




## BENTON RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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**Resolution: #05-05-19**

### A RESOLUTION OF BENTON RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION IN SUPPORT OF THE FEDERAL COLUMBIA RIVER POWER SYSTEM AND THE FOUR LOWER SNAKE RIVER DAMS

**WHEREAS**, Benton Rural Electric Association (“Benton REA”) is a member owned electric cooperative providing electric service in parts of Benton, Yakima and Lewis Counties, Washington,, and 87 percent of the electricity it delivers to its members comes from the Bonneville Power Administration and is generated by the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS); AND

**WHEREAS**, Hydropower provides 70 percent of Washington State’s renewable, carbon-free, affordable and reliable electricity and 60 percent of the Pacific Northwest’s electricity with the majority of the power produced by the FCRPS; AND

**WHEREAS**, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) markets power from 31 federal dams of the FCRPS, but only the ten largest of these dams keep the federal power system operating smoothly through the use of automatic generation control; AND

**WHEREAS**, The ten Federal dams located on the Columbia and Snake Rivers includes the four Lower Snake River dams; AND

**WHEREAS**, Because of the location, size and ability to meet peak power loads, the four Lower Snake River dams keep the system reliable and provide a significant contribution to transmission reliability; AND

**WHEREAS**, Ice Harbor Dam, one of the four Lower Snake River dams, is critical to electrical service for the Tri-Cities area because it supports transmission operations by providing both power and voltage to the Tri-Cities area especially during high-demand periods; AND

**WHEREAS**, Hydropower produces no emissions; the Pacific Northwest’s carbon footprint from energy production is nearly half that of the other parts of the country; AND

**WHEREAS**, because Hydropower output can be quickly increased or reduced, it is an excellent back-up for intermittent wind or solar generation; AND

**WHEREAS**, Industries and businesses, representing hundreds of thousands of jobs, rely on low-cost hydropower to stay in business and prosper; AND

**WHEREAS**, 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; AND

**WHEREAS**, Hydroelectric dams also provide many benefits to the region, including flood control, navigation, irrigation, and recreation; AND

**WHEREAS**, The four Lower Snake River dams enable irrigation for over 7 million acres of farmland producing \$8 billion annually in agricultural income. AND

**WHEREAS**, The four Lower Snake River dams enable barging of approximately 9 million tons of cargo valued at over \$3 billion annually; AND

**WHEREAS**, The federal agencies responsible for the management of the FCRPS (BPA, Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation) operate it in compliance with the Biological Opinion (BiOp) approved by NOAA Fisheries in 2008/2010 and supplemented in 2014; AND

**WHEREAS**, The FCRPS BiOp has successfully improved fish runs by 97 percent of young salmon successfully making it past the dams proving that both dams and fish can coexist; AND

**WHEREAS**, BPA has spent nearly \$17 billion on infrastructure and fish mitigation projects since 1978; AND

**WHEREAS**, In recent years, fish and wildlife costs have ranged from one-quarter to approximately one-third of the total costs; AND

**WHEREAS**, For the foreseeable future, salmon and steelhead mitigation in the Northwest will continue to be one of the largest wildlife recovery efforts in history; AND

**WHEREAS**, There are more fish in the Columbia River than at any time since the first lower mainstream dam was built at Bonneville in 1938; AND

**WHEREAS**, Despite the significant value the dams provide, there continues to be movement to have the four Lower Snake River dams removed; AND

**WHEREAS**, Despite the success of the current FCRPS BiOp, in March 2017, the United States District Court for the District of Oregon (Court) 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; AND

**WHEREAS**, Governor Inslee's Southern Resident Orca Task Force ("Task Force") report recommends a study on the associated economic and social impacts of the potential breaching or removal of the four Lower Snake River dams; AND

**WHEREAS,** The Task Force's proposed study duplicates the same effort that is several years underway by the federal agencies in the Columbia River Systems Operations Environmental Impact Statement and an unnecessary and wasteful use of taxpayer's money; AND

**WHEREAS,** There is misinformation about the four Lower Snake River dams being spread that understates the value of the hydro system in an effort to influence the public to support the removal or breaching of the dams with no regards to science-based facts; AND

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED** That the Board of Trustees of Benton Rural Electric Association supports the continued operation of the four Lower Snake River dams for the many benefits they provide to our economy, environment and citizens;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Benton REA 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 Benton REA opposes the removal or breaching of the four Lower Snake River dams, and spending taxpayer money on duplicative and unnecessary study of such removal or breaching.

ADOPTED by the Board of Trustees of Benton Rural Electric Association on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of May 2019.

  
Michael Freepons, President

ATTEST:

  
Catherine Russell, Secretary/Treasurer