February 9, 2021

Dear Governor Inslee,

I am writing on behalf of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness, a national grassroots organization, led by women, that engages and inspires activism to preserve and protect wilderness and wild lands. The Pacific Northwest Great Old Broads would like to thank you for recognizing the importance of salmon and steelhead to Washington’s ecology, culture, and economy. Thank, also, for taking strong and public stand to fight climate change and COVID, our two most pressing issues facing our nation today.

The fast-changing Pacific Northwest ecological and energy scenes have ushered us into a pivotal moment in time. Governor Inslee, we feel you now have the opportunity to take definitive and courageous action to save salmon, steelhead, and, in turn, the southern resident orcas whose survival depends upon chinook salmon for sustenance. As you are fully aware, further delay threatens to sweep all three iconic species into extinction. Removal of the four dams on the lower Snake River would significantly increase the chances for survival of these species.

The dams on the Lower Snake River are costing taxpayers billions of dollars with no net gain in hydropower as approximately 4 percent of that power is excess power. In addition to taxpayer savings of up to $5 billion, studies indicate that increased tourism, new outdoor recreation, and improved sport and commercial fishing opportunities could generate more that $20 billion in revenue for the region. The financial cost of maintaining and operating these dams far outweighs their benefits. It will be cheaper for taxpayers and better for utility ratepayers to remove these dams and replace their current benefits than to continue funding the status quo.

Removing the four lower Snake River dams and restoring wild salmon runs in the Columbia Basin will return significant economic dividends to the nation and the Northwest, creating a “revenue stream” of federal taxpayer savings and increased economic benefits from new and restored industries.

I urge you to join with Governors Brown and Simpson in recommending breaching of the dams on the Lower Snake River.

Respectfully,

Laurie Kerr,

Leader, Cascade Volcanoes, Great Old Broads for Wilderness