



The following media release summarizes key results of a recent public opinion survey done by Davis, Hibbitts and Midghall, Inc., The survey of 700 registered voters in Washington, Oregon and Idaho was conducted in February 2009, and measured Pacific Northwest attitudes towards salmon, energy and the hydro as a renewable resource.

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### **New poll shows Pacific Northwest voters oppose breaching Snake River dams by wide margin**

Two-thirds of voters in the Pacific Northwest oppose breaching dams on the lower Snake River, viewing it as an extreme measure to improve salmon runs on the Columbia and Snake Rivers.

"Dam removal would be economically devastating to the Northwest's energy picture and use of the rivers as an economic highway" said Terry Flores, executive director of Northwest RiverPartners. "It also runs completely counter to the goal of reducing carbon emissions and would pose a serious setback to meeting the reduction targets set by the states", she added.

"The most dramatic impact would be eliminating 1,100 megawatts of clean hydroelectric power from the region - enough to power a city the size of Seattle - combined with sharp increases in electric rates that will further hurt the Northwest's economy already reeling from job losses," Flores said.

Two-thirds of citizens surveyed recognized that fossil fuels contributing to climate change would replace the energy if the clean and renewable dams were removed.

An overwhelming majority - 88% - identified hydro as renewable - similar to wind and solar resources. And 69% acknowledged that hydro is more reliable than wind because no electricity is generated when the wind doesn't blow. More than two-thirds recognize that hydro does not contribute to global warming.

"The public really 'gets it', Flores noted, "and it is critical that our legislators and policy-makers understand how highly valued hydro is so they can incorporate that into their energy and climate change policies." Citizens showed overwhelming support - 79% - for states and the U.S. Congress to declare hydro as a renewable resource.

"Given that current efforts to improve salmon runs are paying off, extreme and economically damaging moves like removal of Snake River dams should not even be on the table for discussion," Flores said.

Flores noted that the poll results are consistent with polling since 2005 and reflect the high awareness in the region of the importance of hydroelectric power with 93% describing electricity production as an essential or important use of the river.

*Northwest RiverPartners is a partnership of individuals and businesses that supports the region's working rivers and salmon recovery policies based on sound science.*