to what’s been happening in the ocean, and that’s a climate change issue, which in my mind is a lot larger than working on the dams.”

Masonis said it will take “massive investment” in the system to determine what will work for agriculture, fish and energy.

Opposing sides have an opportunity to come together and build bipartisan support for solutions, he said, but that means political division must cease.

“It depends on where you’re sitting in the Basin, which party you’re affiliated with, pretty much where you come down on these issues,”

he said. “That’s not a recipe for success for solving these problems.”

Rob Rich, vice president of marine services for barge company Shaver Transportation, spoke about the ripple effect that removal of the dams and eliminating the ability to move crops using low-cost barges would have on rural communities.

“There’s going to be a significant impact, and it isn’t just going to be to the farm family,” Rich said, referring to other stores in the region that do business with farmers.

Balance is needed, Rich said.

Agriculture is “overwhelmingly” made up of

families and small businesses, McGregor said, noting many of his company’s 36 locations are the biggest employer in town, with 6 to 8 employees.

He sometimes hears that the need for barges and tugboats is declining, but the opposite is true.

The company was going “full blast” last fall, using trucks, trains and barges to move liquid fertilizer upriver from the Tri-Cities to the Port of Clarkston to meet a “very narrow window” for growers to plant fall seed.

Barges delivered enough nutrients to fertilize 200,000 acres in the Palouse and Camas Prairie regions, McGregor said.

“Imagine if we had had to wait until rail got around to it or highways weren’t crowded,” he said. “Farmers would have had to make do with seeding late, and every day you delay seeding, you lower your yield potential.”

McGregor is chairman of the rural vitality task force for the Association of Washington Business.

“We’re very concerned about farm families and those communities that depend on farm families,” he said. “And yes, transportation is vital to our future. Timely transportation in particular.”

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

A little snow this morning

Mostly cloudy and chilly

Cloudy and chilly

Mostly cloudy

Cloudy and chilly

PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
38°	31°	40°	29°	39° 29°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
39°	31°	42°	30°	40° 31°

AccuWeather

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OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	38°	20°
Normals	42°	28°
Records	64° (1919)	-17° (1930)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.20"
Month to date	0.80"
Normal month to date	0.89"
Year to date	0.80"
Last year to date	0.46"
Normal year to date	0.89"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	31°	12°
Normals	42°	29°
Records	62° (1974)	-21° (1930)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace
Month to date	0.13"
Normal month to date	0.70"
Year to date	0.13"
Last year to date	0.45"
Normal year to date	0.70"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Sun.
Boardman	SSE 4-8	NNE 4-8
Pendleton	S 7-14	SE 6-12

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:31 a.m.
Sunset tonight	4:41 p.m.
Moonrise today	1:20 a.m.
Moonset today	12:07 p.m.

New

First

Full

Last

Jan 24

Feb 1

Feb 8

Feb 15

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 87° in Naples, Fla. Low -33° in Cotton, Minn.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

-10s

-0s

0s

10s

20s

30s

40s

50s

60s

70s

80s

90s

100s

110s

showers

t-storms

rain

flurries

snow

ice

cold front

warm front

stationary front

high

low

Washington Supreme Court OKs much lesser version of carbon cap

Program to cap carbon pollution is a ‘clarion call’

By GENE JOHNSON
Associated Press

SEATTLE — The Washington Supreme Court on Thursday reinstated a severely limited version of Gov. Jay Inslee’s plan to cap carbon pollution in the state, a decision the Democrat described as a “clarion call” that lawmakers must act on climate change.

In a 5-4 ruling, the court said the Clean Air Rule cannot apply to companies that sell or distribute petro-

leum or natural gas because they don’t make their own emissions — other people burn the fuel they provide. The Department of Ecology only has the authority to regulate “actual emitters,” the court said.

While environmental groups said it is a good step to require refineries, power plants, factories and other big polluters to cut their emissions, cars remain the biggest source of greenhouse gas pollution. About three-quarters of the emissions that would have been covered by the rule came indirectly from petroleum and natural gas importers and sellers.

That means the court’s decision left the state with a much-diminished rule.

“This ruling will significantly affect our ability to reduce emissions,” Inslee told a news conference in Olympia. “This decision has made it even more abundantly clear that we need to take action in the Legislature. The reason is it has disabled one tool that has been used in our toolbox.”

A Thurston County Superior Court judge struck down the rule after it was challenged by industry groups. The four justices in the minority would have reinstated it in its entirety.

Panel proposes ways to improve Oregon’s outdoor recreation

SALEM — A panel commissioned by Gov. Kate Brown aiming to improve recreation in Oregon’s outdoors suggests creating an Oregon Outdoors Pass and getting more diversity in wild spaces.

The 33-person Governor’s Task Force on the Outdoors released a draft report Thursday.

The *Statesman Journal* reported the goal is to recommend to Brown policies, legislation and initiatives that would boost Oregon’s recreation economy, improve resources, and boost outdoor participation, especially among youths and underserved communities.

To that end, they came up with 30 initial ideas under five broad categories that will be discussed at a final meeting Jan. 23 in Salem. Final recommendations will come this spring. The hope is that the recommendations are applied in the next five years.

Among the recommendations is to encourage diversity by reaching out to minority communities to have a hand in land management planning or hiring more diverse people in state agencies. Another plan would seek to make state parks more

BRIEFLY

accessible — or highlight accessibility — to disabled visitors.

Oregon judge orders clean energy ballot measures to proceed after initial rejection

SALEM — A county judge in Oregon on Thursday ordered the secretary of state to process two clean energy ballot initiatives that environmentalists want to bring before voters in November, after the state official had rejected them.

Secretary of State Bev Clarno, a Republican, had earlier said the ballot initiatives violated a state requirement that legislative measures stick to one subject. Marion County Judge David Leith, ruling in favor of backers of the initiatives, said she was wrong.

“Under the current precedents, I’m satisfied that IP 48 and 49 do satisfy the single subject requirement,” Leith said.

The judge’s permanent injunction means the process of earning a final ballot title from the attorney general will resume. Notably, Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, a Democrat, refused to defend Clarno in the litigation and had challenged her legal basis for tossing the two proposals and a third one. Rosenblum authorized Clarno to find a private lawyer.

— Associated Press

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