



August 28, 2025

The Honorable Harriet Hageman
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
Transmitted via email (Kirby.struhar@mail.house.gov)

Dear Chairwoman Hageman and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the Pioneer Ports, we write to express strong support for H.R. 2073, the Defending our Dams Act, introduced by Congressman Dan Newhouse. This legislation represents a powerful commitment from the federal government to protect our Lower Snake River Dams (LSRDs) from threat of breach.

The Pioneer Ports, comprising the Ports of Lewiston (Idaho), Clarkston, and Whitman County (Washington), are key inland ports that support regional agriculture, manufacturing, and trade by providing critical access to global markets via the Columbia-Snake River System. The Lower Snake River Dams are essential to their operations, enabling efficient barge transportation of goods such as wheat, legumes, and other commodities. These dams provide a navigable waterway that allows the Pioneer Ports to remain competitive by offering a cost-effective, low-emission alternative to rail and truck transport. Without the dams, the viability of barge shipping would be severely compromised, threatening the economic sustainability of these rural communities and the broader Pacific Northwest trade network.

The Lower Snake River Dams (LSRDs) are vital to the Pacific Northwest's economy. As part of the Columbia-Snake River System, they form a marine highway that enables the transport of billions of dollars in cargo to global markets and support thousands of jobs. This system is the nation's top wheat export gateway and the third-largest grain export corridor in the world—feeding populations abroad while sustaining local communities.

Despite these benefits, and those of clean hydropower production and irrigating over 70,000 acres of high production farmland, the future of the LSRDs is under threat. The Biden Administration took steps toward breaching the dams, citing the need to restore wild salmon and steelhead populations in the Columbia River Basin to "healthy and abundant" levels. However, data shows that adult salmon returns have more than doubled since the first dam was built in 1938 because LSRD fish passage survival rates consistently exceed Endangered Species Act standards. NOAA supported Biden's policy shift by publishing a flawed, unauthored report, and the federal government subsequently signed a memorandum of agreement with the Six Sovereigns, paving the way for dam removal.

We appreciate President Trump's June 12th action to withdraw from the memorandum and rescind the Notice of Intent for a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Columbia River System of



Operations. The Defending Our Dams Act builds on this momentum and offers a path to lasting protection of the LSRDs.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Rasmussen'.

Christopher Rasmussen
Executive Director
Port of Clarkston

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott Corbitt'.

Scott Corbitt
General Manager
Port of Lewiston

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kara Riebold'.

Kara Riebold
Executive Director
Port of Whitman County

CC: Christopher.macarthur@mail.house.gov
Office of Rep. Dan Newhouse