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-- REVISED --

COLUMBIA RIVER CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT  
PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, July 31, 2002

(EVENING SESSION)



BE IT REMEMBERED THAT, pursuant to the Washington Rules of Civil Procedure, the Columbia River Channel Improvement Project Public Hearing (Evening Session) was taken before Tamara Ross, Certified Shorthand Reporter in the State of Washington and Licensed Notary in the State of Washington, on Wednesday, July 31, 2002, commencing at 7:08 p.m. at the Water Resource Education Center: 4600 S.E. Columbia Way, Vancouver, Washington.

1 VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON;  
2 WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2002  
3 7:08 P.M.

4 .  
5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: One question:  
6 You indicated earlier that only public lands were  
7 going to be used for restoration projects. Were  
8 there no private individuals willing to get  
9 involved?

10 MS. HICKS: Our folks -- probably  
11 outside could help to answer that, sir. Because  
12 this part is going to be for testimony. But we  
13 have representatives that can help answer your  
14 question.

15 MS. BROOKS: Good evening. I was  
16 just asked to go over a few ground rules for the  
17 evening for testimony. Excuse me. And these are  
18 ground rules that are going to be used in each of  
19 these public hearings. I'll just kind of walk  
20 through these with you folks.

21 Given the public interest in this  
22 issue, the Corps would like all of us just to  
23 follow a few things: First of all, speakers will  
24 be recognized in the order as you signed up. So  
25 I'll be given a sheet, and I'll read off your name.

1 If you can come forward to the microphone, state  
2 your name, go ahead and give your comments. And  
3 I will have some cards. Everybody gets five minutes  
4 to -- to give your comments; have your say.

5                   When you get to the four-minute  
6 point, just so you can pace yourself, I'll hold up  
7 a card that says "one minute." That means you have  
8 one minute left in five minutes. And when you  
9 start to wrap it up, if you start to go over that  
10 five-minute period of time, I'll hold this up. You  
11 probably won't be able to read it because you'll be  
12 busy, but you'll know it means you need to wrap it  
13 up.

14                   We ask that everyone is respectful  
15 of one another. There may be some comments that  
16 some of you agree with or disagree with. Please  
17 let that person speak; have their say. The Corps  
18 is interested in hearing everybody's point of view.  
19 If you want to clap afterwards, could you please  
20 wait until the comments are done and keep it to a  
21 minimum so we can keep moving those through and be  
22 sure and get everyone up to the microphone --  
23 opportunity that wants to speak.

24                   Let's see. What else do I need  
25 to talk to you about? This meeting is not a vote

1 or any sort of a consensus or either -- or even a  
2 dialogue. This is your opportunity to tell the  
3 Corps of Engineers what's on your mind, what your  
4 opinion is, what your concerns are, etcetera. So  
5 when you address them, it's probably not going to  
6 be a question and answer forum. That's what the  
7 out -- for outside afterwards; your questions  
8 answered. Response to direct -- I already went  
9 over that.

10 To make sure we end on time,  
11 speakers will be limited, as I mentioned, to five  
12 minutes. Your time is your own. And in the  
13 interests of hearing from as many of you as  
14 possible, we would ask that you speak on your own  
15 behalf. And if you're representing an association,  
16 you're welcome to do that as well. That doesn't  
17 mean two separate terms. That means one. And  
18 you're speaking on behalf of yourself or the  
19 association for the evening.

20 There are three public hearings.  
21 You get three turns to come up and share your  
22 comments. And also, please know that the comments  
23 you give tonight orally or any other night isn't  
24 your limitation. You can also submit written  
25 comments.

1 I think I've covered pretty much  
2 everything. We intend to end this hearing -- this  
3 part of the hearing -- We had one earlier today as  
4 part of the same hearing. We took a break. We're  
5 back; hoping to end this one at 8 o'clock. And  
6 I'm not sure we'll even go that late, given the  
7 people here. Does anyone have any questions?

8 MR. RABE: Eight or 9:00.

9 MS. BROOKS: When was the scheduled  
10 time?

11 COL. HOBERNICHT: We'll go to 9  
12 o'clock.

13 MS. BROOKS: Did I say 8:00?  
14 Okay. Thank you. Please remember to state your  
15 name when you begin your testimony as well. Mike  
16 Jones -- Michael Jones.

17 MR. JONES: A podium would be nice.  
18 I think we've all got papers and stuff here.  
19 Anyway, we'll do the best we can. I came early.  
20 I had a chance to see the stuff out here. Boy,  
21 this is really neat. I wonder just once if the  
22 Port of Portland had done something like this  
23 around -- on the Oregon side. It'd make such a  
24 difference. Then I got to thinking, well, how  
25 lucky these people are, whichever side you live on

1 the upstream of the Port of Portland.

2 Now, when I heard that you were  
3 reconsidering channel deepening, I thought that's a  
4 really nice idea. I think that's great; especially  
5 great for me. Because in 2000, I filed a lawsuit.  
6 In fact, Laura's one of the Defendants. And we've  
7 been through a big hunk of it. All the responsive  
8 emotions are gone. And so everything in my  
9 Complaint that refers to NEPA is still there.

10 And to give you a little help  
11 with this, even the EPA is still in. So the  
12 Government hasn't been doing well in this lawsuit.  
13 So I figured well, maybe when you decided to  
14 reconsider channel deepening, you'd look at some of  
15 the things I thought ought to be looked at. Well,  
16 I poured through the documents, and not a damn  
17 thing has been looked at. But I have to tell you  
18 something: The court will give me more than five  
19 minutes to talk about this. They'll give me years.  
20 They already have given me two, and probably give  
21 me another five or six.

22 So wouldn't it be a -- What an  
23 idea to do the process the way the process is  
24 supposed to be done, instead of in court. I mean,  
25 why not do it now? Why not come to me and say,

1 "Let's get together. Let's figure out what's going  
2 on"?

3                   Now, let me tell you I understand  
4 something about NEPA. And -- and NEPA is a  
5 process. It's a process of reason. A process that  
6 makes governments do reason -- consideration. And  
7 you -- if you do those things, I have no  
8 alternative. If you do the -- If you do the  
9 mandated process, it's over. There's nothing I can  
10 do about it. I'm not -- I won't be in court or  
11 anything. So why not do the process right? I  
12 mean, what a concept.

13                   But I'll give you an example.  
14 There's an Executive Order for the flood plain. No  
15 Corps' document (phonetic) -- ever -- in Oregon has  
16 -- has looked at this flood -- has looked at the  
17 flood plain Executive Order even though every single  
18 action requires it. So last time you had a meeting  
19 like this, I stood up and said, "You haven't looked  
20 at the flood plain." You still haven't looked at  
21 the flood plain.

22                   Now, I've got so little faith in  
23 the Corps, no matter how bad it is -- and it will  
24 be bad -- You won't care. You'll go ahead and do  
25 channel deepening. So use your brains here. Just

1 do the flood plain Executive Order like it's  
2 supposed to be done. Go ahead and do channel  
3 deepening, and I'll be out of court, see. But  
4 don't do it again, like it is now, where you  
5 haven't done anything with that Executive Order.  
6 In fact, I have a proposal. One of the sites  
7 that's a major part of this plan -- channel  
8 deepening plan -- is an illegal dump site. It was  
9 never -- It was never cited. It -- It's filled  
10 illegally by the Port of Portland. The Port of  
11 Portland admits they filled it illegally. And  
12 that's where we are at court, is that we don't have  
13 to decide whether it's illegal or not. We just  
14 need to decide how much of it was illegal and  
15 what you're going to do about it. If I win,  
16 you're going to remove it. That's going to make  
17 it difficult to keep calling it a dump site.

18                                   And -- and to help you out, the  
19 Port's now halfway through removing 37 acres of  
20 what I won last time. And they're up to about  
21 five million dollars. See, I'll have to go to all  
22 three, and then even more.

23                                   But -- Well, I guess I'm not  
24 going to get to say all the things I wanted to  
25 say. If you want, I can give you your Federal



1 Attorney's name and number. And he can help you  
2 out with the Complaint and what it's about and  
3 stuff. And then we can save The Court's time.

4 MS. BROOKS: Jay Waldron.

5 MR. WALDRON. I'm Jay Waldron.  
6 I'm the President of the Port of Portland  
7 Commission. I practice environmental law for  
8 Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt. And I've practiced  
9 environmental law in this region since 1974. I  
10 actually took the first environmental law course  
11 ever offered at the University of Virginia.

12 I want to -- First of all, I  
13 can't speak on behalf of the Corps. But I accept  
14 Mr. Jones' offer, and I'd be a happy to have  
15 lunch with you. And I'll call you next week.

16 Thank you for giving us the  
17 opportunity at the Port to comment on the draft  
18 Supplemental Feasibility Study and EIS for the  
19 Columbia River Channel Deepening project. This is  
20 obviously vitally important to both the economic --  
21 and the Port and I strongly believe the  
22 environmental health of this region. As President  
23 of the Port of Portland Commission, I have been  
24 closely involved in monitoring this project's  
25 process and its regulatory review for several years.

1 And prior to that, as a citizen interested in  
2 environmental issues, I've been following this for  
3 more than a decade.

4                                 With the completion of the  
5 biological opinion by the National Marine Fisheries  
6 Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the  
7 completion of the draft supplemental reports, I'm  
8 more convinced than ever, having read them, that  
9 this project can and should move forward in an  
10 economically and environmentally sound and  
11 responsible manner.

12                                 I believe it is the responsibility  
13 of the Port of Portland and our sister ports on the  
14 Columbia River to ensure that our region's people  
15 and businesses can succeed in the international  
16 market. We need this project -- I don't think  
17 that's been controverted -- to successfully do our  
18 job. This project benefits the economic health and  
19 vitality of our entire region.

20                                 The Columbia River system, as many  
21 of us know, exports more wheat than any other port  
22 area in the United States. And this is especially  
23 important now, as our food resources have become  
24 strategic resources in Asia. This area is the  
25 second largest grain exporting center in the world.

1 The Port of Portland has the ninth largest total  
2 tonnage and the fifteenth largest container  
3 operation in the United States. Every day, 40,000  
4 people in our region go to work because of maritime  
5 trade. And more importantly than that, every day,  
6 well over 100,000 children depend on maritime trade  
7 for their economic health, for their health care,  
8 for their ability to get an education. If there's  
9 one thing where the environment and the economy  
10 marry in this project, it's the affect on this  
11 region's economy and on the health of our children.

12                   The jobs and the business success  
13 that are directly tied to having cost-effective  
14 maritime access are the essence of this region.  
15 Oregon, for example, is the -- the -- among the  
16 United States -- among the 50 states -- the sixth  
17 largest in gross product dependent on trade. I  
18 believe Washington is second or third. This region  
19 was built, exists, prospers, and takes care of its  
20 children based on trade. Whether you're in Burns  
21 or in Lewiston -- One of the largest importers that  
22 we have is in Bend, Oregon, which imports logs from  
23 New Zealand, processes them, and sends them to  
24 Japan. We are a trade area.

25                   The future effectiveness of the

1 Columbia navigation channel is directly dependent on  
2 deepening it to 43 feet to accommodate the  
3 post-Panamax world. The supplemental report that  
4 you've prepared is a key part of the project's  
5 extensive environmental review, which is important  
6 to both mitigating unavoidable environmental impacts  
7 and to ensure that the project leaves the river  
8 better off than it was before the project starts.

9                   Achieving net environmental gains  
10 is a high standard for a project like this. But  
11 we believe at the Port that it's the right standard  
12 to apply. The estuary and the ecosystem of the  
13 Columbia River is also important to our children.  
14 And it can be protected and enhanced at the same  
15 time that this channel deepening project advances.

16                   An independent scientific panel  
17 convened last year to review Endangered Species Act  
18 questions -- The panel concluded the deepening  
19 project will have no measurable affect on listed  
20 salmon. The biological opinion from NMFS and the  
21 U.S. Fish & Wildlife service has made similar  
22 findings. As this supplemental report demonstrates,  
23 the benefit to cost ratio for this project remains  
24 strong.

25                   Even more importantly, northwest

1 businesses and northwest farms stand to gain major  
2 regional economic benefits from this project that  
3 unfortunately, the way the Federal law works, cannot  
4 be included in the Corps' analysis. It's not  
5 something you consider. But there's not a farmer  
6 in this state that isn't dependent on this project.

7 MS. BROOKS: I'm sorry, Jay.  
8 You're about out of time.

9 MR. WALDRON: Okay. Thank you.

10 MS. BROOKS: Uh-huh.

11 MR. WALDRON: We think that this  
12 project has exciting potential. We think it's  
13 going to be the lifeblood of the region's ports,  
14 the region's trade, and most importantly, the  
15 region's children. Thank you.

16 MS. BROOKS: David Moryc. Is that  
17 how you pronounce it?

18 MR. MORYC: Moryc.

19 MS. BROOKS: Moryc.

20 MR. MORYC: My name is David Moryc.  
21 I'm here representing American Rivers, a national  
22 river conservation organization. And just because I  
23 have serious concerns about this project, I want  
24 everyone here to know also that I support our  
25 region's children as well.

1                   As we all know, I think a lot of  
2 us here are familiar faces. And we're here to  
3 discuss the Portland District Corps of Engineers  
4 project. They're authorized to complete a project  
5 deepening the Columbia River navigation channel from  
6 40 to 43 feet.

7                   In today's testimony, I'd like to  
8 just focus on the need for a truly independent  
9 review of this project, both economically and  
10 environmentally. It's something that folks that I  
11 talked to think well, it's -- We're too far along  
12 in the process. It's too time-consuming. The fact  
13 of the matter is that many of us have been working  
14 on this project for years and have been calling for  
15 independent review of both the economics and the  
16 environmental impacts for years.

17                   And then I'll just go on to give  
18 a few quick examples of why this extra step is  
19 necessary. Since the original congressional  
20 authorization in 1989, there have been numerous  
21 economic and environmental concerns raised in  
22 relation to this navigation project. While the  
23 Corps has made attempt to investigate validity and  
24 accuracy of this economic and environmental analysis  
25 by trying to get input from the public, like we're

1 doing here tonight, conducting internally directed  
2 review processes like the one that you did earlier  
3 in the SEI process. And then next week, you'll be  
4 doing the economics. I think these attempts have  
5 continued to be insufficient. Unfortunately, there  
6 still remains significant economic and environmental  
7 concerns with the project.

8                   Nationwide, as many of you know,  
9 the Federal U.S. Corps' analysis and public faith  
10 in the reputation of its analytical capabilities has  
11 been marred over the last year and-a-half or so by  
12 revelations of faulty economic environmental analyses  
13 in project after project. Examples include the  
14 Delaware deepening project, the Mississippi  
15 navigational study, and others. According to the  
16 National Academy of Sciences report released just  
17 last week, that assessed the Corps of Engineers'  
18 methods, analysis and peer review. The Corps'  
19 analysis of its own proposed projects is inadequate.  
20 Independent -- And they also said that independent  
21 review of the projects -- other projects is  
22 necessary to be sure that the projects are based on  
23 valid economic environmental analysis.

24                   The upcoming -- Excuse me. As  
25 well intended as they may be, the methods used by





1 an independent review.

2                               Second, the Corps has not  
3 addressed many of the external costs to local  
4 communities. And one example under the preferred  
5 alternative, the much-discussed project to dump  
6 close to seven million cubic yards of dredge spoils  
7 in either the lower river just east of Astoria or  
8 in the deep water site would it destroy either  
9 lower water -- lower river fishery or bury prime  
10 crabbing habitat. The affect on the economy of  
11 these communities could be substantial. I think a  
12 -- a quantitative analysis of these -- of these  
13 adverse impacts must be conducted to fully  
14 understand the economic costs truly associated with  
15 the project.

16                               Third, the Corps' analysis  
17 neglects to answer key questions about the affects  
18 of this project on threatened and endangered salmon.  
19 The Corps' analysis relied on incomplete models to  
20 changes in the ecosystem of the Columbia River  
21 estuary, a critical area for salmonids.

22                               For example, the salinity model in  
23 the report on which the Corps relied is incomplete.  
24 Salinity is the mixing of fresh water and salt  
25 water in varying concentrations in the mouth of the

1 Columbia River that kill salmon in many ways. So  
2 accurately modeling changes in salinity to do the  
3 channel deepening is critical to understanding the  
4 affects of the project on these salmonids.

5                   In this case, the scientists who  
6 developed the key salinity model and test the  
7 affects of the projects on threatened and endangered  
8 salmon warn that the results, quote, "May be used  
9 to guide management decisions. But only if the  
10 model of uncertainty is further reduced." That  
11 quote was taken from an appendices in the Corps own  
12 biological assessment. He emphasized the word  
13 "only" in his text.

14                   Furthermore, the Corps' analysis  
15 focuses specifically on short-term impacts even  
16 though several scientists have noted that there may  
17 be significantly long-term impacts to salmon. We  
18 need to look at more than just a snapshot in time.  
19 We've been dredging this river for over 100 years.  
20 There's really just simply too much at stake --  
21 Federal and taxpayers' dollars, critical habitat for  
22 endangered species -- not to proceed with an  
23 independent review. Thank you.

24                   MS. BROOKS: Greg de Bruler.

25                   MR. de BRULER: Good evening. My

1 name's Greg de Bruler, and I'm a resident of  
2 Washington State. I've been here more than once.

3                   Tonight, I've heard some people  
4 speak about the ecosystem. And what I find kind of  
5 appalling is what they're talking about is not an  
6 ecosystem. They're talking about maybe a fish, but  
7 they aren't looking at the whole ecosystem. The  
8 ecosystem of the Columbia River goes well beyond  
9 salmon; goes well beyond salmon; lamprey -- every  
10 other species that's out there.

11                   If you think about what's going on  
12 in the Columbia River in the last 100 years, it's  
13 severely degraded. If you look at the study that  
14 was just done by the Columbia River Tribal Fish  
15 Commission with EPA, and you're a Native American  
16 fishing in the Columbia River, your risk of dying  
17 of a fatal cancer from eating sturgeon out of the  
18 Columbia River is about 1 in a 100. If you're a  
19 Native American eating fish out of the Columbia  
20 River, your risk of dying of a fatal cancer can be  
21 as high as 2 in 1,000 if you're eating salmon out  
22 of the Columbia River. But that's eating fish.

23                   And we're talking about dredging a  
24 river 106 miles long. And the Corps has said, "We  
25 took 23 grab samples." I mean, my business -- my

1 job -- I'm an environmental consultant. I live and  
2 breath looking at ecosystems. I've handled a lot,  
3 so I'm used to the Department of Energy and I'm  
4 used to the way that they worked with their models.  
5 And Hanford has developed some of the most  
6 intricate and sophisticated models in the world for  
7 dealing with their ground water and contamination  
8 (phonetic). But yet, their models are very, very  
9 insufficient to model what's really happening in the  
10 world.

11                                   You took 23 grab samples from the  
12 upper Columbia River. You come back and say in  
13 your literature for the public, "It's clean sand."  
14 This is the farthest thing from the truth. This  
15 isn't clean sand. Are you prepared to close down  
16 the clam shell -- the clam business -- or crabs --  
17 shut it down when you're dredging for the next two  
18 years because the crabs are going to be taking the  
19 contamination that you're releasing along the  
20 Columbia River? Are you prepared to look at the  
21 impacts that have occurred to the people that have  
22 lived off the Columbia River from where you're  
23 dredging to the mouth? Look at the cancer rates of  
24 those people? Are you prepared to look at what  
25 they're going to be inflicting by what they're

1 eating out of the river? Are you prepared to look  
2 at what the lamprey are up-taking? No.

3                   So you know, we're saying we're  
4 using good science, but we aren't. This gentleman  
5 from American River stands up here and talks about  
6 independent science. I agree with him. We -- We  
7 need independence in this thing. When the National  
8 Academy of Science comes out and says, "Oh, the  
9 Corps -- We didn't give you a very good rating for  
10 the way you do your analysis", I have to agree.

11                   The Corps dredged Port of  
12 Kennewick and Port of Pasco a few years ago. And  
13 I called the Corps up and asked them what did they  
14 sample for it? And they said, "Oh, the normal  
15 contaminants of heavy metals." I said, "Oh. You  
16 didn't check for pesticides or radio isotopes from  
17 Hanford?" "Oh. No, we didn't." You're kidding me.  
18 So finally, we got the State of Washington to come  
19 out; shot rock on the islands on the Snake River.  
20 And they found radiation. So they had to post  
21 (phonetic) the island.

22                   So I am sitting here saying I  
23 hear 18 million dollars a year economic benefit. I  
24 hear we're here for the children. We're going to  
25 have a 100,000 people that benefit on this. But

1 yet, I have a good friend of mine who's a pilot  
2 who's been working on the Columbia River for the  
3 last 25 years. I said, "What do you think about  
4 this thing?" He says, "Oh, take it or leave it.  
5 It's not going to make that big a difference. We  
6 aren't going to get that many more ships in here.  
7 You look at what the world trade is doing", he  
8 says, "Might make a difference; might not."

9                               So I've heard and I've listened to  
10 the people of the various communities up and down  
11 the river, and I've actually heard a very harsh  
12 critic of the process has said, "You know, if they  
13 would just work with us, we could put together a  
14 plan that makes sense. And you might even be able  
15 to get to dredge if you work with the people. And  
16 you'd mitigate all the problems that are down  
17 there." You know, we think of the Port of  
18 Portland. We think of shipping; great. But what  
19 about the small communities? What about the small  
20 fishermen? What about the small factories? What  
21 about the ecosystem?

22                               And the ecosystem is everything  
23 that lives in the Columbia River. So when you say  
24 you're protecting the ecosystem, you aren't. You're  
25 trashing it. You're trashing the food chain for a

1 whole bunch of species that you don't even think  
2 about because they, quote, "aren't endangered or  
3 aren't listed or protected."

4                                   And so I think it's the year  
5 2002, and I think we need to learn from our  
6 science. We need to go back and really do a good  
7 job. Let's do it right. Let's get the independent  
8 analysis that we need. But let's don't do it  
9 half-baked. Let's get the people in the room that  
10 have the concerns. Let's go step by step process  
11 and alleviate these pains and suffering that's going  
12 on and address these shortcomings. And please  
13 don't come back and say, "Oh, our biological  
14 opinion says we aren't going to trash the  
15 ecosystem", because you are. It's not about  
16 salmon. It's about the Columbia River. I  
17 appreciate this opportunity. Thank you.

18                                   MS. BROOKS: Chris Hatzi.

19                                   MR. HATZI: Good evening. My name  
20 is Chris Hatzi. I'm President of Columbia River  
21 Port Rejuvenation, an organization of regional  
22 business, business associations, and citizens that  
23 are committed to improving the international market  
24 access for the region. Thank you for providing me  
25 an opportunity to publicly -- on -- for public

1 comment on the draft supplemental feasibility report  
2 in the area of the Columbia River channel deepening  
3 project, which is vitally important to the economic  
4 and vital health of our region.

5                   With the completion of the  
6 biological opinion and the completion of the draft  
7 supplemental report, it is clear that this product  
8 can and must move forward in an economically and  
9 environmentally responsible manner.

10                   Channel deepening is vitally  
11 important to our economy. Effective and efficient  
12 maritime transportation is vital to sustaining and  
13 strengthening our region's trade-based economy;  
14 especially during these difficult economic times.  
15 Deepening the Columbia River navigational channel is  
16 critical to maintaining maritime commerce into  
17 sustaining businesses, farms, and jobs in our  
18 region.

19                   This project will ensure the  
20 Columbia River can accommodate the larger  
21 fuel-efficient vessels that increasingly dominate the  
22 world fleet. This broad-based -- This project has  
23 broad-based support from businesses, labor unions,  
24 farmers, ports and communities throughout the  
25 northwest from the Tri-Cities to Lewiston to Klamath



1 Falls.

2                                   Over 40,000 local family wage jobs  
3 are dependent on -- and another 59,000 northwest  
4 jobs are influenced by Columbia River maritime.  
5 Due largely to delays in channel deepening,  
6 longshore job losses on the Columbia River in the  
7 last five years have taken 16 million dollars  
8 annually out of the economy. With the northwest  
9 leading the nation in unemployment, we cannot afford  
10 to lose anymore jobs. Vitality of these jobs and  
11 businesses require access to cost-effective maritime  
12 transportation. The future effectiveness of Columbia  
13 River navigation is directly dependent on deepening  
14 the channel from 40 to 43 feet to maintain the  
15 vitality of this transportation route and our  
16 region's trade-based economy.

17                                   As the supplemental report  
18 explains, the benefit to cost ratio for this  
19 project remains strong. Even more importantly,  
20 northwest businesses and farmers obtain major  
21 regional economic benefits from this project that  
22 cannot be included in the Corps' analysis. The  
23 economic benefits are largely diverse, rural and  
24 urban, east and west, Oregon, Washington, and  
25 Idaho; across our entire region. Without sufficient

1 market access, rates from the Columbia River have  
2 increased making some northwest commodities  
3 uncompetitive in most international markets. Columbia  
4 River maritime commerce provides 208 million dollars  
5 in state and local taxes that benefit communities  
6 throughout our region.

7 I will leave the environmental  
8 debate to the experts. However, I would urge you  
9 to consider the environmental impacts of not  
10 dredging: The ships can be the most  
11 environmentally friendly method of moving goods  
12 between two points. By having sufficient ocean  
13 carrier service in the Columbia River, there will  
14 be less need to truck cargo between the Columbia  
15 River ports and California and Puget Sound. Fewer  
16 trucks mean less road wear and lower truck  
17 emissions.

18 The Columbia River channel project  
19 will benefit both our economy and our environment.  
20 I urge you to finalize the supplemental report and  
21 grant the pending regulatory permits and approvals  
22 to move this important project to completion.

23 MS. BROOKS: Larry Snyder.

24 MR. SNYDER: My name is Larry  
25 Snyder. I'm -- S-N-Y-D-E-R. I'm President of the

1 Vancouver Wildlife League. We're a group of  
2 hunters, fishermen, and conservationists over 200  
3 strong. We've been in existence since 1929. And my  
4 membership looks at this project as very  
5 disquieting. Many of them have been recreating,  
6 hunting and fishing on the Columbia River for more  
7 than 60 years. And they knew what it was, and  
8 they are concerned about what it's going to be --  
9 or going to become.

10                   They look at it in several  
11 different ways: Number one, the biggest example of  
12 government pork (phonetic) that they can remember.  
13 Number two, they look at this as another example of  
14 what occurred at Rice Island. They look at the  
15 decline in their fishing and hunting opportunities,  
16 and they think it will continue to be that way, and  
17 this project won't help it a bit. They look at  
18 this as the old Chinese proverb: Death by a  
19 thousand cuts. The Columbia River, that is.

20                   Our main concern is what you're  
21 going to do with the dredge spoils. We've seen  
22 examples of that in the past, where sloughs have  
23 been totally covered, and areas that were wetlands  
24 are now 10 feet high with sand and various other  
25 dredge spoils.

1                   Our primary concern is the  
2 Vancouver low lake -- lake lowlands. And of  
3 course, we have to take that up with the Port of  
4 Vancouver, which is one of the sponsors of this  
5 project. 'Cause they're going to fill 500 acres  
6 south of the Flushing Channel for heavy industry.  
7 And then they want to take the area north of the  
8 Flushing Channel and put light industry and fill  
9 that too. So this project, if it is successful in  
10 getting off the ground, will result in a  
11 degradation of the Vancouver Lake Lowland.

12                   The Vancouver Wildlife League has  
13 spent years attempting to improve the habitat for  
14 migratory waterfowl and upland game. And this will  
15 be the end-all of that particular project that  
16 we've put so much time and energy into. That area  
17 north of the Flushing Channel should not get one  
18 pound of sand. Thank you very much.

19                   MS. BROOKS: Cyndy de Bruler.

20                   MS. de BRULER: Good evening.  
21 Cyndy de Bruler. I'm representing Columbia  
22 RiverKeeper, a nonprofit environmental group that  
23 works to restore and protect the water quality of  
24 the Columbia River. And I come tonight with some  
25 concerns that I would like to express.

1                               First of all, I'm very  
2 disappointed in the public process around this  
3 meeting. We found out about this less than two  
4 weeks ago. And that's not sufficient time for the  
5 public process to adequately involve citizens. That  
6 doesn't give us time to send out a newsletter to  
7 inform our 700 paid members in the Portland area or  
8 700 members in the Hood River area or members in  
9 the Astoria area of their opportunity to comment.  
10 And I think that you see directly the results of  
11 that in an empty room here tonight, other than many  
12 agency people. So much more outreach and public  
13 involvement needs to be around this process if  
14 you're going to get it to move forward.

15                               Secondly, we're not convinced by  
16 this proposal, as written, that it would be  
17 economically or environmentally sound or beneficial  
18 to the Columbia River. The restoration efforts  
19 that you mentioned in detail need to be more deeply  
20 analyzed. They fail to consider local impacts to  
21 fishermen and the environment; especially in the  
22 mouth of the river. You've heard this before, so I  
23 don't think there's any reason to go into detail.

24                               The restoration components must be  
25 guided by the lower river citizens and organizations

1 like CREST and the local watershed organizations --  
2 and they have just not been consulted in this  
3 process -- to assure real restoration instead of  
4 just using the term "restoration" for what is  
5 really sediment dumps.

6                   Environmental concerns of our  
7 organization include impacts to salmon that have not  
8 adequately been addressed and impacts to other fish  
9 and wildlife in the ecosystem which have been  
10 totally ignored. In particular, concerns about  
11 inadequate windows for salmon migration. In the  
12 document -- the biological opinion -- National  
13 Marine Fisheries has stated that the project would,  
14 quote, "adversely impact essential fish habitat",  
15 end of quote, for salmon. So to move forward and  
16 just ignore those type of conclusions is unwise.

17                   The proposed ocean dumping of 14  
18 square miles is bound to have an adverse affect on  
19 Dungeness crab. We sympathize with the crab  
20 fishermen, but we also feel for the crab. And I  
21 don't want this to be a process where we're  
22 deciding between salmon and crab. And that's kind  
23 of what it's come down to.

24                   Another environmental concern is  
25 the contamination issue. Twenty-three grab samples

1 do not adequately address 106 river miles. In the  
2 bi-state water quality study, every sediment sample  
3 taken showed essences (phonetic) of dioxin. It's  
4 there in the river. We know it. And just saying  
5 that this entire dredged channel is coarse sand  
6 does not avoid the issue. If this project moves  
7 forward, there must be diligent ongoing testing of  
8 the dredge materials. And it must be to detection  
9 levels for things like dioxin that are meaningful.  
10 And there has to be an action plan in place if  
11 contaminants are found to protect fish and wildlife  
12 and human health.

13                                 Finally, I agree entirely with  
14 American Rivers' proposal for an independent review.  
15 I think that this is the only way that this project  
16 can move forward. The review -- The process that  
17 has happened today is not independent, and the  
18 stakeholders do not see it as such. There's a  
19 reason for that. Citizens must be more involved in  
20 the process as it moves forward. Thank you very  
21 much for being here tonight and the opportunity to  
22 comment.

23                                 MS. BROOKS: Was there anyone else  
24 in the room who didn't have the opportunity to sign  
25 up to speak that would like to now? Could you

1 come forward and -- and give your name?

2 MR. WELLS: My name's Charles  
3 Wells. My family has property on the river. But  
4 the other thing I wanted to address -- I live in  
5 Portland also, so I have an interest in that  
6 aspect. But I have found that virtually the ports  
7 are all public sponsored. And it's like each of  
8 these port areas is trying to build their area  
9 greater. And it's all done with taxpayer dollars.  
10 So it's like this port versus this port versus this  
11 port, and it's taxpayers' dollars in each of them  
12 on this competition.

13 My cost to bring a container from  
14 Seattle as opposed to bringing it in from Portland  
15 is about \$150 difference. It's not that great.  
16 And I can actually negotiate that out with my -- my  
17 vender on the other end. So as far as -- I mean,  
18 I don't see where there's this huge economic  
19 incentive that everybody's talking about that's  
20 going to actually happen. But I -- but when I'm  
21 there on the river, and I -- there's these  
22 freighters coming by -- And especially now, when  
23 you're talking about the months where the river's  
24 shallower -- there's these huge surges. And  
25 there's a -- like -- the cove; Quinn's Cove. All



1 of a sudden, it will go dry. Then this water will  
2 come in and turns into rapids. And what was calm,  
3 clear water will turn into silt. And you'll see  
4 that the fish that were there are all of a sudden  
5 breathing -- They're breathing mud. And you know  
6 that has an affect on them. You'll see small  
7 ones being thrown off to the side. And it happens  
8 every time a large freighter comes in.

9                                   And at night -- Because the Coast  
10 Guard doesn't really enforce the speeds of these  
11 freighters, you'll have surges -- Some nights, it'll  
12 just be amazing. The boats are slamming around.  
13 The houseboats are moving around. People walking  
14 down the dock -- "What's happening here?" I said,  
15 "This is the freighters coming by." And it's going  
16 to be worse with larger freighters. It's going to  
17 be worse.

18                                   I had friends that -- They were  
19 coming in to shore over on Caterpillar Island. And  
20 all of a sudden, their boat just slammed high on  
21 the beach. They had to get many other people to get  
22 their boat off the beach. There's a danger that  
23 happens with the surges. And it has an impact on  
24 there.

25                                   The other thing is now the Corps

1 wants to go into new things. They have destroyed  
2 so many areas they pumped in. This -- this cove  
3 at one time -- I think this used to be Hay's  
4 Island (phonetic). And you could take a boat  
5 around Hay's Island. Like the joke in the  
6 community -- you realize this is Frenchman's Bar.  
7 The reality is there is no Frenchman's Bar. There  
8 used to be a sand bar. And you'd come in the back  
9 side and go around Hay's Island. And that was a  
10 sand bar. But the Corps filled it in. So now,  
11 it's just a section of beach. So the next time  
12 you see Frenchman's Bar, remember there's no bar  
13 there anymore. It's gone. The Corps destroyed it;  
14 destroyed habitat; the otters in the fishermen's  
15 slough. The beavers that are in the slough. All  
16 of the game birds that are in the slough. They  
17 cannot use that. They can't use the dirt. So  
18 that's just lost habitat.

19                                   As far as the river temperature --  
20 Because it would be through an area that's  
21 shallower. That's no longer protected. So it's a  
22 loss of habitat; damages by the huge surges that  
23 are going to be larger yet. And the question is  
24 who does it really benefit? It benefits  
25 bureaucrats that want to have a larger King Dome;

1 maybe larger than this port or larger than that  
2 port. Thank you.

3 MS. BROOKS: Anyone else? I'd like  
4 to mention one last thing -- Yes? John Fratt?  
5 Sure.

6 MR. FRATT: My name is John Fratt.  
7 I live at 5208 Deboyce (phonetic) here in  
8 Vancouver, Washington. Welcome to Vancouver. I  
9 work for the Port of Vancouver. I was with the  
10 group that started the reconnaissance to the  
11 reconnaissance study. I followed this project  
12 very closely.

13 I commend the Corps in its review  
14 and the excellent work that was done in reviewing  
15 the policies and the development of the scientific  
16 committee. I think you've gone out of your way to  
17 prove that this is a project that can be done.  
18 We're talking about three feet on an already  
19 existing 40-foot channel. It is not as though  
20 we're starting over again. The restoration projects  
21 that are envisioned in this plan are excellent and  
22 will do exactly that: They will restore habitat.

23 Oftentimes, in the port industry,  
24 we go and say, "All right; mitigation. It's just a  
25 cost." Now, in the port industry, we're talking

1 about restoration. And we understand that that's  
2 our responsibility. I thank you very much for your  
3 work, and I thank you for coming to Vancouver,  
4 Washington to take this hearing today. Thank you.

5 MR. HUNT: My name is Dave Hunt,  
6 and I serve as Executive Director of the Columbia  
7 River Channel Coalition. It's a coalition of ports  
8 and businesses and labor unions and agricultural  
9 interests, economic development transportation from  
10 throughout the region who disagree on a lot of  
11 things. But when it comes to this project, we very  
12 much see the special value and the unique nature  
13 of this project and the benefits it will have for  
14 our region, both economically and environmentally.

15 I really want to commend the Corps  
16 and the other agencies you've worked with for  
17 several things: One, for doing this series of  
18 public hearings and taking evenings and long drives  
19 during the next several weeks and months out of  
20 your schedule. I think that's important so you can  
21 hear what's on my mind (phonetic) -- of your  
22 constituency.

23 For the -- For both the SEI  
24 process, which brought independent scientists to  
25 look at the environmental aspects, as well as for

1 the expert panel that's going to be looking at the  
2 benefit cost analysis, you are really going above  
3 and beyond any requirements that you have. And  
4 you're really setting the pace for the rest of the  
5 nation.

6                   So despite some other comments  
7 that have been made, I really want to commend you  
8 all for going above and beyond, in terms of opening  
9 yourselves up, not knowing what the SEI panel will  
10 do -- benefit/cost panel may say -- but being  
11 willing to subject this project to that additional  
12 review.

13                   I especially for your -- want to  
14 commend you for your commitment to work diligently  
15 at either dramatically reducing or potentially even  
16 eliminating ocean disposal. As we have done our  
17 work around the region, that's been a key concern  
18 that's come up. Both from crab fishermen who are  
19 concerned about habitat, but also from those who  
20 want to keep beaches nourished on the Oregon Coast.

21                   And so that whole effort to keep  
22 sand in the systems, not -- to not give it away to  
23 deep water disposal, and to not subject it to  
24 potential impacts on the crab habitat. I know it  
25 has been a difficult effort to get it there, and I

1 want to commend you for that.

2                               As I read the supplemental  
3 feasibility report and EIS, several things become  
4 clear to me: One, that there are huge regional  
5 economic benefits; not just in Portland, Vancouver,  
6 Kalama, Longview, or St. Helens, but throughout the  
7 entire region. That -- Also, it's clear that there  
8 are significant environmental -- both restoration --  
9 both mitigation efforts that will actually deal with  
10 unintended impacts -- unavoidable impacts -- but  
11 also the ecosystem restoration efforts, which I  
12 think so many of us fail to recognize go above and  
13 beyond the actual impacts of this project. That's  
14 very clear in the supplemental report.

15                               It's also really clear the  
16 benefits are rural and urban throughout the entire  
17 region. That, I think, makes the project unique.  
18 It's clear the area to be dredged is small -- only  
19 a small percentage of the river between Astoria and  
20 Vancouver -- as I've seen the segments, only about  
21 three and-a-half percent of that -- of that river  
22 surface, which is pretty significant. It's also  
23 clear those areas are going to be the same areas  
24 where dredging is already occurring. We're not  
25 comparing the river when Lewis and Clark were here

1 to what it would be in a deeper channel. We're  
2 comparing the channel today to a deeper channel.

3                   A comment was made earlier that  
4 the Columbia River's degraded over the last 100  
5 years. I'd agree with that statement. I think most  
6 of us probably would. The question for us now, I  
7 think, is are we going to do something about that  
8 by doing the kind of ecosystem restoration measures  
9 that are included in this project and other  
10 measures that are part of other projects, or are we  
11 going to not do that? Are we going to do it in a  
12 way that really damages our economy or do it in a  
13 way that enhances our environment and economy at  
14 the same time?

15                   I think the coalition strongly  
16 supports efforts to do both. To have the  
17 environment -- the economic process we need as a  
18 region, certainly, during these difficult economic  
19 periods, as well as the environmental progress  
20 that's really called for based on history of the  
21 river. I think it's clear -- If you think about  
22 projects of any sort in our region, I cannot think  
23 of another single project that has such dramatic  
24 positive economic benefits on the region. And  
25 again, it's not just here throughout our entire

1 region that it has such major benefits, in terms of  
2 job reconstitution and creation that makes such  
3 significant progress in terms of -- and  
4 environmental progress to deal with the channel in  
5 the Columbia River. It really brings our region  
6 together.

7                               Whether you're looking at the  
8 channel coalition or congressional delegation or  
9 state legislators for Oregon and Washington or all  
10 of the groups throughout the entire region who have  
11 come together, tens of thousands of people came  
12 together and said, "This is critically needed.  
13 This makes sense."

14                              This one project is uniting our  
15 region in a way that I think any other project that  
16 -- that it has or will. And so I just want to  
17 commend you for your progress, to urge you to hang  
18 in there despite the difficult challenges ahead, and  
19 continue to make the kind of progress that will  
20 bring us both economic progress and environmental  
21 progress.

22                              MR. BARTON: My name is Tom Barton.  
23 I live in Hazel Dell, Washington, which is just  
24 north of Vancouver. One of the items I've not  
25 heard mentioned here regarding the environmental



1 protection is the issue of mosquito control. As  
2 you know, the Columbia River has historically been  
3 associated with mosquitos. And there are a lot of  
4 people that live here and a lot of people that  
5 lived here before the white man came. And I am  
6 told -- and -- historically that most of the native  
7 population that lived on Sauvie Island died from  
8 malaria within a couple of years. It's documented  
9 in the Hudson Bay Company's hospital -- the  
10 patients with malaria who were trappers and local  
11 people in the area.

12                               So the Columbia River makes a  
13 sharp turn at Portland and heads north. It makes  
14 another sharp turn and heads west. Where it turns,  
15 it floods. And when it floods, it makes a habitat  
16 that's ideal for mosquitos to breed. And I haven't  
17 heard one mention of mosquito control. And I see  
18 this document here, an Environmental Protection Fact  
19 Sheet. And it goes into birds and fish, but it  
20 does not mention mosquitos. And mosquitos are a  
21 hazard to people and to animals.

22                               Malaria is one thing. But now,  
23 we are also having people's health to consider with  
24 the West Nile Virus being predicted to be on the  
25 west coast as similar as it is on the east coast.

1 And this is with the -- with the birds. Primarily  
2 the crow was very -- and the species similar to the  
3 crow are very susceptible to West Nile Virus.

4                   So I would like to see some  
5 priority be given to the dredge spoils that would  
6 place some of these spoils in areas that are high  
7 habitat for mosquitos and not just disposed out  
8 into the ocean.

9                   And I think that these -- The  
10 people who live here, even though they are -- maybe  
11 to some are not as important as fish -- I think  
12 the people that live here have some priority too.  
13 And one of them is to be able to live and to enjoy  
14 their livelihood without the nuisance of mosquitos,  
15 as well as the impact on their health.

16                   So if you could consider this in  
17 your dredging -- I was surprised to find -- I  
18 thought the dredging was going to include three  
19 feet off the top through the whole length of this  
20 corridor. And my understanding is that it's just  
21 the top -- parts of three feet. The -- the points  
22 that are going to be leveled off to make it  
23 navigable to larger ships. And of course, this will  
24 be economically beneficial. But I would like to see  
25 consideration be given for the spoils of the

1 dredging to fill areas that are problem breeders  
2 for mosquitos that cause problems for the people  
3 who live here. And they also -- much to people  
4 who love animals, they create a great deal of  
5 problems for animals as well. Thank you.

6 MS. BROOKS: Is there anyone else?  
7 I'd like to mention one point that I left off when  
8 I -- I did my opening remarks; that the response --  
9 There will be responses to your testimony. And the  
10 Corps will do that after all of the hearings are  
11 complete in their review process. So I wanted to  
12 make mention of that.

13 So with that, I'll turn it back  
14 over to you.

15 COL. HOBERNICHT: Again, thanks for  
16 coming. I appreciate you all taking time out of  
17 your busy schedules to come and let us know what  
18 your thoughts are on this project. So with that,  
19 this ends the evening. Thank you.

20 (Discussion held off the record.)

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