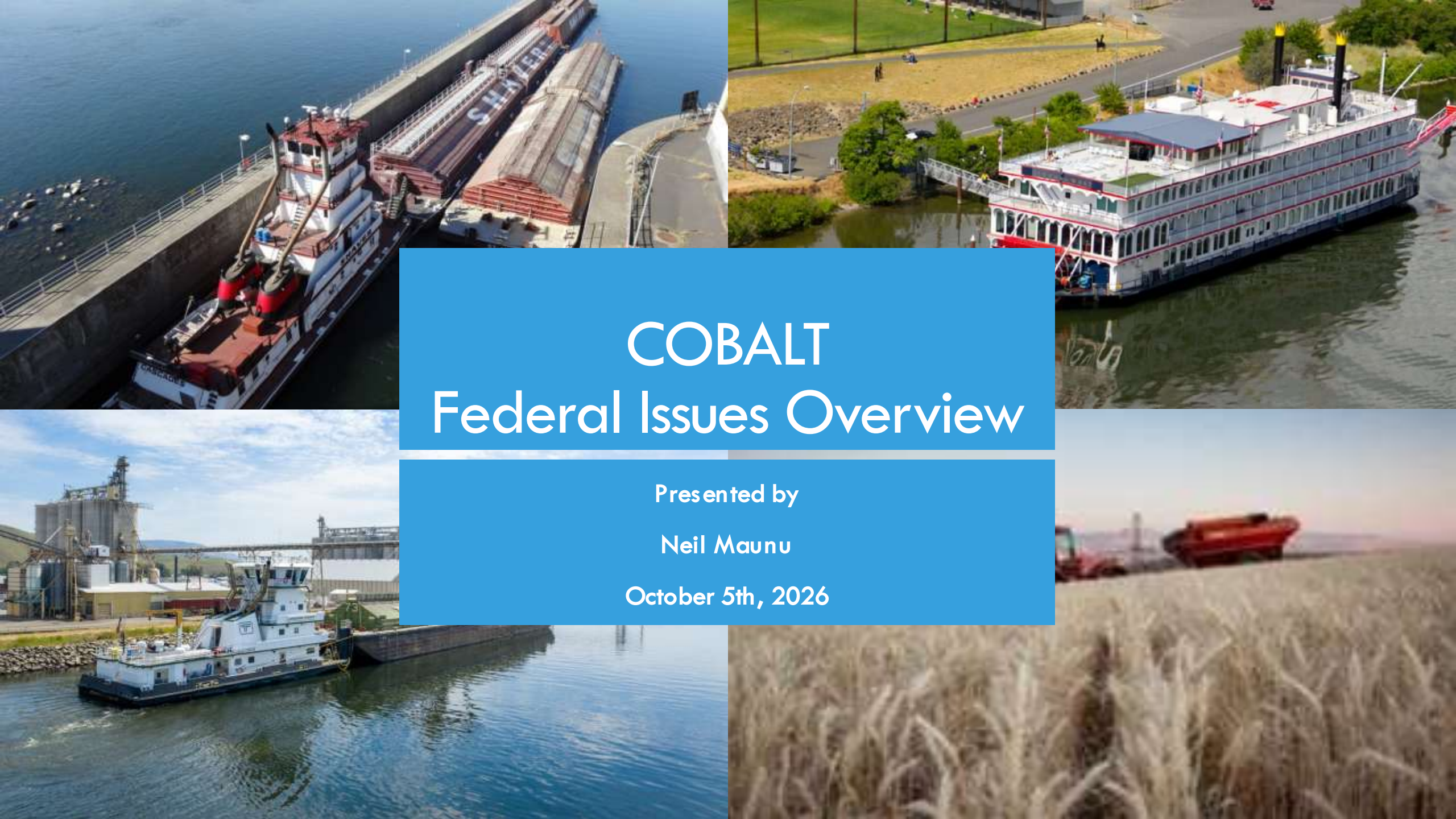
Pacific Northwest Waterways Association

Columbia River Steamship Operators Association (CRSOA)

October 5th, 2026

NEIL MAUNU



COBALT
Federal Issues Overview

Presented by

Neil Maunu

October 5th, 2026

Pacific Northwest Waterways Association

Non-profit trade association that advocates for federal policies & funding in support of regional economic development

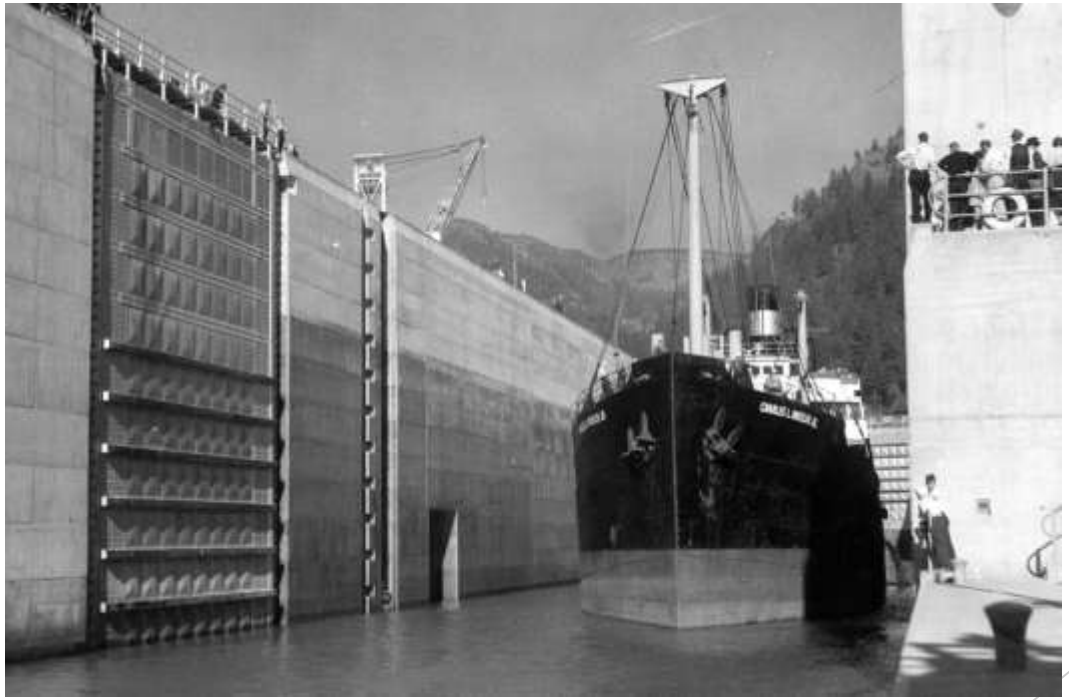
Over 155 members in WA, OR, and ID:

- *Public ports*
- *Agriculture & forest products producers*
- *Utilities*
- *Towboaters & steamship operators*
- *Pilots*
- *Union labor*
- *Terminal Operators & Grain Elevators*

Pacific Northwest Waterways Association

For over 92 years, PNWA members have advocated for efficient, reliable, and environmentally sustainable waterways.

Established as the Inland Empire Waterways Association in 1934, PNWA led the way for development of infrastructure for navigation, electric power and irrigated agriculture on the Columbia and Snake River System. In 1971 we expanded, adding Puget Sound and coastal members to provide a comprehensive regional perspective.



PNWA Staff

Dena Horton
Deputy Director

Mary Wiley
Communications Manager

Neil Maunu
Executive Director

Nicole Kach
Government Relations Specialist

Carli Kreinbring
Operations Coordinator

PNWA Federal Partnerships

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- Portland, Walla Walla, Seattle Districts
- Northwestern Division
- Headquarters in DC
- Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) – Pentagon

Congress

- Northwest House & Senate Delegations (District & DC)
- House & Senate Energy & Water Appropriations Subcommittees
- House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee (T&I)
- Senate Environment & Public Works Committee (EPW)

White House

- Office of Management & Budget (OMB)
- Council on Environmental Quality

PNWA Areas of Engagement

PNWA – A "Microcosm" of National Waterway Infrastructure

- Our region has it all! Coastal ports; large and small, Inland Ports and private terminals, marinas, a variety of commodities…
- Value-add for Congressional Staff and Members

Infrastructure Maintenance and Rehabilitation - #1 Priority

Deep Draft Navigation

Inland Navigation

Small Ports

Washington's Coastal & Puget Sound Ports

Washington is one of the largest exporting state in the U.S.

Together, the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma are the second largest container load center in the country

WA state has 75 Public Ports

Oregon's Coastal Ports

Home to cargo terminals, commercial fishing fleets, marinas and recreational facilities

Port Infrastructure & Maintenance

International Trade

Breakwaters & Seawalls

Marinas

Dock & Piling Repair/Replacement

Dredging

Commercial & Recreational Fishing

Partnering with the Corps

Communication and collaboration with industry and stakeholders is key – maintenance closures

- Robust public and tribal communication in multiple formats on the Chittenden Locks maintenance outages for the large and small locks
- Even more public and stakeholder communication on the gate replacements
- Coordination of Congressional staff tours

Partnering with Public Power

- Routine RAFT calls: Regional Alliance for Transparency
- Columbia River Treaty – Power Group
- Support through events
- Testimony in Congress

Federal Advocacy

PNWA Federal Regulatory Advocacy

- Unified Regional Advocacy Voice
- Federal Regulatory Coordination & partnership
- Emphasizing Permitting Efficiency & Predictability
- Supporting Science-Based Policy Support
- Navigation, Trade & Energy Advocacy
- Congressional & Agency Engagement

Legislative Priorities – Water Resources Development Act

Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)

- Bipartisan federal legislation that authorizes U.S. Army Corps of Engineers water infrastructure projects
- Passed by Congress approximately every two years to support navigation, dredging, flood risk management, and ecosystem restoration
- Critical tool for maintaining safe and reliable navigation (like what we have on the Columbia–Snake River System)
- Supports port communities, maritime jobs, and the region's global export competitiveness

WRDA 2026 – PNWA Advocacy Priorities:

- **Lower Columbia River Turning Basin** Improvements to improve vessel safety and maneuverability
- **Columbia River Treaty Flood Risk Management Agreement** extension
- Development of **Aquatic Placement Facilities** to support long-term dredging and channel maintenance

Columbia Snake River System

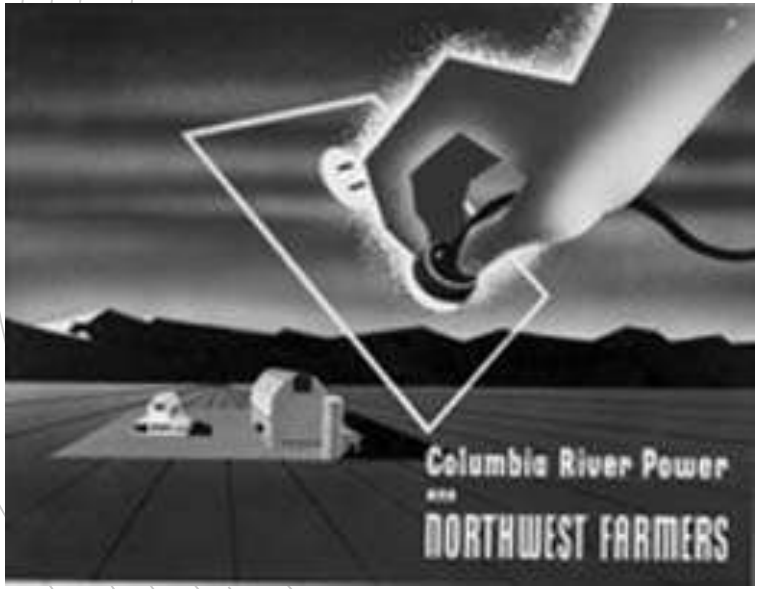
- **River System Overview**
- What Moves on the River?
- Infrastructure Projects
- Fish and the Environment

The Northwest in the early 1900's

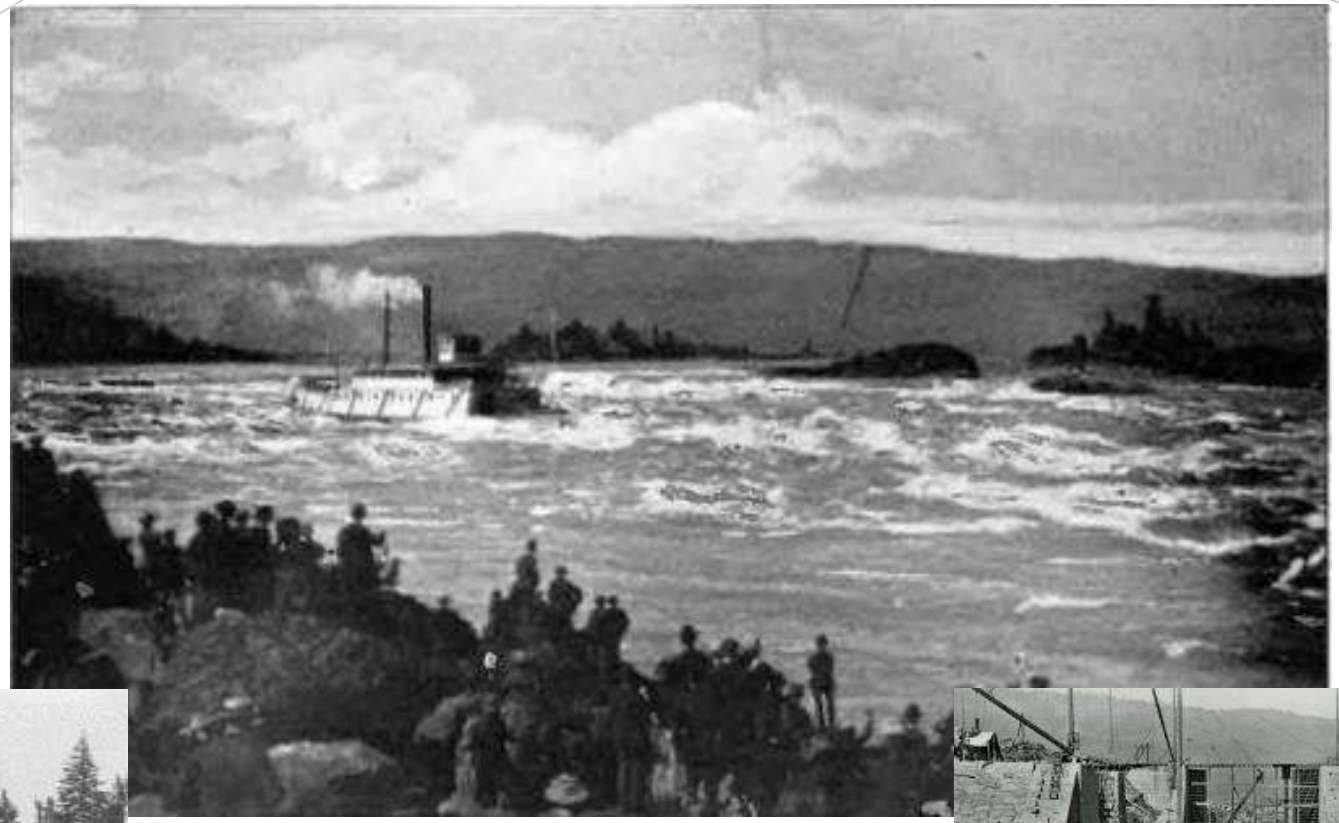
Protect from flooding

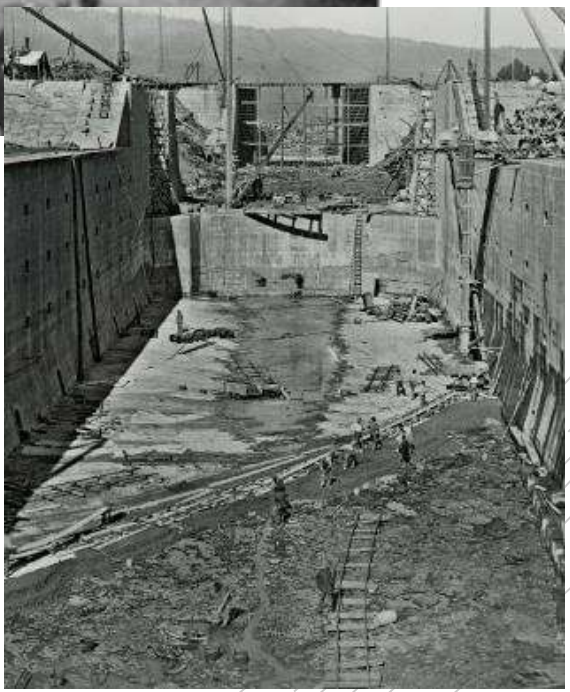
Vanport Flood – June 15, 1948

Rural electrification



Get goods to market





Our future was built

Columbia-Snake River System

465 miles of navigable waterways connecting Astoria, OR to Lewiston, ID

Eight locks and dams make inland navigation possible

More than 700 feet of elevation gain is managed through the lock system, allowing cargo to travel efficiently and safely

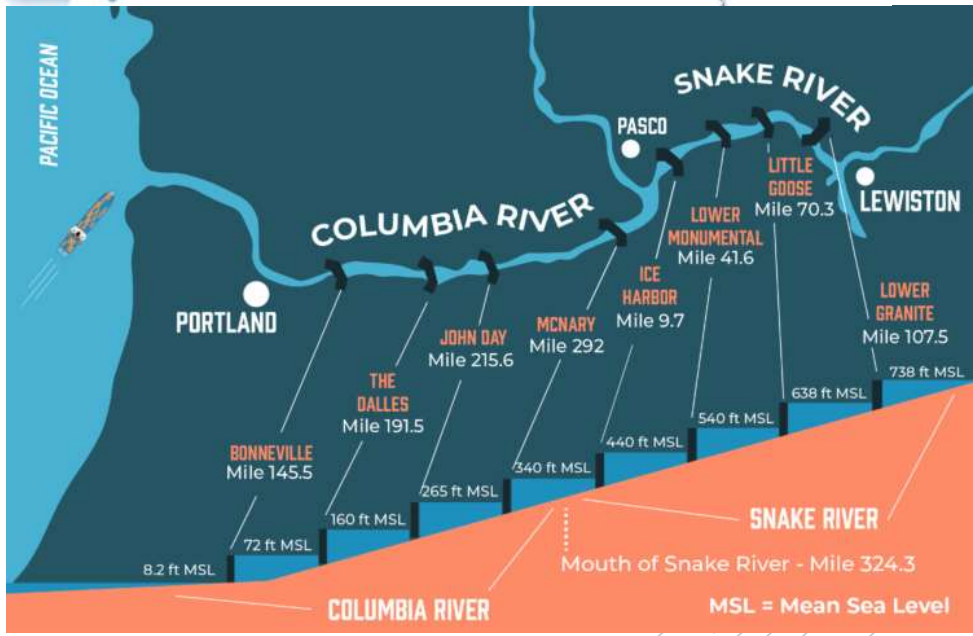
Marine Highway M-84

Deep Draft Portion

- Astoria to Portland, OR
- 110 miles long
- 43 ft. deep
- 51.1 M tons of cargo in 2023
- $25.3 B worth of cargo in 2023

Inland System

- Portland, OR to Lewiston, ID
- 365 miles long
- 14 ft. deep
- 8 lock & dams
- 8.5 million tons of cargo



Virtual Tour: The Dalles navigation lock

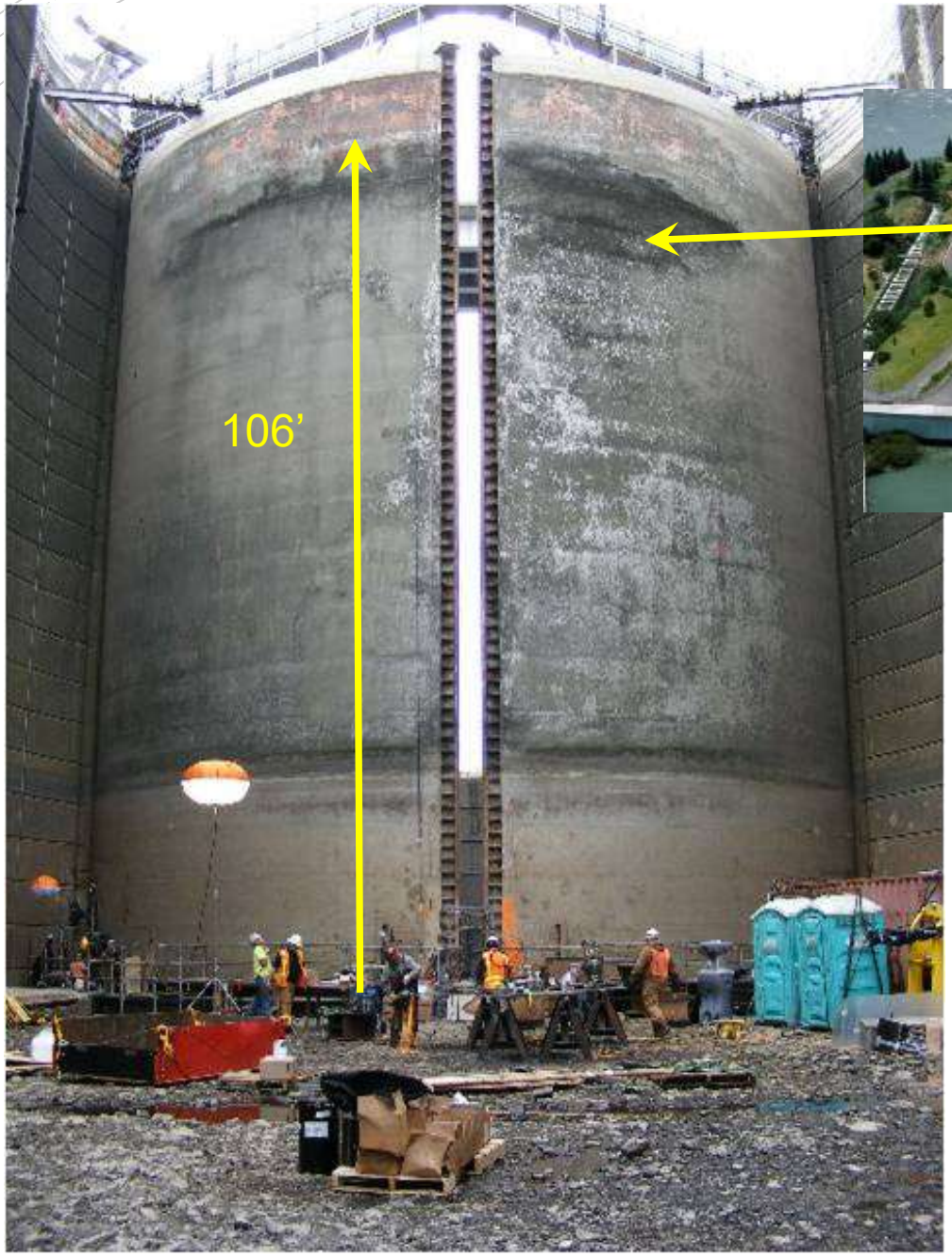
Virtual Tour: The Dalles navigation lock

The Dalles navigation lock

- downstream gate -

The locks on the Columbia Snake River System have the highest lift in the United States

John Day Lock's lift is 110 Feet The highest in North America!



Armchair Engineer

A WEB SERIES ABOUT
BRIDGES, DAMS, AND
COMMON SENSE

Navigation Lock

The Columbia–Snake River System is one of the most important inland navigation corridors in the United States. Stretching 465 miles from Astoria, Oregon to Lewiston, Idaho, the system allows barges to move cargo through a series of eight locks and dams.

How the Navigation Locks Work

Navigation locks function like water elevators for vessels, allowing tugboats and barges to safely pass through dams.

- A tow enters the lock chamber from either upstream or downstream.
- Massive gates close behind the vessel.
- Water levels inside the chamber are raised or lowered to match the river level on the opposite side of the dam.
- The opposite gates open, and the vessel continues its journey.

This process allows commercial vessels to safely bypass dams while maintaining river navigation.

Lock Dimensions and Vessel Size

The locks on the Columbia–Snake River System were designed specifically for river barge transportation.

- Lock chamber size: approximately 675 feet long × 86 feet wide
- Typical barge tow: four barges (2×2 configuration)
- Tow dimensions: about 650 feet long × 84 feet wide
- Clearance: only about 1 foot on each side, requiring highly skilled navigation by tug captains.

Because of these tight clearances, navigating through the locks requires experienced pilots and precise vessel control.

Columbia Snake River System

- River System Overview
- What Moves on the River?
- Infrastructure Projects
- Fish and the Environment

The Columbia Snake River System – An Export Gateway

Over 51.1 Million Tons of Foreign & Domestic Trade (2023, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce of the United States)

Valued at over $25.3 Billion in 2023

Supporting over 40,000 Local jobs

Over 1,500 Vessel calls Annually

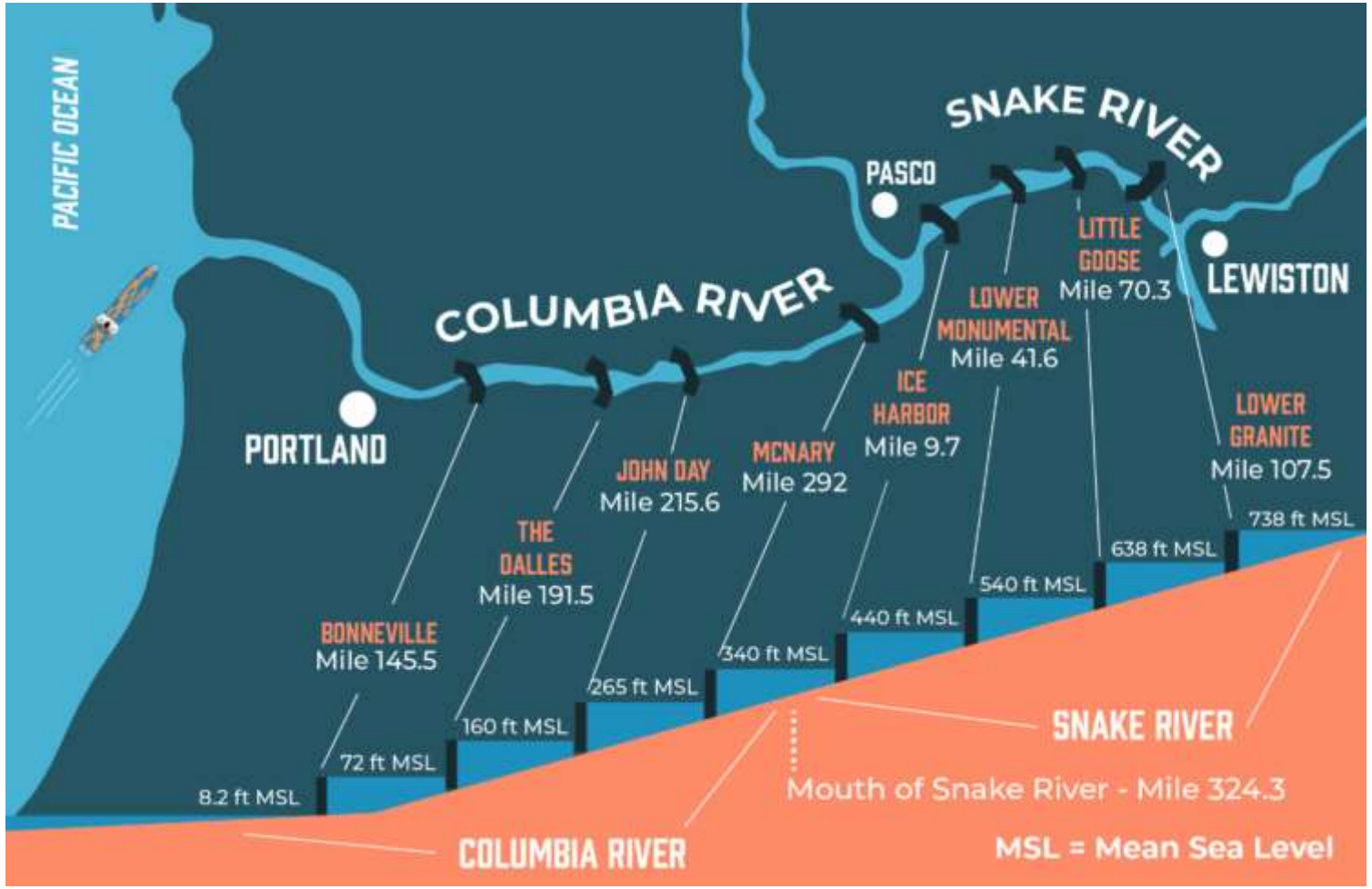
Navigation on the River
A Marine Highway

Deep Draft Portion

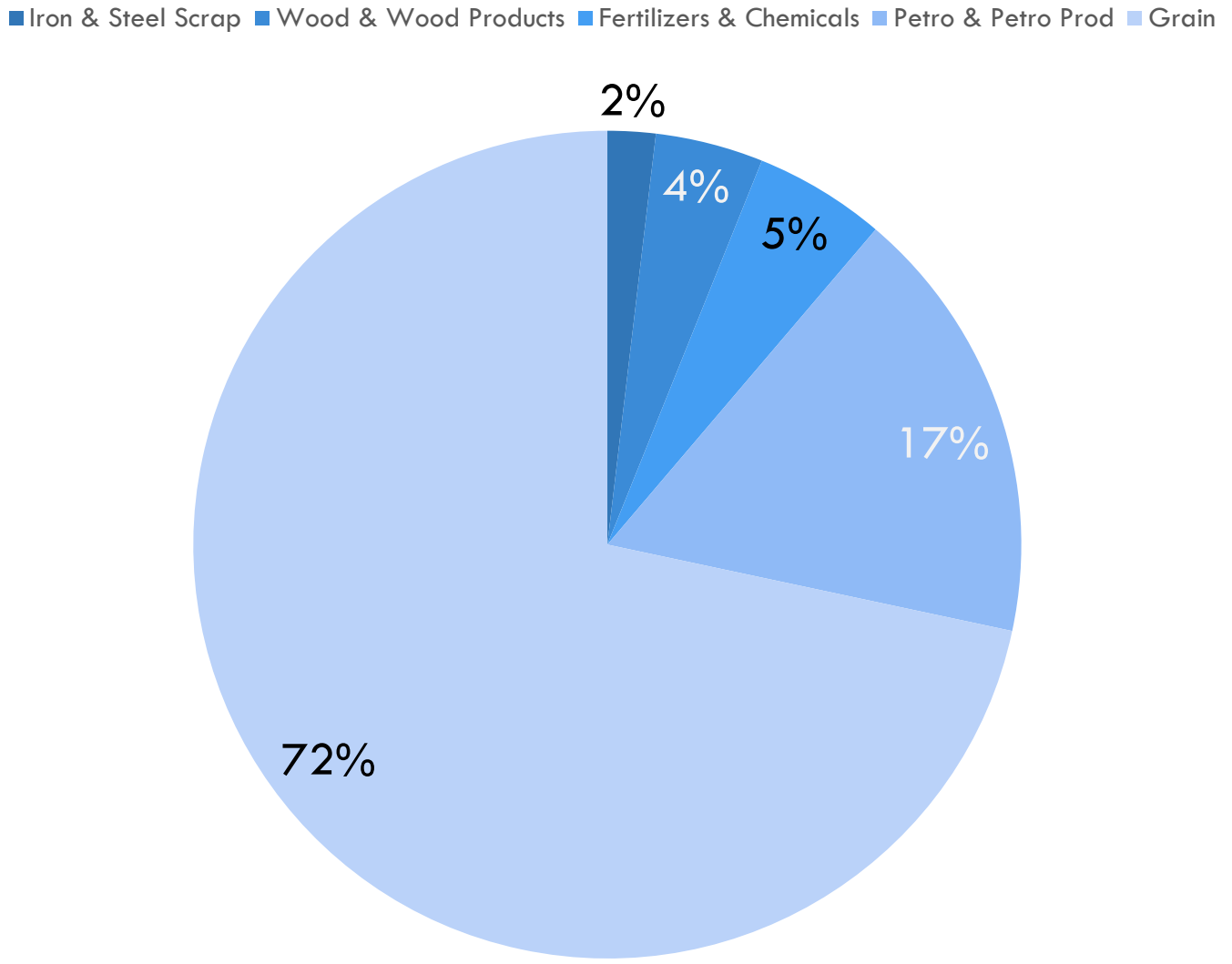
- *Astoria to Portland, OR*
- *110 miles long*
- *43 ft. deep*

Inland System

- *Portland, OR to Lewiston, ID*
- *365 miles long*
- *14 ft. deep*
- *8 lock & dams*

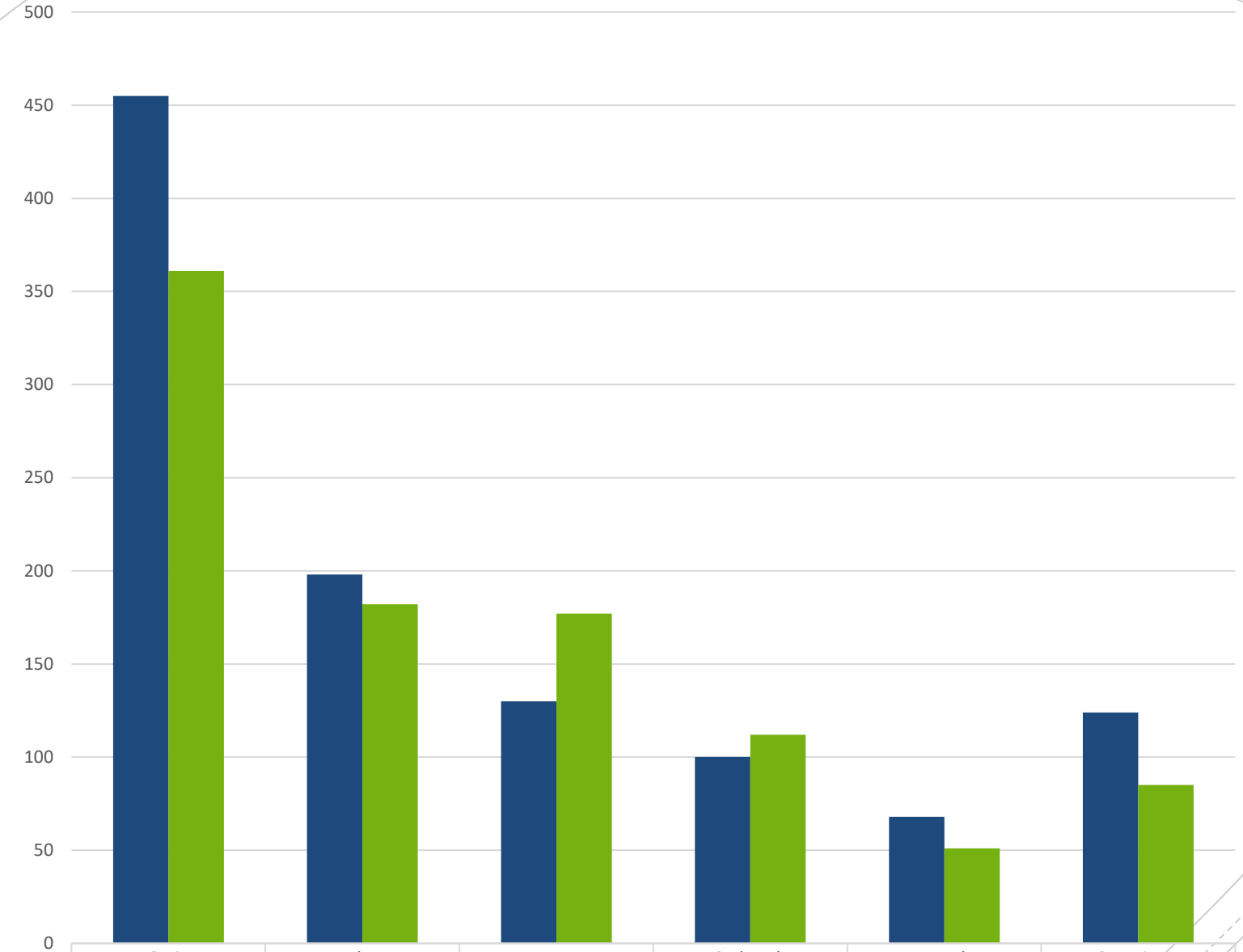


Import & Export Facts



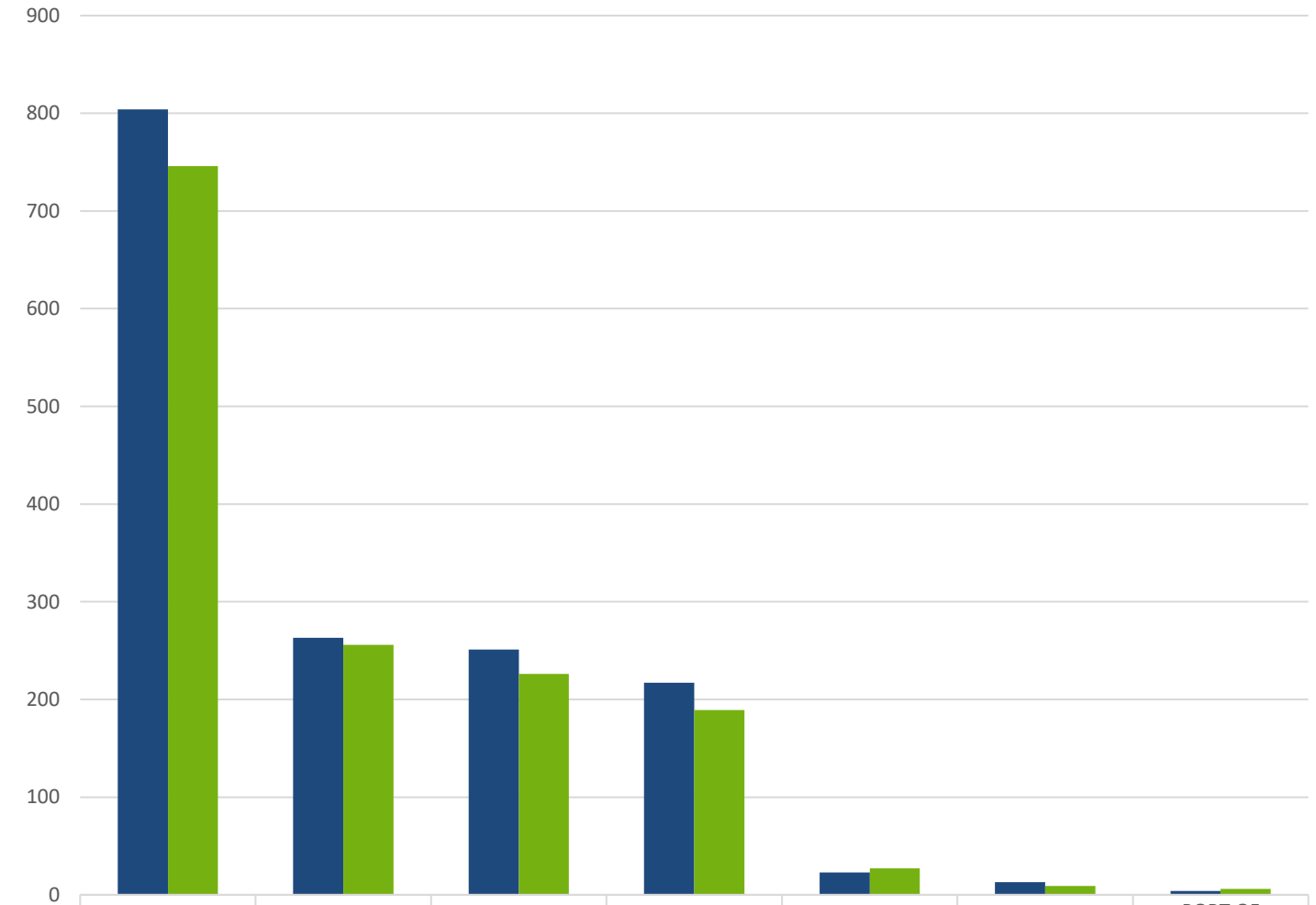
Source: Waterborne Commerce of the U.S.

Top 6 Cargos by Vessel Calls



	Grain	Petrol Barge	Autos	Soda Ash	Potash	Containers
2022	455	198	130	100	68	124
2023	361	182	177	112	51	85

Vessel Calls by Port



	PORTLAND	VANCOUVER	KALAMA	LONGVIEW	ASTORIA	RAINIER	PORT OF COLUMBIA COUNTY
2022	804	263	251	217	23	13	4
2023	746	256	226	189	27	9	6

Grain Exports

Globally:

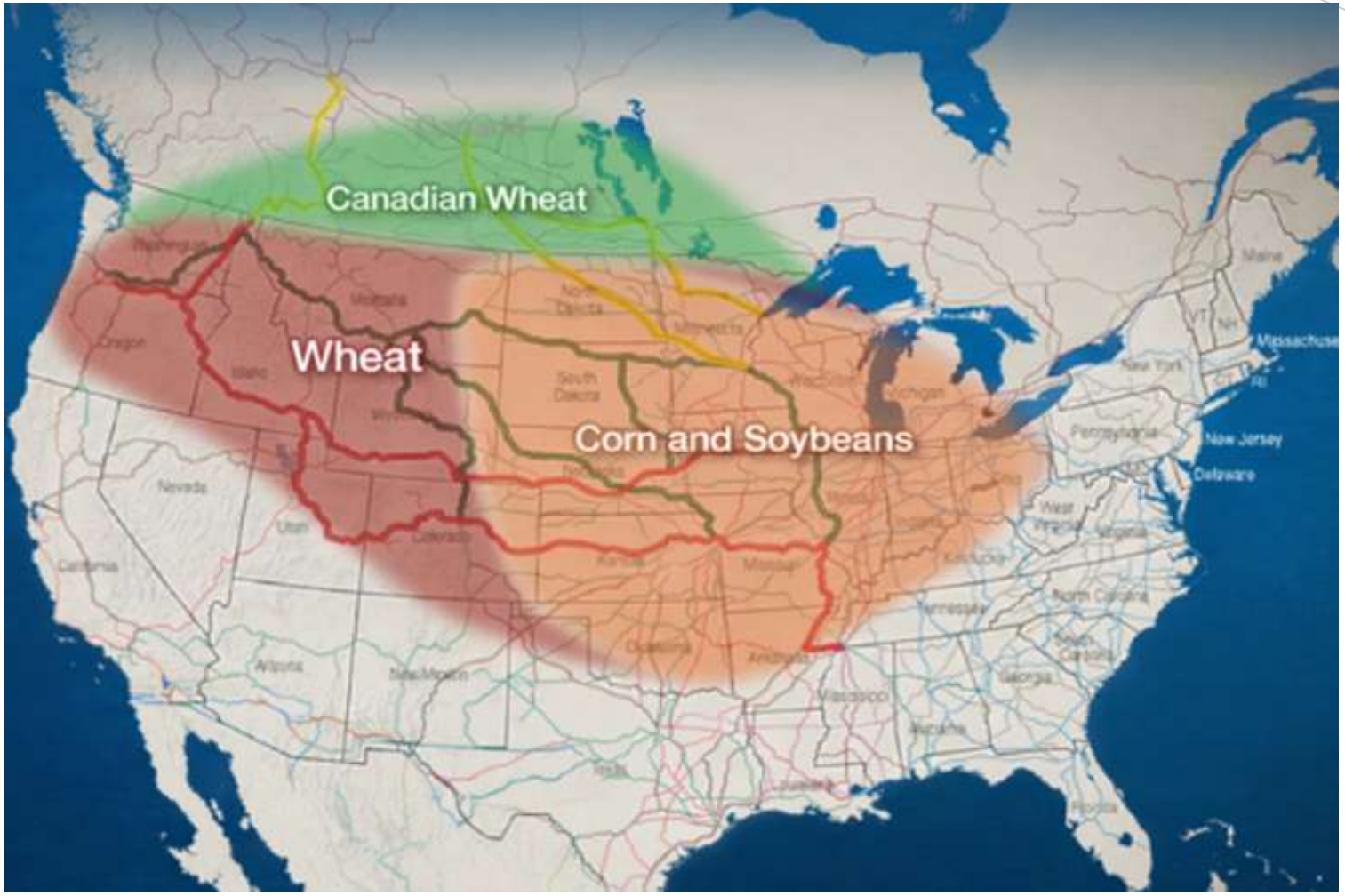
#3 Largest in Grain Exports

Wheat:

#1 in U.S. exports

Soybeans:

#2 in U.S. exports



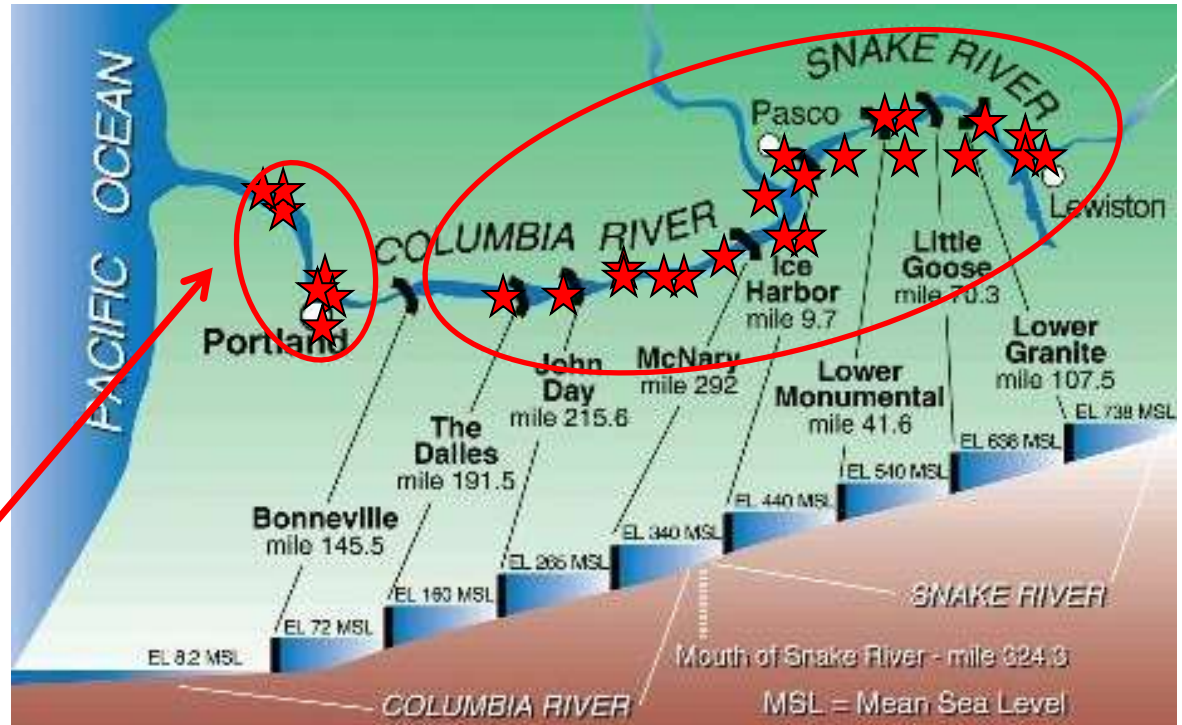
Multimodal Transportation System Linking Rail, Barge, and Ports to Move Grain from the Midwest to the World

Grain Exports

Arriving by Rail

Multimodal Transportation System linking Rail, Barge, and Ports to move Grain from the Midwest to the World

Six major grain export facilities



Arriving by Barge

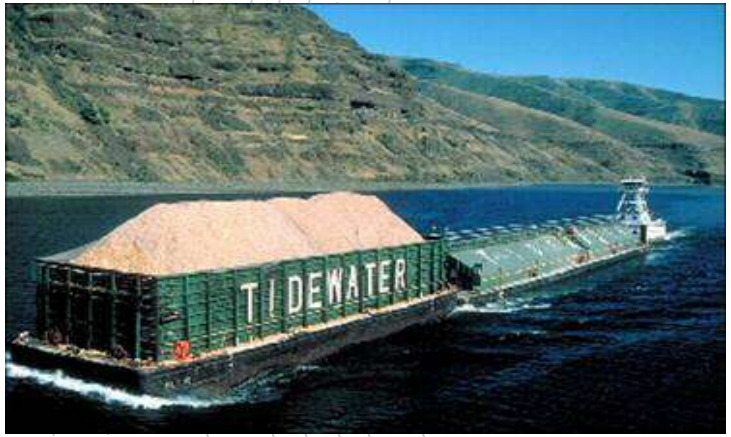
Trade Gateway EXPORTS

MINERAL BULKS

#1 on West Coast

AUTO IMPORTS & EXPORTS

Major West Coast gatew ay

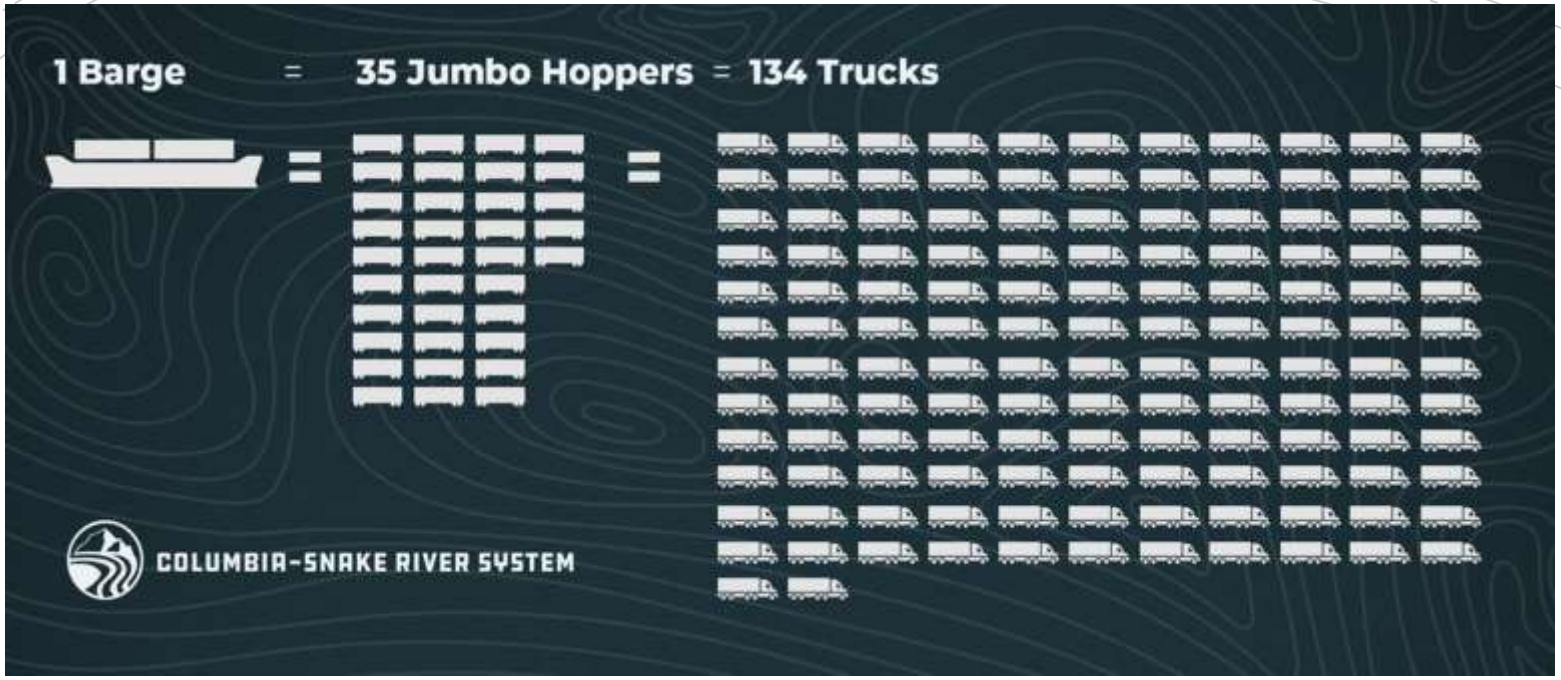


WOOD EXPORTS

#1 on West Coast

Other Columbia/Snake Cargo

Transportation Benefits



Benefits of Barging

- Cost-Efficient
- Safe
- Reliable
- Environmentally Responsible
- One 4-barge tow (1 tugboat) is the equivalent of 538 TRUCKS on the road

Commodities Moved

- Grain
- Wind energy
- Renewable fuels and jet fuels
- Fish passage and barging
- Cruise passengers
- Gravel, Timber, Wood Products

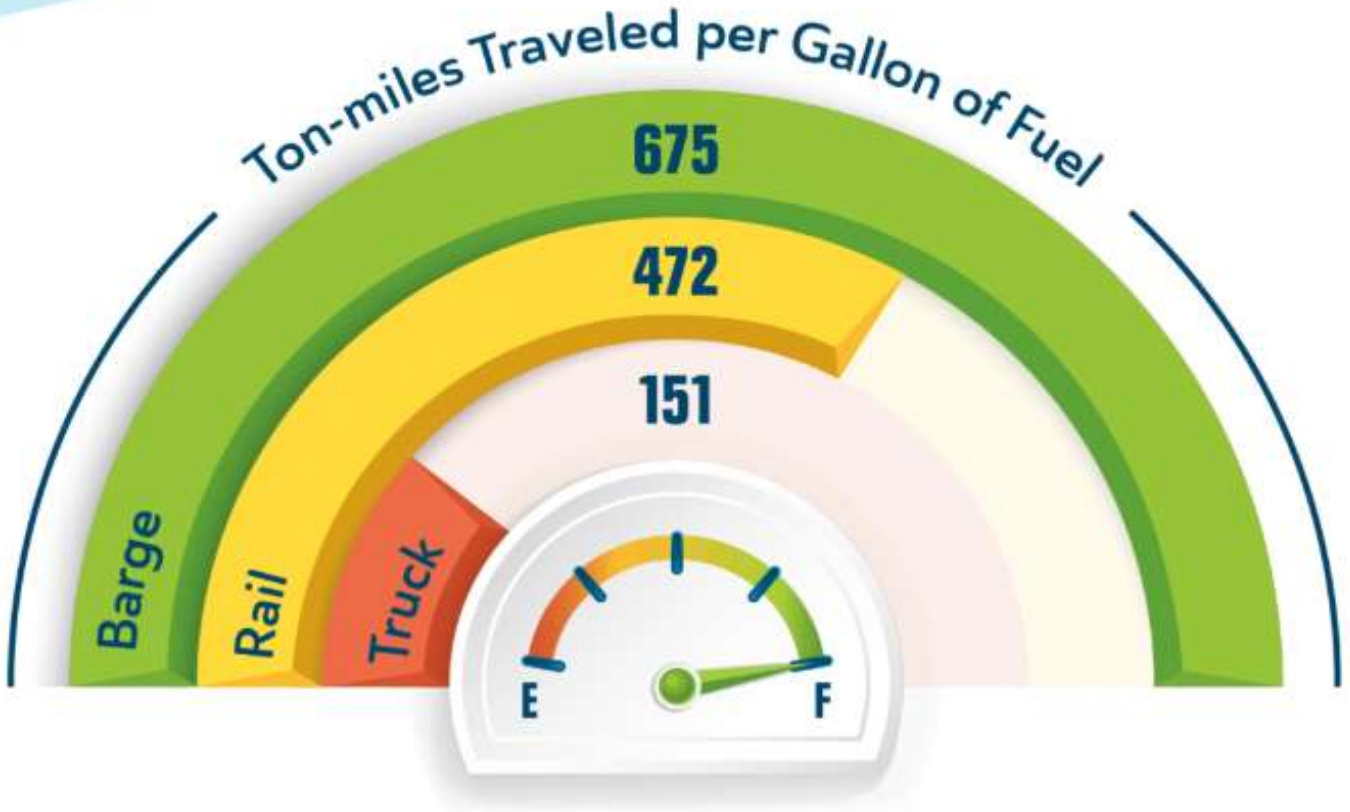
Towboats & Barges: Most Fuel Efficient

Barges move one ton of cargo

675 miles

on a single gallon of fuel!

- **A rail car is 30% less efficient**
- **A truck is 78% less efficient**



nationalwaterwaysfoundation.org

WATERWAYS COUNCIL, INC.

NATIONAL WATERWAYS FOUNDATION

Columbia Snake River System

- River System Overview
- What Moves on the River?
- **Infrastructure Projects**
- Fish and the Environment

Columbia River Jetties MAJOR REHAB

Help maintain depth & orientation of the navigation channel

Provide protection for ships entering and leaving the river

Jetty breach could lead to a shoaled-in bar

Columbia River Channel Deepening COMPLETED

20-year project

Completed November 2010

110-mile channel deepened to 43’

6K tons added capacity per ship

$1-2M worth of cargo added per ship call

Hundreds of millions of dollars in private infrastructure development

RESULT: Over $1B in new investment

Lower Columbia River Channel Maintenance

US Army Corps of Engineers Dredge *Yaquina*

Annual appropriated activity – four dredges

Draft restrictions in 2011 - 2015

40’ draft restriction = $22M+ direct economic impact per year

Cargo left on the dock, disruptions to the supply chain

2024 ZERO Draft restrictions! Thanks to the work of so many!

Port of Portland dredge Oregon

Columbia River Routine Maintenance Dredging

Channel Maintenance Plan – ports and Corps working together

Planning for 20 years of routine dredging activity and material placement

Sponsor ports: Longview, Kalama, Woodland, Vancouver, Portland

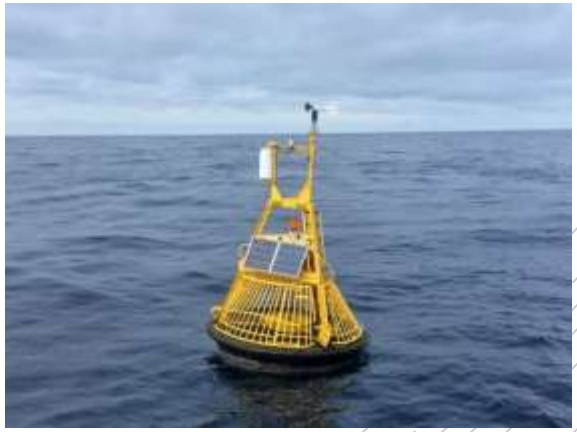
Into affect June 2026!

Learn more:
http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/lcrchannelmaintenance/

Lower Columbia River Infrastructure Planning ADDITIONAL NEEDS

- Anchorages & Turning Basins
- Pile dikes
- Stern buoys
- Weather buoys
- Confined Aquatic Placement

Turning Basin



Columbia River Lock Maintenance and Closures

Communication and collaboration with industry and stakeholders is key – maintenance closures

2010 – 2011

- Significant federal investment
- New gates at 3 locks, major repairs at 3 others
- Ensures long-term viability of the river system

2016- 2017

- 15 weeks
- Mid-Dec 2016 to mid-Mar 2017
- Systems installed at 6 of 8 locks

2024

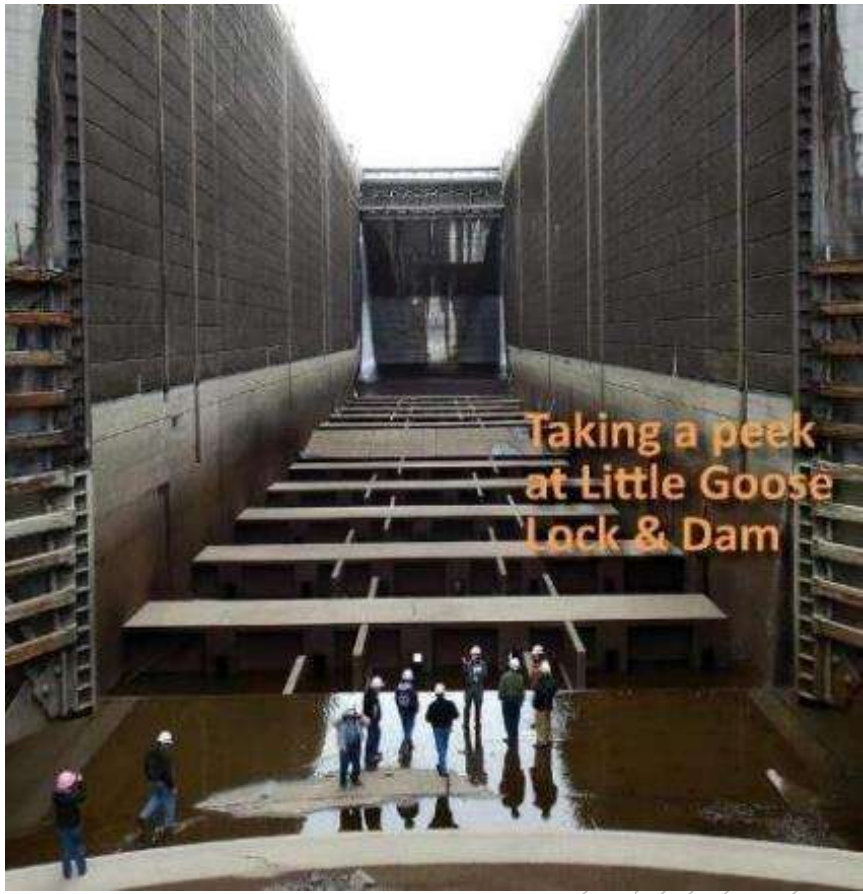
- Typical closure (Portland District)
  - 2 weeks in March
- Upriver (Walla Walla District)
  - Major Repairs
  - "Extended" lock closure

2027

- 3 & 4 -week closure
- PNWA Congressional Tours

2030

- Extended Outage (in planning)



Columbia Snake River System

- River System Overview
- What Moves on the River?
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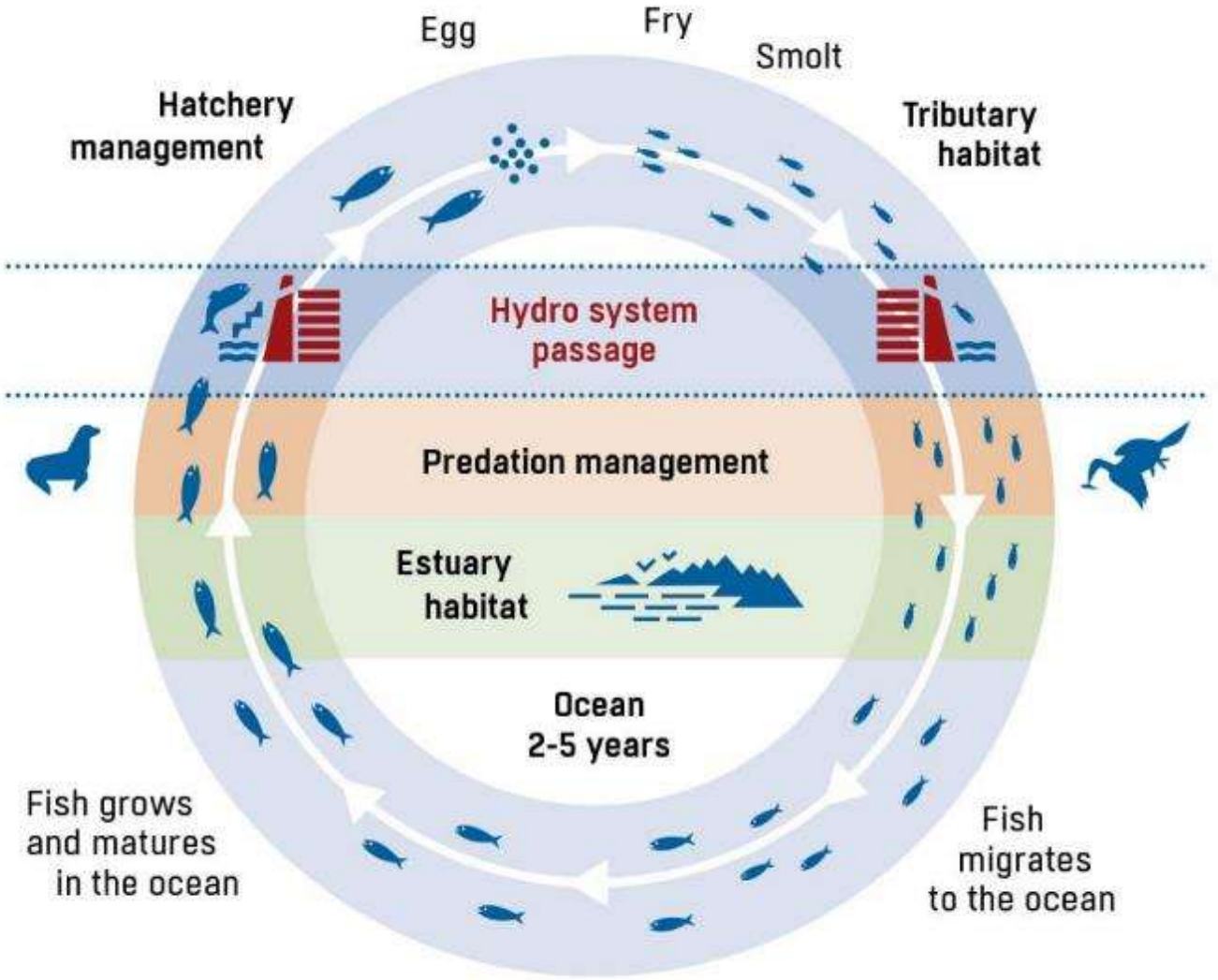
- **Fish and the Environment**

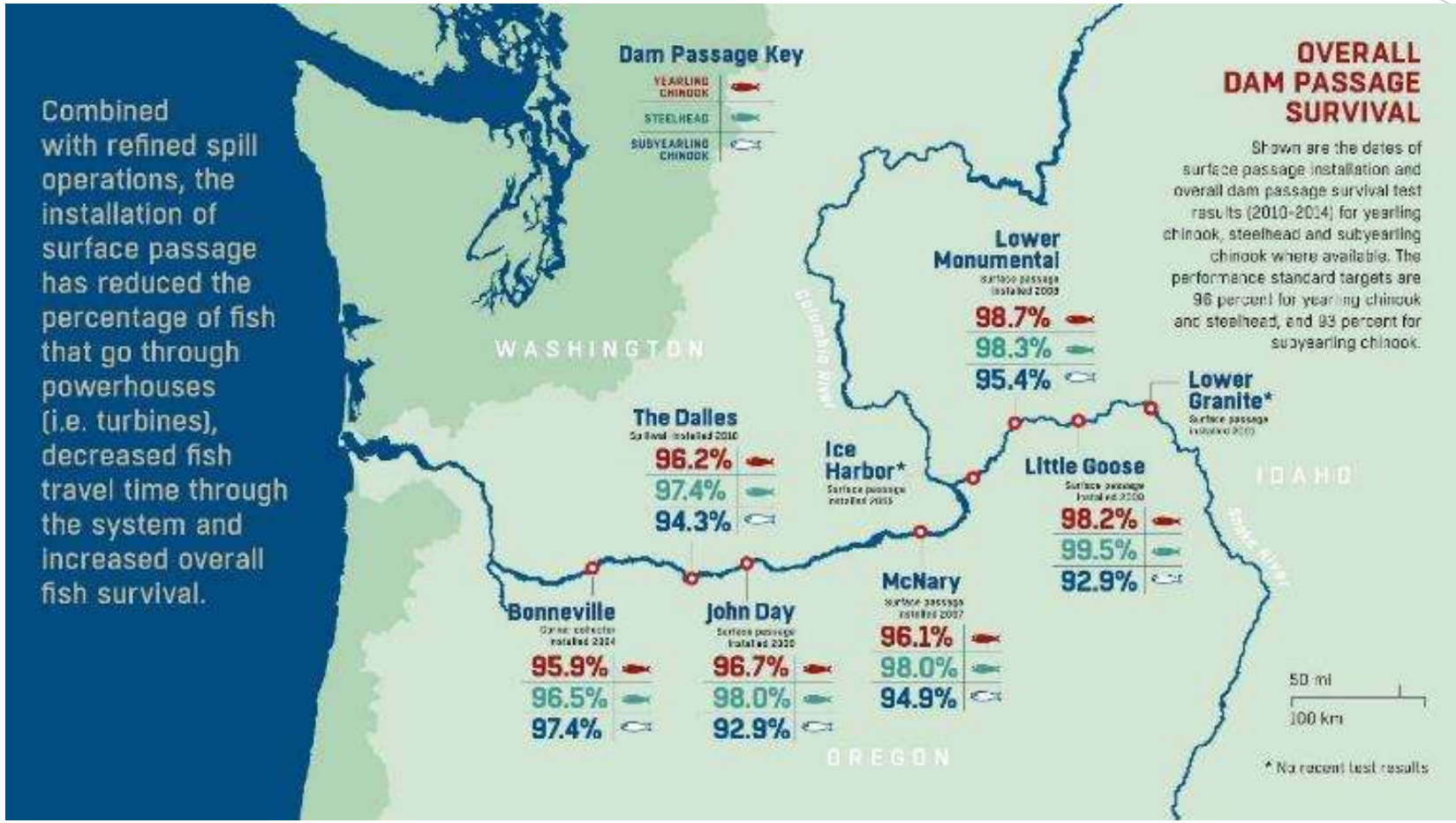
Sharing Our Rivers with Anadromous Fish



Fish Survival at the Dams

Juvenile survival at the dams now averages 95-97%

NOAA: survival rates through the hydro system are approaching levels in rivers without dams



Columbia Snake River System

Columbia River Treaty

Columbia River Treaty (CRT)

CRT History

Ratified in 1964 to coordinate flood control after Vanport flood disaster and optimize hydroelectric generation

- ✓ Constructed four dams for flood control:
  - Canada: Duncan ’67, Arrow/Keenleyside ‘68, Mica ‘73
  - USA: Libby ‘75
- ✓ Cost Sharing
- ✓ Shared Energy Benefits

CRT Storage Capacity

Mica: 20 MAF

Keenleyside: 7.1 MAF

Duncan: 1.4 MAF

Libby: 5 MAF

Columbia River Treaty Status

BOTTOM LINE:

Still waiting on US Senate Ratification and a full agreement with Canada

An Agreement in Principle (AIP) was reached in July 2024

- Planned flood control (3.65 MAF vs. 8.95 MAF)
- Pay $37.6M annually for flood control & $16.6M "other"

Interim period (3-year agreement from 2025 through 2027)

FUNDING: Year 1 Funding: Senator Murray (WA) secured $37.6M in funding for flood control / Year 2 Funding: Secured in latest funding bill / Year 3 PBUD '27

WRDA ask includes an extension of the 3-year interim agreement for pre-planned flood control when current agreement expires in September 2027

PNWA is cultivating and continuing to engage with contacts at the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ), National Security Council (NSC) and State Department

U.S. Senate ratification must take place

- USACE and the State Department are saying we are "CLOSE"
- Senator Risch and Senate Foreign Relations = key for PNW

PNWA advocates for ratification of a new treaty w/ focus on navigation certainty

Thank You

Neil Maunu, Executive Director

Pacific Northwest Waterways Association

neil.maunu@pnwa.net

Appendix

IPNG & Litigation Overview

IPNG Mission and Strategy

Inland Ports and Navigation Group (IPNG)

- Subset of PNWA Membership, managed by PNWA with legal counsel provided by Schwabe

IPNG is comprised of ports, farmers, pilots, transportation companies, terminals, and water resources stakeholders who work to balance economic prosperity with environmental stewardship

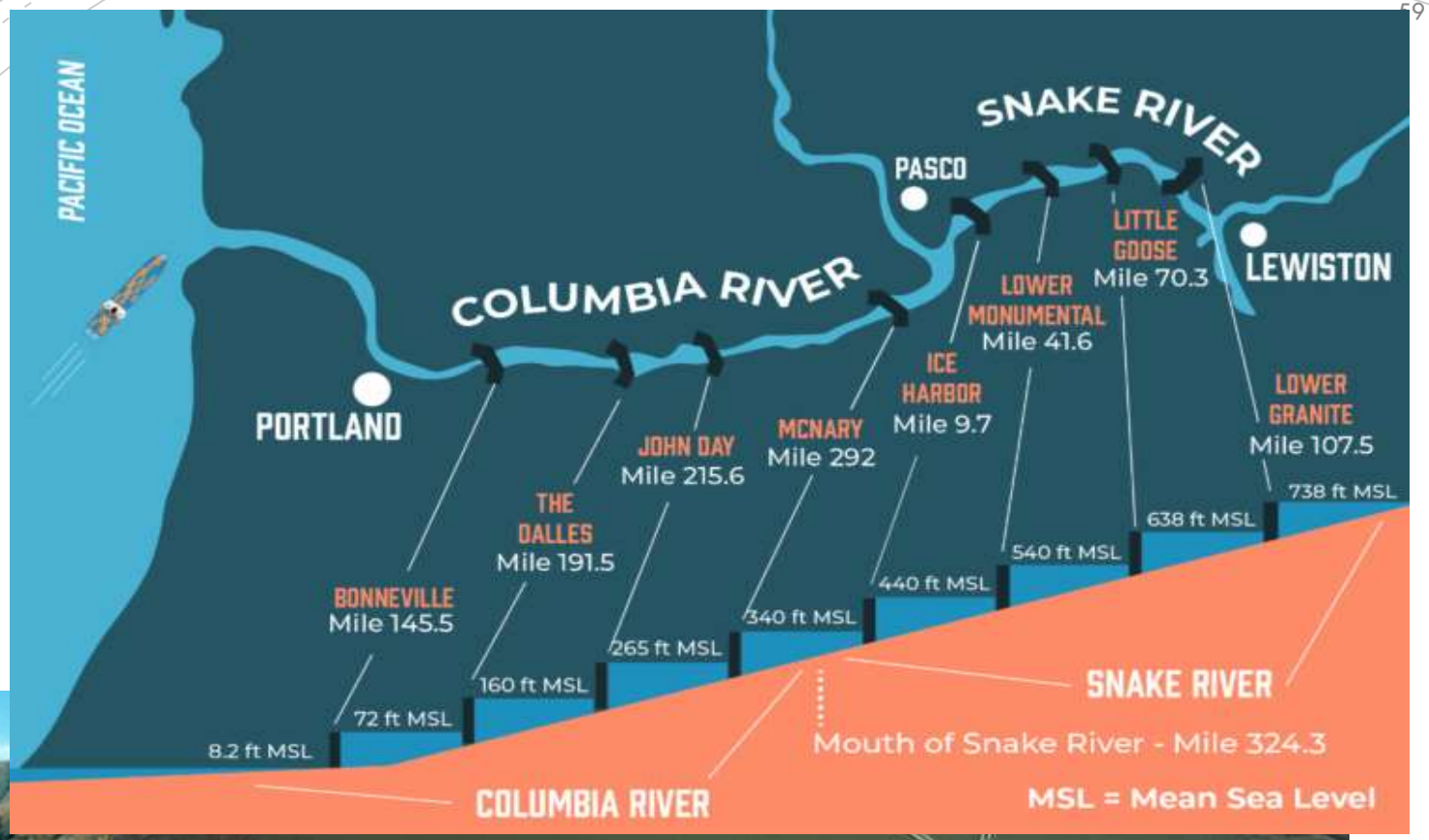
- 30 public & private organizations across Idaho, Oregon, and Washington

IPNG's mission is to protect inland navigation, hydropower, and irrigation on the Columbia Snake River System, while supporting a healthy environment and robust fish runs in the Northwest

IPNG supports advocacy activities both within the Pacific Northwest and Washington, D.C.

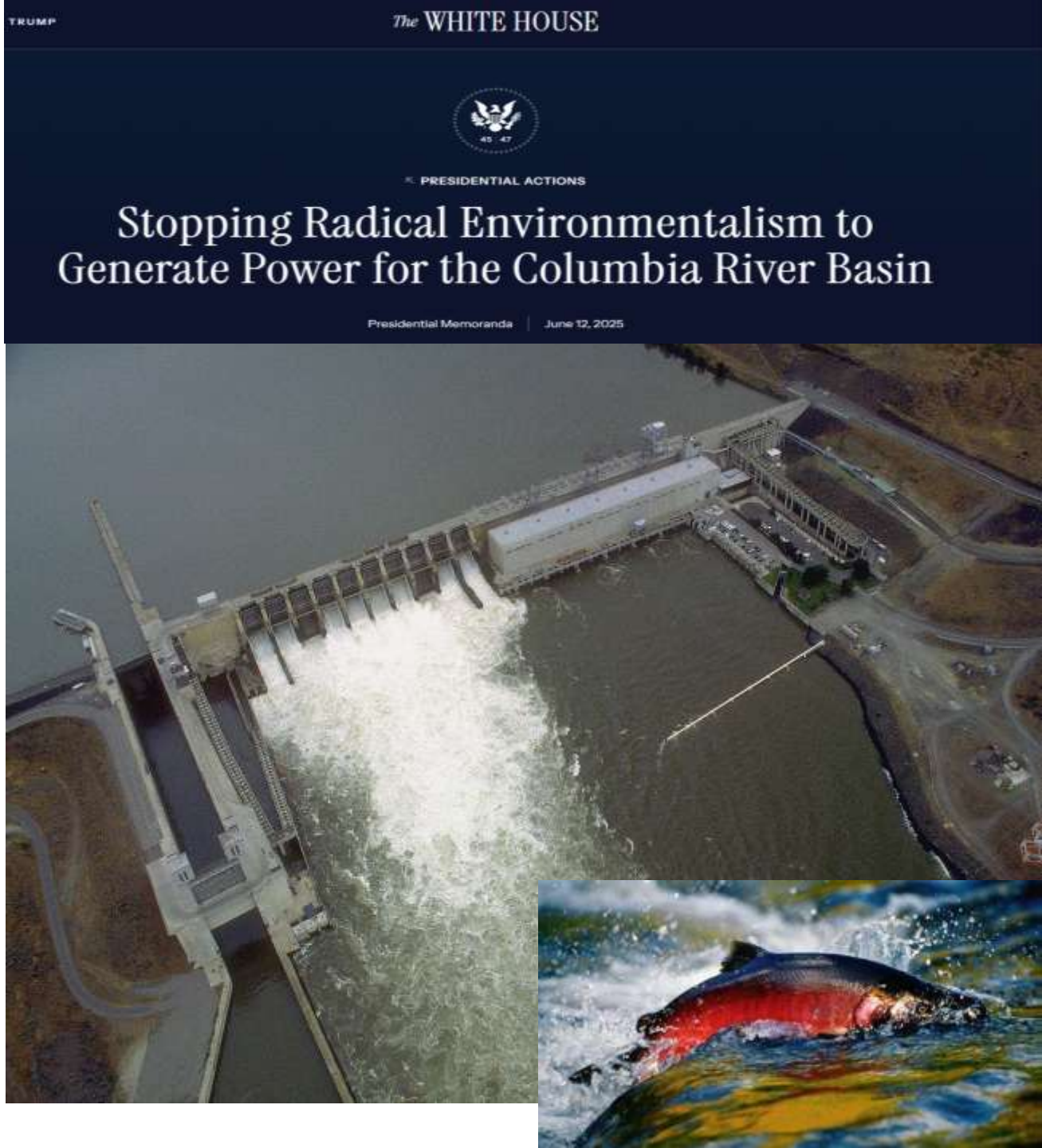
IPNG drives industry and community engagement, highlighting the importance of our inland waterways

Lower Snake River Dams



Threat to Navigation on Lower Snake River Dams

- 2020: Columbia River System EIS
- 2022-2023: Mediation and 2022 Change in the “goalposts.”
- 2024: Stay in Litigation
- 2025: June 12th Presidential Memo
- 2026: Preliminary Injunction (Feb)
- Appeals and continues “On the Merits”



Presidential Action

June 12th 2025 Presidential Memorandum

Revokes Biden Administration Memorandum

Withdraws US Government from MOU and commitments

Rescinds the Notice of Intent for Supplemental EIS on CRSO

Directs Agencies to reissue Notice of Intent

"Healthy and Abundant"

2022 NOAA issues report: "Rebuilding Interior Columbia Basin Salmon and Steelhead, and Other Native Fish Populations in the Columbia River Basin"

- Unauthored document
- Changes the standard of ESA jeopardy to "healthy and abundant"
- Basis for Biden Memorandum and ensuing MOU with Six Sovereigns

Litigation Timeline

- Plaintiffs filed a motion to lift the litigation stay, which was granted on September 11, 2025.
- Plaintiffs filed a motion for a Preliminary Injunction (PI) on October 14, 2025.
- As an intervenor-defendant, IPNG filed its response on December 15, 2025.
- The Oregon District Court held a hearing on the Preliminary Injunction on February 6, 2026.
- The court issued a Preliminary Injunction ordering lower reservoir pool levels and significant increases in spill operations on February 25, 2026.
- In response, IPNG filed motions seeking a stay of the injunction and appealed the decision in May 2026.
- Plaintiffs filed a motion to assign the case to the same three-judge panel. The motion was denied.
- Oral Argument is expected to take place on October 20th, 2026