



NOAA NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator, provided the following statement following a federal court hearing on the on the Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion.

Statement by Dr. Lubchenco on the Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion

November 23, 2009

Our goal – the goal of the biological opinion – and the whole reason for this hearing – is to protect the fish, to avoid jeopardy, and to put them on a road to recovery. And the next step is to complete and implement the recovery plans.



Sockeye salmon

There is one thing to keep in mind amid all of the litigation we have seen over the past several years. At the end of the day, this is about the fish.

To do this, we have to follow the science and the law. There is no equivocation about that.

Right now we have an extraordinary window of opportunity with a confluence of natural, policy and political events. We have record and near-record returns of some salmon. We have critical improvements to the dams, and restoration of hundreds of miles of habitat. And we have unprecedented regional support for our efforts, with three states and six Tribes in agreement that this comprehensive approach will work. We wouldn't be at this point without the Judge's leadership bringing us together.

The window of opportunity we have now may not remain open. While not all stakeholders agree, we continue to be hopeful we can seize this opportunity so we can get to work on implementing measures to protect this iconic species.



Chinook salmon

The Administration hopes we can bring a decade of litigation to a close. We think it is appropriate to focus our resources on fish protections and habitat restoration. We invite all parties to join us in implementing this BiOp and its Adaptive Management Implementation Plan, and in aggressive recovery actions for our entire Columbia ecosystem.

The Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion and related documents are available [online](#)