March 11, 2020

D. Peter Helmlinger, P.E.
Brigadier General,
Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Army

Lorri Gray, Regional Director,
Columbia-Pacific Northwest
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Department of the Interior

Elliot Mainzer, Administrator and CEO
Bonneville Power Administration
U.S. Department of Energy

Dear Brigadier General Helmlinger, Regional Director Gray and Administrator Mainzer:

We write today to urge you to postpone the public hearings on the CRSO DEIS scheduled to begin next week in light of the rapidly evolving public health crisis brought on by spread of the coronavirus or COVID-19. These hearings are important and we appreciate the effort it took to organize and plan for public in-person meetings across four states, and, collectively, we have thousands of members interested in attending—many that would travel hundreds of miles to do so. However, the meetings should be rescheduled at a later time when the current public health risk has abated and the people can fully and safely participate.

As you know, this public health threat has led to recommendations against public gatherings in many Northwest cities, to public health emergency declarations by state and local governments, and to cancellation of numerous events, conferences and meeting in virtually all of the locations where you have scheduled public meetings. This situation is changing daily and concerns are increasing. These circumstances fully support a decision to reschedule the planned public hearings.

We do not believe a webinar could replace a public, in-person, location-specific exchange of ideas. A virtual meeting would severely hamper the opportunity for the public to engage and to supply the federal decisionmakers with feedback on issues highly important to the future of Northwest people and our communities.
Should you nonetheless decide to proceed with these hearings, you should be aware that, in light of health concerns, advice regarding public gatherings, and a dynamic public health environment, we cannot in good conscience urge our members or the public to participate in the hearings and we will not do so.

In closing, we urge you again to announce that the currently scheduled public hearings for the CRSO DEIS will be rescheduled at a later time. This step is necessary in the interest of public health and safety and in light of current uncertain and changing circumstances.

Sincerely,

Linda Behnken, Executive Director
*Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association*
Juneau, AK

Amy Daugherty, Executive Director
*Alaska Trollers Association*
Juneau, AK

Wendy McDermott, Director of Programs for Puget Sound and Columbia Basin
*American Rivers*
Bellingham, WA

Chris Hager, Executive Director
*Association of Northwest Steelheaders*
Milwaukie, OR

Bob Sallinger, Conservation Director
*Audubon Society of Portland*
Portland, Oregon

Brett VandenHuevel, Executive Director
*Columbia Riverkeeper*
Hood River, Oregon

LeeAnne Beres, Executive Director
*Earth Ministry*
Seattle, WA

Todd True, Attorney
*Earthjustice*
Seattle, WA

Leda Huta, Executive Director
*Endangered Species Coalition*
Washington, D.C.
Tom Logan, Board Chair
*Flyfishers International*
Livingston, MT

Brett Haverstick, Education and Outreach Director
*Friends of the Clearwater*
Moscow, ID

Nicholas Nelson, Executive Director
*Idaho Rivers United*
Boise, ID

Tom France, Regional Executive Director
*National Wildlife Federation*
Missoula, MT

Giulia Good Stefani, Senior Attorney
*Natural Resources Defense Council*
Mosier, OR

Julian Matthews, Treasurer
*Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment*
Lapwai, ID

Grant Putnam, President
*Northwest Guides and Anglers Association*
Clackamas, OR

Liz Hamilton, Executive Director
*Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association*
Oregon City, OR

Wendy Gerlitz, Policy Director
*NW Energy Coalition*
Portland, OR

Glen Spain, Northwest Regional Director
*Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations*
Institute for Fisheries Resources
Eugene, OR

Greg Haller, Executive Director
*Pacific Rivers*
Portland, OR
Joseph Bogaard, Executive Director
Save Our wild Salmon Coalition
Seattle, WA

Bill Arthur, Northwest Salmon Campaign Director
Sierra Club
Seattle, WA

Mike Petersen, Executive Director
The Lands Council
Spokane, WA

CC:
Council on Environmental Quality
Northwest Governors
Northwest Congressional Delegation