

From: Olympic Climate Action olyclimate@olyclimate.org
Olympic Peninsula, Washington
February 15, 2019



To: Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

Olympic Climate Action is a grassroots organization of approximately 1000 citizens from across the Olympic Peninsula dedicated to research, education, and action on climate change since 2012. All members are invited to engage in decision-making, and all our positions reflect consensus or super-majorities. At our February 3, 2019 meeting, our general membership instructed our Executive Committee to compose and send this letter, which our entire Executive Committee has approved.

Please insist to the Army Corps of Engineers and other federal officials that the four lower Snake River dams be breached, now.

The starving Southern Resident Killer Whales, unfortunately, can't afford the luxury of waiting for study committees. They're too busy struggling to stave off extinction for lack of their diet staple, Chinook salmon. They've done their lobbying in the most compelling way possible: Tahlequah spent 17 days touring the Salish Sea with her dead baby, and her message should be clear to all who have a heart and brain.

Governor, these orcas define who we are, and if we let them disappear from the planet on our watch, what does it say about us? Do we say that it simply wasn't politically expedient? You can — and must — wield your influence to save them.

Massive salmon recovery efforts have not produced enough Chinook for the Southern Residents to thrive. Those efforts are unlikely to succeed soon.¹ The orcas have grown more and more dependent on Snake River Chinook — hundreds of thousands of which will grow large enough to feed orcas within 18 months once the dams are breached. Meanwhile, by April, each dam reservoir will kill 2 million salmon smolts that could have grown up to feed the orcas.

No other strategy recommended by the Orca Task Force will produce such life-saving results so fast.

Orca survival aside, other factors argue in favor of breaching these dams:

- They do not meet Congress' mandate that their benefits exceed their costs;
- They fail to provide for salmon recovery;
- The Army Corps of Engineers and the Bonneville Power Administration lack sufficient funds to maintain all the dams in the Federal Columbia River Power System;
- Most of the power the four lower Snake River dams produce is surplus and sold at a loss;

Our mission: We seek a safe, prosperous, sustainable future for residents of the Olympic Peninsula by addressing the threat of climate change. www.olyclimate.org



- They cannot provide peaking power;
- They are the costliest larger dams in the federal system;
- The last purported obstacle to breaching — the \$4 billion to \$5 billion cost the Corps has shackled onto the project — buckles before a new technique. Hydraulic removal of the dams' earthen portions would cost \$450 million, including contingencies for irrigation, rail upgrading, and cultural resource protection; and
- Finally, a free-flowing Snake River would produce thousands of new jobs.

Governor, as a committed environmental leader, you can and should stride into this situation as a champion, throwing your weight and the State's behind these beleaguered creatures. We understand that standing up will expose you to political headwinds from various interest groups as well as general inertia; both of which were manifest on the OTF, to wit:

- All the information above, and more, was provided to the OTF and ignored;
- Environmental groups' request to write a stakeholder plan over the next year is redundant to work already done by the Corps of Engineers that was recently updated;
- Most of the OTF recommendations might someday increase salmon stocks, but they'd come too late to save our orcas. One recommendation already in effect — increasing spill — has had no benefit for juvenile salmon but is harming adults with gas embolism.

Meanwhile, more than 700,000 people, reflecting a strong will of Washington voters, have signed petitions urging you to demand that the dams be breached. Uncounted are the newspaper, television, and radio editorials; social media messages; and letters to you, to Legislators, and to Washington's congressional delegation, from people and groups such as ours. From a political point of view, we've "got your back" and will champion you if you champion this cause.

Therefore, we urge you to confer seriously with Dr. Ken Balcomb of the Center for Whale Research and Jim Waddell, PE, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Ret.) and Clallam County Public Utility District commissioner, about this proposal.

Please. Because "now" is nearly too late.

Sincerely,

Ed Chadd, chair, Olympic Climate Action, on behalf of the OCA Executive Committee, executing a resolution of the general membership at our meeting of February 3, 2019

Other Executive Committee members:

Ann Soule, Vice-Chair, Sequim
 Julia Cochrane, Secretary, Port Townsend
 Ingrid Carmean, Treasurer, Port Angeles
 Bob Vreeland, Port Angeles
 Ed Bowlby, Sequim
 Brian Grad, Carlsborg