



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
RESOLUTION 2-2019**

**SUPPORTING THE FEDERAL COLUMBIA RIVER POWER SYSTEM,  
RECOGNIZING ITS ROLE IN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP, AND  
OPPOSING REMOVAL OF THE LOWER SNAKE RIVER DAMS**

Orcas Power & Light Cooperative (OPALCO) is a member owned electric cooperative providing electric services in San Juan County, Washington, and is a full requirement utility, with all of the electricity it delivers to its members (other than a small amount of local distributed power) coming from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and is generated by the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS).

The FCRPS is in large part responsible for the clean air, water and lands enjoyed by millions in the Pacific Northwest. The dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers provide navigable waters, irrigation, flood control, recreation and the FCRPS provides a reliable source of clean energy for millions of residents of Washington State and the Pacific Northwest.

Hydropower produces no emissions, making the Pacific Northwest's carbon footprint from energy production nearly half that of the other parts of the country and because hydropower output can be quickly increased or reduced, it is an excellent back-up for intermittent wind or solar generation.

Industries and businesses, representing hundreds of thousands of jobs, rely on low-cost hydropower to stay in business and prosper and high technology firms have located facilities in the Pacific Northwest because of the availability of reliable, carbon free hydropower, creating jobs and boosting local economies.

The clean and renewable energy generated by the FCRPS has made Washington State a national and world leader in responsible environmental stewardship and implementation of the FCRPS BiOp has successfully improved overall fish runs by 97 percent, proving that dams and fish can coexist. Consequently, there are more total fish in the Columbia River than at any time since the first lower mainstream dam was built at Bonneville in 1938.

To facilitate this remarkable achievement, BPA has spent nearly \$17 billion on infrastructure and fish mitigation projects since 1978 representing from one-quarter to one-third of the BPA's total costs. Because of these efforts, for the foreseeable future, salmon and steelhead mitigation in the Northwest will continue to be one of the largest wildlife recovery efforts in history.

The four Lower Snake River dams enable irrigation for over seven million acres of farmland producing \$8 billion annually in agricultural income, barging of approximately nine million tons of cargo valued at over \$3 billion annually, and annually produce 1,000 aMW of emissions-free power, enough to serve nearly half a million Northwest businesses, industries and households. BPA has identified the four Lower Snake River Dams as critical components of the FCRPS mission of supporting peak power generation and removing over 2,000 megawatts of firm winter capacity generated by the four Lower Snake River Dams would add to a forecasted Northwest shortfall in energy capacity.

Despite the significant value the dams provide, and the success of the current FCRPS BiOp, there continues to be movement to have the four Lower Snake River dams removed. In March 2017, the United States District Court for the District of Oregon directed the federal agencies to undertake a

comprehensive review of hydro operations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and urged the federal agencies to include analysis of the removal, bypass or breaching one or more of the four Lower Snake River dams. Additionally, Washington State is funding a study on the associated economic and social impacts of the potential breaching or removal of the four Lower Snake River dams which duplicates the same effort that is several years underway by the federal agencies in the Columbia River Systems Operations Environmental Impact Statement, making the study an unnecessary and wasteful use of taxpayers' money.

There is inaccurate information about the four Lower Snake River dams being spread in an effort to undermine the value of the FCRPS and create public support for the removal or breaching of the four Lower Snake River dams with no regards to science-based facts. However, the FCRPS and the four Lower Snake River dams have been, are and will continue to be a critical component of life in the Pacific Northwest.

OPALCO supports the whales and our federal hydro system. We oppose the removal of the dams because we don't believe it will solve the problem for our fish and the food chain and may worsen the situation. We believe the NEPA study will provide the science necessary to understand the full web of interdependent issues at play, including water temperatures, ocean acidification, pollution and climate change. We believe we can build a successful future for our fish and wildlife, clean air and water, while keeping our power carbon free with the FCRPS.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the Board of Directors of Orcas Power & Light Cooperative resolves to support the continued operation of the FCRPS including the four Lower Snake River dams for the many benefits they provide including emissions-free, renewable, reliable, low-cost energy; and

Further resolve to oppose spending taxpayer money on a duplicative and unnecessary study of such removal or breaching; and

Further resolve to support effective actions to restore salmon runs as determined from existing and future BiOps; and

Further resolve to support effective actions to save the resident orcas in the Salish Sea.

#### CERTIFICATION OF SECRETARY

I, Brian Silverstein, Secretary of Orcas Power and Light Cooperative, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Orcas Power and Light Cooperative, held on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of September 2019 at which meeting a quorum was present.

SEAL

Brian Silverstein, Secretary