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PUD VOICES SUPPORT OF HYDRO SYSTEM -- OPPOSES CHANGES IN THE HYDROSYSTEM OPERATIONS

At a recent Northern Wasco County PUD board meeting, the board took action to adopt a resolution supporting the Northwest RiverPartner's Green Dams Blue Skies campaign which supports a partnership for all uses of the Columbia River system – renewable hydropower, agriculture, commerce and recreation.

Northwest RiverPartners is a partnership of farmers, electric utilities and large and small businesses in the Pacific Northwest, joined together to ensure that the Columbia and Snake Rivers remain living, working rivers. The energy generated by the dams on the Columbia River system is critical to the economic prosperity of the Pacific Northwest. The hydro system is, quite simply, the economic engine for the Northwest.

The PUD board has continued to support efforts to enhance fish survival; however, with approximately 30 percent of every Northern Wasco County PUD customer's electric bill going to pay for fish, the board is opposed to changes in the clean, renewable hydro system operations that are not science-based or cost-effective.

"When it comes to dam operations or removal, it is like pouring money down a rat hole when decisions are based on emotions and politics," commented board member, Howard Gonser. He added, "It just doesn't make good sense to make costly changes without credible scientific data to support the action. We want to be part of the solution, but there isn't any evidence that tearing down dams will enhance fish survival,

in fact, some studies indicate the release of tons of built up silt would have a negative impact.”

The responsibility to secure adequate energy to meet Northern Wasco County PUD energy needs in the future is a concern the PUD board takes very seriously. Wind generation is currently a part of the PUD’s energy portfolio, however, within the next ten years, it is predicted the hydro system will no longer be able to supply all of our energy needs. With wind only blowing 34 percent of the time, what type of generation will supply the majority of the time when the wind isn’t blowing? These are critical questions the PUD board has been trying to resolve.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Linda Wilson at 298-3302 or Dwight Langer at 298-3300 or any PUD board member. We would like to hear your concerns.

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