



IDAHO DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH AND WELFARE

DIVISION OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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WATER RESOURCES
WESTERN REGION

W065 File

1445 North Orchard, Boise, ID 83706-2239, (208) 334-0550

Philip E. Batt, Governor

June 19, 1995

Roger Fuhrman
Director of Water Management
Idaho Power Company
P.O. Box 70
Boise, ID 83707

RE: Salmon Water Releases from Cascade Reservoir

Dear Mr. Fuhrman:

The Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) would like to schedule a meeting to discuss issues related to the timing of water releases from Cascade Reservoir to augment salmon migration through the Lower Snake River. It is our understanding that prior agreements with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) provided water from Brownlee Reservoir to enhance downstream flows for spring and fall salmon migration. Water released from Brownlee Reservoir for salmon was later backfilled with water from Cascade and Deadwood Reservoirs. These previous agreements provided flexibility to withdraw water from Cascade and Deadwood Reservoirs over several months to replace the volume released from Brownlee Reservoir.

Flexibility in the timing of water releases from Cascade Reservoir has been critical in balancing the needs to protect endangered bald eagles, local fisheries and mitigate further deleterious impacts to water quality of Cascade Reservoir. The BOR, however, has recently informed DEQ that Idaho Power has requested any water for salmon released from Brownlee Reservoir be simultaneously compensated with the release of water from Cascade Reservoir.

This change in operating policy could have a dramatic affect on local efforts to meet water quality standards for Cascade Reservoir and potentially impact the local economy. DEQ is concerned that this change in the timing of water releases will further aggravate conditions in Cascade Reservoir during a critical period when water quality already fails to meet State Water Quality Standards. In addition, the added demand for release of water under the revised operating schedule would further exacerbate the environmental stress on local fisheries caused by a lack of water volume, elevated temperatures and low dissolved oxygen levels. These conditions typically occur in late July through August when reservoir water levels are near the minimum conservation pool designated by the BOR.

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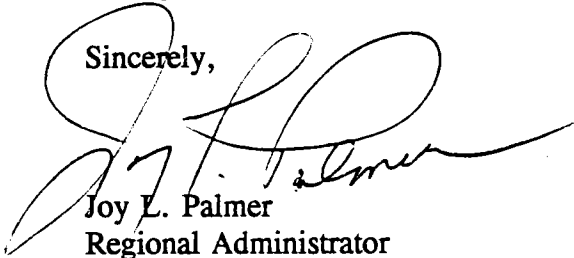
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Department of Water Resources

Due to the important nature of this issue we will be contacting you in the near future to schedule a meeting to discuss our concerns. If you have any questions please contact me at 334-0550 or Dewey Worth at our Cascade Satellite Office at (208) 382-6808.

Sincerely,



Joy L. Palmer
Regional Administrator

JLP:DW:kh c:Cascade\Salmon.Joy

cc: Ken Roberts, Cascade Coordinating Council
Dewey Worth, DEQ-SWIRO, Cascade
Jerry Gregg, BOR
Dave Tuthill, IDWR
Source File
Reading File