

Congressman Russ Fulcher

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Statement for the record for the hearing hosted by the Subcommittee on Wildlife, Water, & Fisheries titled: "The Northwest at risk: the environmentalist's effort to destroy navigation, transportation, and access to reliable power."

Thank you to Chairman Bentz and Members of the Waters, Wildlife, & Fisheries Subcommittee for the opportunity to submit, for the record, a brief statement on the hearing titled: "The Northwest at risk: the environmentalist's effort to destroy navigation, transportation, and access to reliable power." For the Northwest United States, the lower Snake River dams bring reliable energy, boost American exports, and offer wealth for millions of Americans.

These essential components of this maritime highway represent energy reliability from continuous production of hydropower to meet growing populations. Idaho's grain and other producers rely on the dams to help navigate these critical foods to "feed the world." And the wealth generated from these dams means we can keep families intact, communities whole, and economic opportunities in place. We should not supplant these ingeniously engineered systems with an ill-timed road network or other uncertain network. With ingenuity and technology, we can ensure wise stewardship of our environment, future energy needs, and prosperous communities.

Generations of Americans have relied upon these energy and transport systems to make a future for their families and their communities. With U.S. adversaries competing on the world stage, now is not the time for us to go back into a dark and bleak anti-growth future.

As we make strides towards a cleaner energy future, let's make the systems we have today work for future generations. I cannot in good faith tell the residents of Idaho to trade energy reliability for energy stagnation and economic uncertainty all to meet the whims and desires of the Biden Administration's push for environmental justice. Rather, I am encouraged by the admission of Council for Environmental Quality Chair, Brenda Mallory, that indeed, only Congress can authorize certain purposes to these dams, or for the removal of them physically.

Without the lower Snake River dams, families will go without power in the heat of summer and the cold of winter. The economic ruin that is certain to follow will not provide justice to communities across Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon already surrounded by federal lands rife with bureaucratic red tape.

I am constantly inspired by the resilience of the farmers, ranchers, barge and port operators, recreational tourism, power, and all the immense benefits provided by the lower Snake River dams. For the time I am in office, I call on all interested parties to weigh in on where we are at in this country with our foreign adversaries, and consider – if the United States needed to be truly energy independent sooner rather than later, would we even be having conversations about removing strategically important energy and trade systems? I think not.

I thank the Committee on Natural Resources for holding this important hearing and providing an opportunity for the communities in the Northwest to be heard on a national stage.