

RESOLUTION NO. 84-19

A RESOLUTION of the City of Richland supporting the Federal Columbia River Power System, recognizing its role in environmental stewardship and opposing removal of the Lower Snake River Dams.

WHEREAS, the City of Richland operates an electric utility providing customers reliable service at the lowest reasonable cost through wholesale power purchases, efficient operations, and energy efficiency; and

WHEREAS, City electric utility customers receive 98% of their electricity from the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) and 90% from FCRPS hydro system resources; and

WHEREAS, the FCRPS is comprised of 31 federal dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers and its tributaries which are critical components in the Pacific Northwest; and

WHEREAS, the dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers provide navigable waters, irrigation, flood control and recreation for generations of residents in Richland and the Pacific Northwest; and

WHEREAS, the Columbia River and Lower Snake River Dams contribute to Richland's economic vitality and high quality of life; and

WHEREAS, dam breaching will erode this economic vitality and high quality of life through loss of businesses, increased wholesale electric rates, increased agricultural products transportation costs and loss of recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, Richland City Council does not support imposing these economic burdens on electric utility customers, tax payers and citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Columbia River and Snake River dams provide a reliable source of clean energy for millions of residents in Washington and the Pacific Northwest; and

WHEREAS, the four Lower Snake River Dams (Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose and Lower Granite) annually produce 1,000 aMW of carbon-free power, which is enough to serve nearly one-half million Northwest businesses, industries and households; and

WHEREAS, the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has identified the Lower Snake River Dams as critical components of the FCRPS mission to support peak power generation; and

WHEREAS, the Lower Snake River Dams are some of the least expensive to operate, and with the cost of power generated by the dams ranging from \$10 to \$14 per

megawatt-hour compared to market prices of \$25 to \$35 per MWh, they provide some of the greatest value for BPA customers; and

WHEREAS, removing over 3,000 megawatts of firm winter capacity generated by the Lower Snake River Dams would add to a forecasted Northwest shortfall in energy capacity; and

WHEREAS, the hydro system is in large part responsible for the clean air, water and lands enjoyed by millions of residents in the Pacific Northwest; and

WHEREAS, the State of Washington enacted legislation calling for 100% of all retail energy sales to come from carbon-free resources by 2045; and

WHEREAS, this law, Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5116, includes existing hydropower as an eligible resource for utilities seeking compliance with the State's 100% clean requirement; and

WHEREAS, the Energy & Environmental Economics (E3) study found that the cost of achieving 100% clean energy leads to exponential cost increases, and is impractical due to massive renewable overbuilds; and

WHEREAS, the clean and renewable energy generated by the hydro system makes the State of Washington a national and world leader in responsible environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS, the removal of the four Lower Snake River Dams would do irreparable harm to Washington and the Pacific Northwest's role as a leader in clean, carbon-free energy production; and

WHEREAS, BPA has spent nearly \$17 billion on infrastructure and fish and wildlife programs since 1978, including projects that address hydroelectric operations, habitat, hatcheries and harvest; and

WHEREAS, those investments, made in accordance with Biological Opinions (BiOp) approved by National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, have successfully improved fish runs, thereby resulting in greater than 96% of young salmon making it past each of the Snake River dams on their down-river passage; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, there were more Chinook, Sockeye and Coho salmon returning to Bonneville Dam than in any other year since the dam was built in 1938; and

WHEREAS, reports from NOAA Fisheries indicate that Columbia and Snake River Chinook salmon returns increased in 2018; and

WHEREAS, while 2017 and 2018 saw significant declines in overall salmon returns, studies by NOAA Fisheries have attributed those declines to ocean conditions

that are expected to dissipate by 2020, leading experts to forecast improved overall salmon returns beginning in that year; and

WHEREAS, Richland City Council previously adopted Resolution Nos. 44-97 and 85-97 to reject and oppose removal or breaching of any dams on the Columbia or Snake Rivers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Richland that Richland City Council supports the continued operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System in general, and particularly the Lower Snake River Dams.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that studies like those carried out by E3 strongly indicate that the removal of elements of the FCRPS, including the Lower Snake River Dams, would negatively impact the City's responsibility to provide reliable, efficient and clean power to its customers at the lowest reasonable cost.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that based on studies and Biological Opinions carried out by NOAA Fisheries, the City endorses the position that hydroelectric dams and salmon can and do coexist.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City undertake the task of educating its customers and others as to the benefits of hydropower to the City, the State of Washington and the Pacific Northwest, and of the threats posed to salmon runs by factors such as lost habitat, predation and ocean conditions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City supports the four Lower Snake River Dams for the carbon-free, renewable, reliable, low-cost energy they provide, making them an important component of a clean energy future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City opposes the removal or breaching of any or all of the four Lower Snake River Dams.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall take effect immediately.

ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Richland, Washington, at a regular meeting on the 2nd day of July, 2019.


ROBERT J. THOMPSON
Mayor

ATTEST:


DEBBY BARHAM, Deputy City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


HEATHER KINTZLEY, City Attorney