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Idaho Water Resource Board passes resolution opposing fish-passage for salmon, steelhead above Hells Canyon complex

BOISE - (Feb. 7, 2017) – Citing Idaho law and the State Water Plan, the Idaho Water Resource Board unanimously approved a resolution Monday opposing additional fish-passage requirements on the relicensing of the Hells Canyon Dam complex.

The board’s action is consistent with the position of Idaho Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter.

“Policy 2B of the State Water Plan states that ‘any reintroduction or introduction of federally listed species or other aquatic species without state consultation and approval is against the policy of the state of Idaho,’” the resolution said.

In addition, “the introduction of federally listed species without state consultation and approval is against the public policy under Idaho Code 67-818(5),” the resolution said.

Oregon raised the fish-passage issue as Idaho Power sought a Clean Water Act certification as part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s (FERC) conditions for relicensing the Hells Canyon complex. The Idaho Power Company has been working on relicensing the Hells Canyon complex for more than 10 years. Snake River Chinook salmon and steelhead have been protected under the federal Endangered Species Act since the 1990s.

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