

Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Patrick Donovan. I currently live in Seattle. I was born in Idaho. Some of my earliest childhood memories are catching steelhead in Idaho rivers. These fish are very important to me and many, many people in the Pacific Northwest. I am here this evening to urge BPA – as it sets its rates for the 2007-2009 timeframe – to make a real commitment to live up to its obligations to protect and restore healthy fisheries in the Columbia and Snake Rivers. BPA's salmon program needs more money, not less. For years, it has been funded at levels below what is needed to recover endangered stocks. And BPA needs to direct its money at programs that are truly supported by the science. This will save money in the long run.

In addition to communicating that BPA should fully fund its salmon program in 2007-2009, and not continue to view salmon -- and renewables for that matter -- as some type of reserve fund to draw from to cover expenses elsewhere, I would like to make three points.

1. BPA needs to stop blaming salmon for its inability to further lower rates or for the uncertainty in its rate-setting process. BPA's salmon expenses are anything but "unforeseen." They have long been a part of doing business in the Columbia Basin. BPA has a legal obligation to protect our imperiled fisheries and it has failed repeatedly to do so. Unfortunately, litigation and uncertainty rule the day, but that is not due to the salmon themselves nor the efforts of salmon and fishing advocates. It is due to the failure of the federal agencies – including BPA – to protect and restore salmon and steelhead as they are required to do. If it is going to reduce its rates, BPA needs to look at programs other than salmon and renewable energy.

2. The river does not belong to BPA. It is a resource for the entire region that generates energy, produces salmon, supplies farms with water, and provides countless other services. These uses need to be balanced, since currently, they are not. BPA and the utilities need to accept this and begin to advocate for scientifically sound recovery programs that address the main cause of decline – a lethal hydrosystem, so that we can start to show some signs of progress for all the money that we are spending.

3. Finally, salmon mean business in the Northwest. BPA has a blind spot when it comes to acknowledging that many individual livelihoods, businesses and local economies depend on healthy, harvestable fisheries that originate in the Columbia and Snake Rivers. As recently as 2001, salmon-related activities – including recreational, tribal and commercial fisheries -- in Washington State generated \$1 billion a year. An Idaho study recently concluded that restoring its fisheries to 1950s levels – not historic levels – would generate more than \$500 million dollars in that state each year. It would mean even more for the states of Washington and Idaho. Healthy runs of salmon can be real economic development, often for rural communities on the coast and along the river. BPA should acknowledge these salmon-reliant communities, and work to address the adverse impacts to them.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening.

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