

**2024 01 28 WSDCCRES1027 adopted ECC Resolution
Support Lower Snake River Rail Development**

WHEREAS the Washington State Democratic Central Committee agrees with the urgent need to replace benefits currently provided by the Lower Snake River (LSR) dams, consistent with the Washington State Democratic Party 2022 Platform (1) and the Lower Snake River Dams Benefit Replacement Report from Governor Inslee and Senator Murray, including investments in alternative transportation infrastructure to protect farmers, and assist in recovery of salmon that are on the brink of extinction and essential to the culture and wellbeing of Tribal Nations (2)(3); and

WHEREAS competitive options are needed for shipping through investments in shortline rail infrastructure to enable interconnectivity between the mainline railroads and the short line network in the LSR area, to provide alternatives to shipping by barge and truck, resilience against climate events or supply chain events and other threats (4); and

WHEREAS threats to shipping by barge could include temporary or permanent interruption of barge service due to instances of lock failures, extended maintenance, spill/drawdown, dredging, treaty obligation, litigation or dam breaching or removal, and preparation for these potentialities are urgently needed, including contingency measures to protect farmers; and

WHEREAS an improved shortline rail shipping network in the region reduces roadway accidents, wear and tear on roads from trucking (5), toxic particulate runoff from truck tires (6), and emissions from trucks (7); and

WHEREAS the Washington State Transportation Budget for the 2023-2025 biennium funds studies of the potential for rail improvements in the region (8); however, the three year period of performance is too long considering the urgency to protect and recover salmon species;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washington State Democratic Central Committee (WSDCC) supports expanded and improved rail service in the LSR region, to provide shipping options to replace current transportation services of the Lower Snake River dams, and resilience for farmers against other risks, and to proactively support the survival and renewal of salmon species that are foundational to the culture and well being of Tribal Nations; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the WSDCC ask the Washington State Legislature to authorize and appropriate funding for projects that can be implemented in the 2025-2027 biennium, including measures to protect farmers while the shortline network is being implemented, with timely applications made for all

available federal grants, and a program completion deadline set for no later than Dec. 31, 2028; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to the Governor of the State of Washington, the Washington Democratic Congressional Delegation, the Washington State House and Senate Democrats, and Joint Transportation Executive Committee.

References:

1. Washington [State Democratic Party Platform \(2022\)](https://www.wa-democrats.org/) <https://www.wa-democrats.org/> Lines 694-698
2. Gov. Jay Inslee and U.S. Senator Patty Murray of Washington State Lower Snake River Dams: Benefit Replacement Report, Ch. 5
https://governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-11/LSRD%20Benefit%20Replacement%20Final%20Report_August%202022.pdf
3. Salmon Status in Washington, State of Salmon in Watersheds (2022?):
<https://stateofsalmon.wa.gov/executive-summary/salmon-status/>
4. [Threats and Uncertainties Regarding Future Barging of Grain on the Lower Snake River](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bB64pZGtBC3BsMiX34PVyHsUnCN76R/view?usp=drive_link), Linwood Laughy, Sept. 28, 2023
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bB64pZGtBC3BsMiX34PVyHsUnCN76R/view?usp=drive_link
5. Truck tire particulates: Shipping by truck - roadway wear:
The Five Most Blatant Myths about Freight Transportation on the Lower Snake River (2013): <https://www.wildsalmon.org/images/factsheets-and-reports/2013-Five-Myths-lower-Snake-waterway.pdf>
6. Fishermen Sue Tire Manufacturers Over Toxic Chemicals They Say Are Harming Salmon And Trout. Forbes Nov 8, 2023, Mary Whitfill Roeloffs, Forbes Staff
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/maryroeloffs/2023/11/08/fishermen-sue-tire-manufacturers-over-toxic-chemicals-they-say-are-harming-salmon-and-trout/?sh=46791b9b1ca7>;
7. Reduced truck emissions: Association of American Railroads, Freight and Climate Change, Dec 2023 <https://www.aar.org/issue/freight-rail-climate-change/>
8. Engrossed Substitute HB 1125 as passed by the Washington State Legislature, Transportation Budget 2023-2025 Session Law: 217 (11a) p. 60, and Section 204 (8) p.18: <https://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2023-24/Pdf/Amendments/House/1125-S.E.%20AMC%20CONF%20S3376.1.pdf>