



Yakima Basin Storage Alliance

November 5, 2010

Ms. Dawn Wiedmeier
Ms. Wendy Christensen
Bureau of Reclamation
1917 Marsh Road Yakima, WA 98901

Mr. Derek Sandison, Director
Washington State Dept. of Ecology
Office of Columbia River
303 Mission St. #212
Wenatchee, WA 98801

Dear Ms. Wiedmeier, Ms. Christensen, & Mr. Sandison,

Since the beginning of the current water planning process, YBSA has strongly supported actions that would provide sufficient water to supply a 70% minimum delivery level during multiple drought years to maintain irrigated agriculture, to provide flows and habitat for greatly increased salmon populations, and to secure supplies for current and future municipal and domestic water needs for the well-being of the Basin. We have repeatedly expressed our serious concerns that the Integrated Plan, as currently formulated, does not meet these goals.

One important measure of any program undertaken in the Yakima Basin to improve water supplies is the expected level of salmon production. Over the last few years several models have been run, including one during the preparation of the Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study, as well as more recently during the current planning effort, that attempt to quantify the level of salmon production under various water supply and habitat scenarios.

We understand that any modeling effort dealing with future salmon populations is difficult, due to the myriad of factors that influence salmon populations, both in the Yakima Basin and external to the Basin. Never-the-less, modeling is one means of examining potential production increases that may occur if various projects are implemented. That said, we believe the model runs to date have not been consistent in the assumptions built into the models, nor in the range of actions included in the models. This makes it difficult if not impossible to compare the expected fisheries benefits of the various projected actions.

Therefore, we are requesting an additional model run to estimate salmon production in the Yakima Basin based on a future that includes enough water to fully engage all potential habitat features. Those features include passage at all existing storage dams and passage, floodplain and side channel habitat restoration projects such as levee and dyke setbacks and removal of other obstacles constraining flow in the lower Yakima River

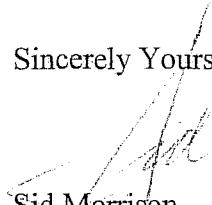
below Sunnyside Dam. Additionally, the model run should include the amelioration of water temperatures in the lower Yakima River. We believe, for the purposes of this model, these actions should be included without consideration of the political feasibility or costs. We further request the level of harvest external to the Yakima Basin be clearly estimated and identified as such. Finally, we request all model assumptions and future actions be clearly itemized.

We believe this is the only way to truly compare salmon production in the Yakima Basin under various future scenarios on an equal basis. Since potential salmon production is one of the key elements in selecting future actions, the results from such a model would be extremely useful in the current planning process.

We would appreciate a meeting with you before the model is run to explain the various inputs prior to running, especially as to temperatures and floodplains.

We look forward to working with you in this critical effort.

Sincerely Yours,



Sid Morrison
YBSA Chairman

cc

Senator Patty Murray
Senator Maria Cantwell
Representative Doc Hastings
Governor Christine Gregoire