

OPINION

OTHER VIEWS

Another voice weighs in on Snake River dams

An obscure division within the Office of the President now wants to weigh in on the fate of four dams on the lower Snake River.

Another voice that appears to be leaning toward removing the dams.

In a March 28 blog post, the White House Council on Environmental Quality outlined its efforts to study breaching the dams. Those efforts included a March 21 “Nation to Nation” meeting between federal agencies and leaders of the Tribes of the Columbia River Basin.

The Council on Environmental Quality was established during the Nixon administration under the National Environmental Policy Act. According to the council’s website, it is charged with coordinating “the federal government’s efforts to improve, preserve and protect America’s public health and environment.”

According to the blog, the council last fall convened leaders from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Army Corps of Engineers and the Bonneville Power Administration.

The group will “build on existing analyses to identify a durable path forward that ensures a clean energy future, supports local and regional economies, and restores ecosystem function, while honoring longstanding commitments to Tribal Nations,” the blog states.

“We cannot continue business as usual. Doing the right thing for salmon, Tribal Nations, and communities can bring us together. It is time for effective, creative solutions,” the blog states.

The fix might be in.

“We heard calls to support breaching the four dams on the lower Snake River to restore a more natural flow, also about the need to replace the services provided by those dams, and recognition that such a step would require congressional action,” the blog post reads. “We were asked to consider the Basin holistically because of its inherent interconnectedness.”

OK. Let’s consider the farmers and other people who depend on the river.

The dams in southeast Washington generate electricity and allow farmers to move grain by barge down the Columbia River’s main tributary.

Without the dams, the river would be too shallow to barge wheat and other farm goods the roughly 100 miles between Lewiston, Idaho, and the Tri-Cities. Lake Sacajawea, a reservoir created by Ice Harbor Dam, irrigates 47,000 acres. The loss of electricity generated by the dams would increase the cost of pumping groundwater.

The agriculture and shipping communities remain wary of discussions on the fate of the dams.

“We continue to be engaged with the administration at CEQ,” Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, said. “Looking at the blog, we would have liked to see more focus on the impact this would have had on farmers across the country.”

Removing the dams would come at the expense of the entire region that depends on low-cost and reliable electricity the dams provide and the livelihoods of farmers, barge operators, deck hands, dock workers in the region and the vendors who support them.

It continues to be a bad idea.

— *Capital Press*



LETTER to the EDITOR

More reasons to not jump on ‘Greater Idaho bandwagon’

David Hayslip’s letter detailing reasons for not jumping on the Greater Idaho bandwagon was spot on. I would like to add a

couple of more reasons to think about.

First, though I can understand the dislike for the way things are in the Willamette Valley, one must realize their contribution to the Oregon tax base and its significant impact on the statewide economy. Are you really willing to give that up? Perhaps it would be better to find solutions to problems.

Second, are you willing to have your minimum wage drop from \$12.50 an hour to \$7.25? I can’t imagine the hardship that would put on people.

This movement may be good for discussion over a few beers, but seriously?

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