

August 2013

From the desk of*Dick Adams*

Time to Speak Up on Columbia River Treaty's Future

Activity around the Columbia River Treaty is revving up. It remains a top priority for PNUCC and I see it gaining momentum across the region. Why? Bonneville Power and the Corps of Engineers (a.k.a. the US Entity) are circulating their first crack at a recommendation to the US State Department outlining ideas for a renegotiated Treaty.

We want the State Department to hear a unified voice from the Northwest and are hoping in its final form the US Entity recommendation will carry broad regional support. However, their initial draft has a long way to go to get there by December.

It is time to clarify what is best for the Northwest. The US Entity's June 27th working draft reflects over two years of analysis and engagement with the Sovereign Review Team. Sadly, their draft ignores a quarter-century of effort in this region to improve the ecosystem. And that immense effort has produced some respectable results. The Draft recommends incorporating a comprehensive ecosystem-based function into a modernized Treaty. I am personally wrestling with how adding this function to the Treaty would fit with the dozens of existing processes (e.g. Endangered Species Act, Council Fish & Wildlife Program). What value is added? BPA and the Corps already work with our friends in Canada to store and release water to help the ecosystem. The nine items listed in their Draft on ecosystem need some explaining.

The PNUCC Board delivered *the attached letter* as an early signal of our concerns to inform ongoing discussions. We will also provide timely input on what we think should be in a recommendation to the US State Department, by their August 16th deadline.

Help hired to convey power industry views. In addition to what we are doing at PNUCC, we are fully engaged with the Columbia River Treaty Power Group. We share the goal of a supportable final recommendation and are coordinating messages to key players. Last week the Power Group stepped up in hiring the law firm of Van Ness Feldman to help us convey our interests to policy makers and stakeholders over the next 6 months. Their *press release is attached*.

Be ready! Time to add your voice soon. We are anticipating round two of a draft recommendation in early September. It will be time for BPA and the Corps to hear from you! Whether we love it or hate it, we will want to underscore the importance of having a renegotiated Treaty that equitably distributes downstream power benefits between the US and Canada and defines how flood protection will be utilized after 2024, leaving the operations of hydro projects for ecosystem purposes to the host of forums and agreements already in play.

Stay tuned...



Dick Adams
Executive Director