

Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association

December 5, 2017
CSRIA Open Letter

Hon. Sect. of Interior Ryan Zinke
Hon. Sect. of Energy Rick Perry
Hon. Sect. of Defense James Mattis

Hon. EPA Adm. Scott Pruitt
Hon. Sect. of Ag. Sonny Perdue
Lt. Gen. John Kelly, WH Chief of Staff

RE: Protecting the Columbia-Snake River System, a Great National Asset

Dear Cabinet Secretaries and Gen. Kelly:

It would seem inconceivable that we should have to request your intervention to protect one of the greatest national assets, the economic engine that comprises the Columbia-Snake River Federal Hydropower System. But events prod this correspondence.

The Federal Hydropower System is a testament to what good men and women can achieve, when guided by reason and the pursuit of economic prosperity and social well-being. The System's non-carbon emitting turbines electrify the region's commerce, serving some of the most influential companies in the world—like Boeing, Microsoft, Intel, Amazon, Nike, and others—and energize the homes of millions of Northwest and California citizens. The System creates an accessible water source for the most productive and efficient irrigated farms on the planet; it offers commercial navigation to ship the nation's wheat to coastal sea ports; it provides for unique recreational opportunities. And the scientists from NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have developed protective measures for salmon and steelhead that overcome harsh river system conditions in unfavorable water-years.

But the political, and bureaucratic, leviathan created by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has nurtured twenty-five years of Columbia-Snake River litigation, now being encouraged by a single, federal district court judge (Oregon). Worse yet, this judge now refuses to review evidence that points toward the destruction of about two-thirds of Idaho's wild spring chinook run, the lethal product of inept ESA management regimes and failed oversight of the so-called fish managers.

Our prayer for relief is vested in the statutory power of the ESA (ESA Committee review and the exemption process), where an executive directive can be invoked to shield Hydropower System operations from further, abusive litigation, and to adopt System measures that will more than sufficiently protect ESA-listed fish.

While CSRIA is in communication with senior agency and DOJ staff, who are being respectful of our legitimate concerns, the national asset at risk is worthy of your personal attention, and we would request an opportunity to meet directly with you, to better inform your understanding of the situation.

Respectfully,

CSRIA Board of Directors

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Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association

Media Release—October 2, 2017

Killing Idaho Fish Inept Management Encouraged by Endangered Species Act Litigation

In an evidentiary hearing motion brought before U.S. Federal District (Oregon) Judge Michael Simon, the Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association (CSRIA) presented unassailable evidence that fish managers' 2015 decisions decimated about 65% of the wild, spring chinook returns to Idaho (2017 adult fish returns). Other hatchery fish suffered as well, and the final numbers for returning Idaho steelhead will document further losses.

The records confirm that the Columbia River fish managers allowed Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed salmon and steelhead migrations to remain in the Lower Snake River, during extremely poor in-river conditions, rather than rely on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' juvenile fish transportation program. The fish were exposed to adverse river conditions that proved fatal, as documented by the fish managers' recently released evaluation (Comparative Survival Study, 2017).

The evidence clearly shows that the fish managers ignored the legally required, ESA (Biological Opinion) "spread the risk" policy, in the spring 2015, when they transported only 13% of juvenile salmon/steelhead during low flow and high temperature conditions—when young fish are the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of remaining in-river. This was the lowest percent transported since records were first kept in 1993.

NOAA Fisheries' scientists attempted to obtain an early spring, 2015 start date for transportation—to get the juvenile fish out of the river during poor survival conditions—but other state agency fish managers defiantly blocked this crucial action.

CSRIA representative Darryll Olsen characterized the 2015 fish kill, "as defying every manner of sound judgement, and the sad product of 25-years of irrational ESA litigation in the Oregon District Court. The Federal Administration, faced with fish managers' stark incompetence, must invoke a formal ESA Committee (God Squad) Review action, as required by the ESA statutes."

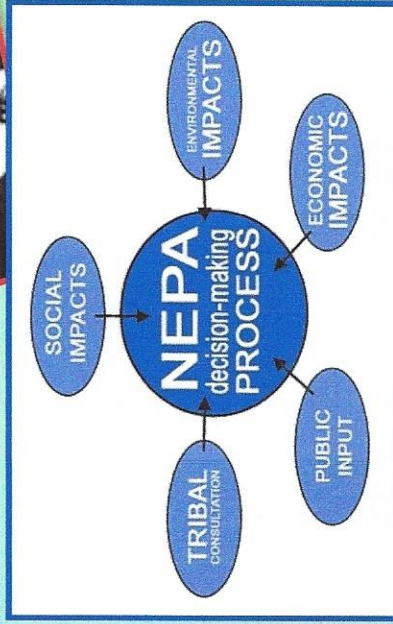
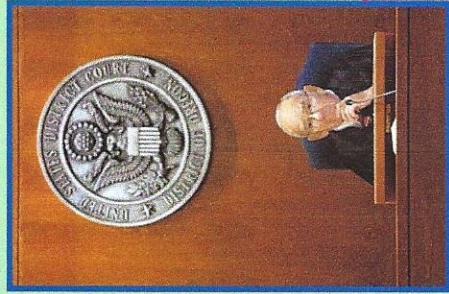
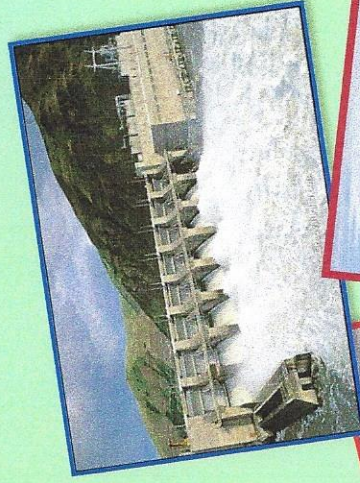
Additional Information Attached and Contact: 509-783-1623

Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association

Ending Columbia-Snake River ESA Litigation

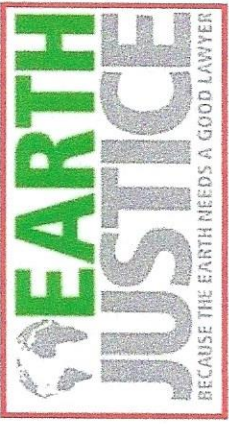
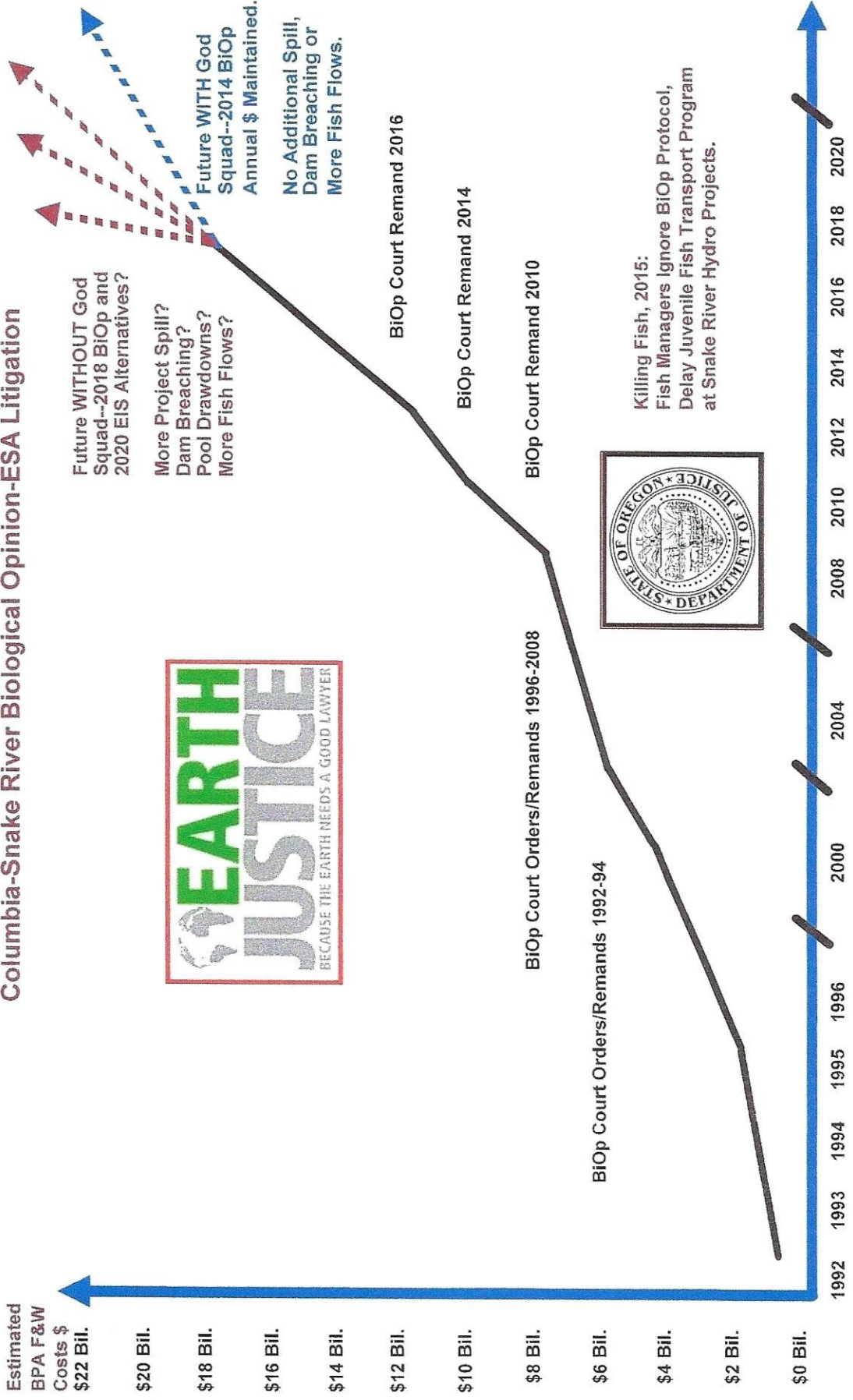
The ESA Saga

- ✓ 13 Salmon-Steelhead Species, ESA-Listed Since 1992.
- ✓ Years of Relentless ESA Litigation/Judicial Review?
- ✓ ESA Biological Opinion—Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives (RPAs) for Avoiding Risk of Extinction?
- ✓ Bonneville Power Administration Expenditures—Our Money.
- ✓ Future: More Hydro Project and Water Management Impacts \$\$.
- ✓ **ESA-Authorized GOD SQUAD, Deliver Us from Evil.**



THE PATH TOWARD GOD SQUAD

Columbia-Snake River Biological Opinion-ESA Litigation



Killing Fish, 2015:
Fish Managers Ignore BiOp Protocol,
Delay Juvenile Fish Transport Program
at Snake River Hydro Projects.

Future WITHOUT God Squad--2018 BiOp and 2020 EIS Alternatives?
More Project Spill? Dam Breaching? Pool Drawdowns? More Fish Flows?

Future WITH God Squad--2014 BiOp Annual \$ Maintained.
No Additional Spill, Dam Breaching or More Fish Flows.

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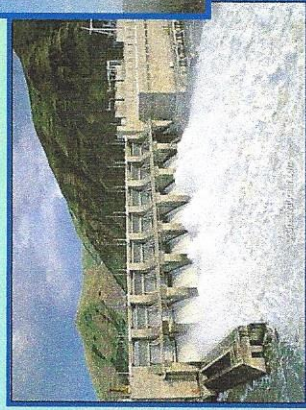
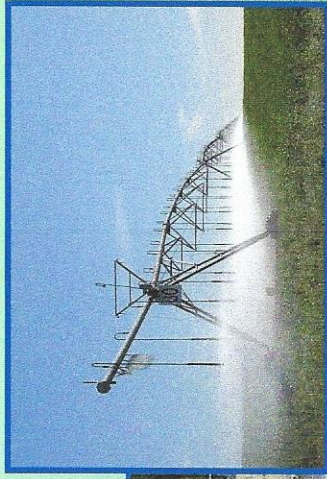
Ending Columbia-Snake River ESA Litigation

Life with God Squad

- ✓ ESA Statute and Administrative Protection—Section 1536.
- ✓ Hydro Projects' Exemption and Mitigation Plan in Place.
- ✓ Subject to Judicial Review—
But Much Different Standard than BiOp RPAs.

Life without God Squad

- ✓ Governed by BiOp Litigation and Judge Michael Simon, Along with Earth Justice and Oregon.
- ✓ ESA Legislative Relief? Really?
- ✓ Political Agreement? Really?
- ✓ 2018-2022:
 - More Project Spill.
 - Reservoir Drawdowns.
 - More BPA \$\$.



EARTH JUSTICE
BECAUSE THE EARTH NEEDS A GOOD LAWYER

