Ocas and salmon are on the brink of extinction and immediate action is needed. Our region’s orca scientists have found that these endangered whales are starving and Chinook salmon from the Columbia-Snake River Basin are a critical part of their diet. Restoring the lower Snake River and its endangered salmon population provides our greatest opportunity anywhere on the West Coast to substantially increase salmon abundance, feed orca, and help save both species from extinction.

Historically, the Columbia Basin had yearly wild salmon runs at 10 – 16 million fish. The 2017 spring, summer, and fall Chinook salmon counts at the uppermost dam on the lower Snake totaled 74,871 fish. Today, these runs continue to decrease even more. Scientists predict total extinction of orca in 3-5 years and Chinook salmon in 5 – 10 years.

Over 20 years at a cost of over $3 billion, juvenile fish passage structures and strategies on the LSR have failed to save the salmon. By keeping these four dams in place, the Federal Government is not only allowing wild salmon to slide toward extinction, it is actually facilitating extinctions.

Furthermore, a significant surplus of power now exists in the PNW due to expansions of West Coast solar, wind, and natural gas production. The four dams on the lower Snake River supply only 4-5% of hydropower to the PNW, and it is only available in the months of spring when it is not needed in this area.

The need for the four Lower Snake River dams to be used as transportation on the waterway from the Pacific Coast inland to Idaho has also decreased. From 2000 – 2018, as commodity shippers increasingly abandoned the waterway, freight volume declined by 50%. Today, the only barged commodity is grain, and due to farmers’ increasing use of rail, grain barging, has also dropped by 45%. The dam-enabled LSR freight transportation waterway is not worth is economic and environmental costs. Please act NOW to breach these four dams on the Snake River.