

# Environmental groups oppose Simpson's dam removal plan

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**  
*Capital Press*

SALEM — It's rare that farmers and environmental groups agree.

But both agricultural stakeholders and environmental organizations say Idaho Rep. Mike Simpson's proposed \$33.5 billion salmon recovery deal is a no-go.

A group of 17 environmental organizations say Simpson's plan would speed up salmon extinction and harm human health, calling it "untenable."

The group, including the Center for Biological Diversity and Spokane Riverkeeper, sent a letter on Tuesday, March 16, to Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley and Washington Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, all Democrats, opposing Simpson's plan.



Simpson

A representative for the Center for Biological Diversity has not returned calls seeking further comment.

Agricultural stakeholders and power companies also oppose Simpson's plan.

Simpson, a Republican, has not introduced legislation, but in February unveiled a plan for salmon recovery that includes removing the Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental and Ice Harbor dams on the lower Snake River in 2030 and 2031.

His proposal includes a 35-year extension of the license of all remaining dams in the Columbia River



Associated Press, File

**Ice Harbor dam near Burbank, Wash., is one of four dams on the lower Snake River that would be taken out under a proposal by Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho.**

Basin greater than 5 megawatts, and a 35-year moratorium on litigation related to anadromous fish under the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and the Clean Water Act.

"Each of our organizations strongly supports the removal of the four Lower Snake River dams to help restore the region's culturally significant wild salmon and steelhead, and we fully support aiding every community impacted by the removal of the dams," the letter states.

"However, this goal cannot be

achieved by suspending the protections of our bedrock environmental laws for a generation or more, along with an unprecedented attack on environmental justice for millions of people that live across the Columbia River basin," the letter continues. "The proposed suspension of core environmental laws is the most sweeping we have ever encountered and is unacceptable."

The groups claim in their letter that breaching the dams could save four of the most endangered salmonid species from extinction. But

Simpson's proposal demands "the most extensive rollback of environmental safeguards in the modern environmental era."

"Rep. Simpson is asking millions of the region's residents to sacrifice their clean water protections and is risking the future of many other endangered, threatened, or sensitive species in the Northwest as the price for removing these four dams," the letter states. "Moreover, this deal would set a terrible and dangerous precedent for the rest of the nation, creating a model wherein environ-

mental progress can only occur by sacrificing human health and environmental protections elsewhere."

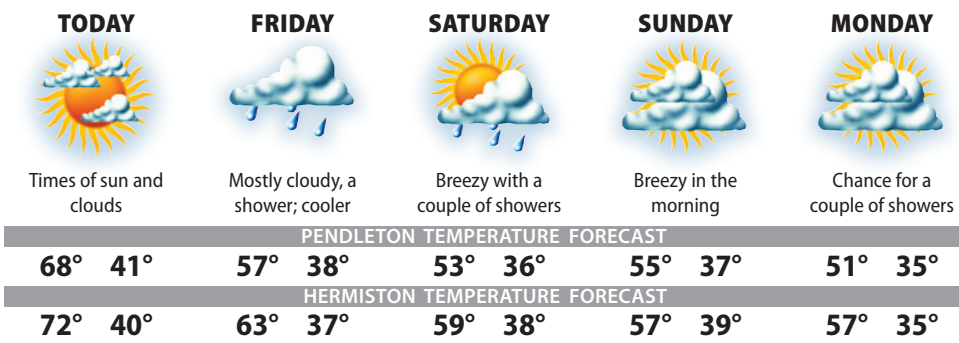
"Cynically, Rep. Simpson's proposal continues the false narrative that environmental safeguards are to blame for declining wild salmon populations," the letter states. "Nothing could be further from the truth."

"While we support providing funds and resources to help the communities that would be impacted by the removal of the Snake River dams, Rep. Simpson proposes to spend \$34 billion with virtually no accountability on how those funds would be spent," the letter states.

The groups say that under Simpson's proposal, most funding would go toward "special interests and large agribusiness," claiming that funding would go toward "large factory farm agribusinesses to further subsidize operations that already cause massive water and air pollution and other environmental ills" and a "vague list of other infrastructure projects including unproven hydrogen storage and small modular nuclear reactors that have little to do with the Snake River dams." The letter argues that "Rep. Simpson would be the sole arbiter who picks winners and losers for decades to come."

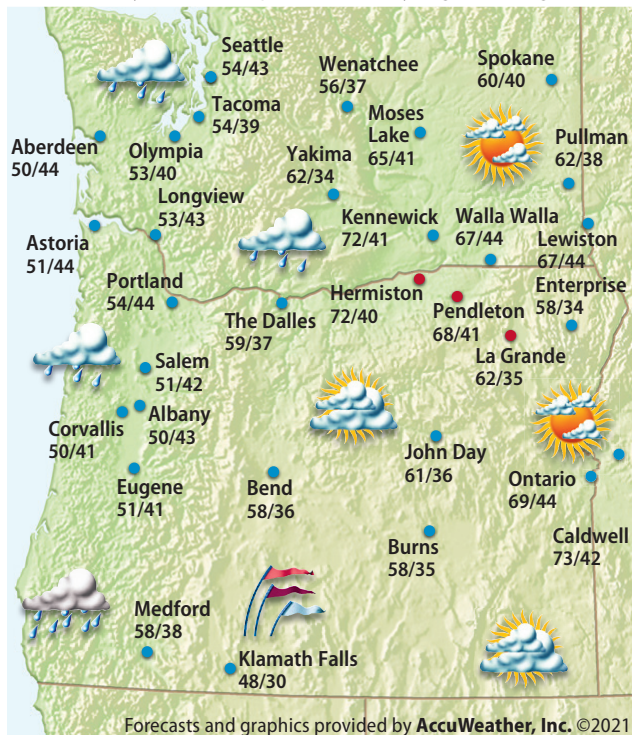
"The entire purpose of breaching the Snake River dams is to rescue populations of wild fish," the groups write to the legislators. "But, perversely, Rep. Simpson's proposal would jeopardize those very same fish by removing their legal protection from other major sources of harm."

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST

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



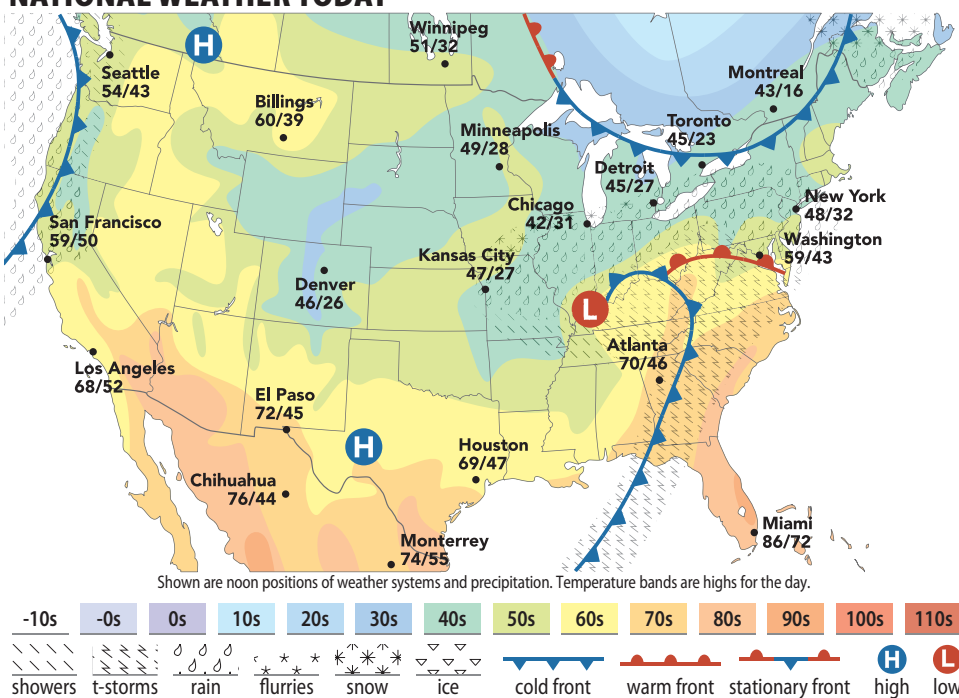
## ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	58°	29°
Normals	55°	36°
Records	76° (1900)	10° (1906)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.09"	
Normal month to date	0.71"	
Year to date	3.11"	
Last year to date	4.67"	
Normal year to date	3.22"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	59°	26°
Normals	58°	35°
Records	76° (1972)	19° (2002)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.07"	
Normal month to date	0.53"	
Year to date	1.15"	
Last year to date	0.48"	
Normal year to date	2.77"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	Fri.	
Boardman	NW 4-8	SW 6-12
Pendleton	S 7-14	WSW 6-12
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	7:02 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	7:05 p.m.	
Moonrise today	9:31 a.m.	
Moonset today	none	

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)  
High 95° in McAllen, Texas Low 4° in Buena Vista, Colo.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



## Oregon jobless rate remains high, at 6.1%

By **MIKE ROGOWAY**  
*The Oregonian*

SALEM — Oregon added 13,900 jobs last month, nearly twice as many as it gained in January, but the jobless rate remains stubbornly high.

Unemployment was 6.1% in February, according to new data out Tuesday, March 16, from the Oregon Employment Department. That's on par with the national rate and down just one-tenth of a percentage point from January.

While the jobless rate has fallen for 10 straight months, the rate of decline has slowed to a crawl. Oregon remains down more than 150,000 jobs from February 2020. Oregon has regained a little less than half of the jobs it lost in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic.

Last month's job gains were almost entirely in the leisure and hospitality sector. Restaurants and bars began reopening to indoor service last month in many

of Oregon's largest counties after a three-month shutdown triggered by a steep rise in coronavirus infections and deaths.

Oregon relaxed those rules in February as the outbreak faded. The reopenings in Oregon's largest county didn't get underway until midway through the month, though, and their rebound may have been hindered somewhat by a snow and ice storm that hit the Portland area around Valentine's Day.

With business restrictions further relaxed this month, and COVID-19 hospitalizations continuing to trend downward, that offers some hope for greater improvement in March.

Despite the pandemic recession — Oregon's deepest downturn on record — some segments of the economy have added jobs over the past year.

Transportation and warehousing is up 7.2%, 5,300 jobs, reflecting the shift to online shopping during

the pandemic.

Professional services are up 0.6% and architectural and engineering services are up 4.0%. Workers in those segments can generally do their jobs remotely, meaning they were somewhat insulated by the pandemic's direct effects.

Oregon listed 142,000 workers as unemployed last month, nearly double the number who were unemployed in February 2020. In addition, more than 100,000 Oregonians sought benefits last month through the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program, temporary aid Congress established at the outset of the pandemic.

Congress extended that program, and other expanded benefits, into September in a new, \$1.9 trillion relief package passed last week. But the employment department has warned that thousands of Oregonians may have a lapse in benefits while the agency adjusts its systems to accommodate the change.

## IN BRIEF

### Oregon State Police vehicle rams wrong-way driver

BAKER CITY — A Missoula, Montana, man is in the Baker County Jail on multiple charges after he drove the wrong way on Interstate 84 and collided with an Oregon State Police trooper who was trying to find the wrong-way driver on Friday, March 12.



Deuel-Clinkenbeard

Sr. Trooper Andrew McClay was evaluated at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center-Baker City and released, according to an OSP press release.

The driver, Logan Raye Deuel-Clinkenbeard, 28, sustained minor injuries and was treated at the hospital.

Deuel-Clinkenbeard is charged with second-degree attempted assault, reckless driving and reckless endangerment.

The incident started just before 2 p.m. on March 12 when OSP dispatch received more than 35 calls to 911 about a car traveling west in the freeway's eastbound lanes at Milepost 342, near Huntington about 38 miles

east of Baker City.

In his report, McClay wrote that he was just passing Milepost 327 in the eastbound lanes when the vehicle, a gray 2011 Toyota Camry sedan, "was traveling towards me at a very high rate of speed."

McClay wrote in his report that he "rammed the vehicle to get it off the roadway."

The approximately 15-mile section of freeway includes multiple curves through the Burnt River Canyon.

Both Deuel-Clinkenbeard's car and the OSP Ford SUV McClay was driving sustained significant damage from the collision, and both were towed, according to McClay's report.

In a document filed on Monday, March 15, in Baker County Circuit Court in support of a motion seeking to release Deuel-Clinkenbeard to either his father or on conditions set by the court, the father said that his son has "severe mental health conditions for which we have been seeking treatment." The document also states that Deuel-Clinkenbeard has no prior criminal history and "needs consistent mental health treatment."

—EO Media Group

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