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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8023

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State of Washington                      53rd Legislature                      1993 Regular Session

By Senators Loveland and Hochstatter

Read first time 03/04/93. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources.

1            TO THE HONORABLE BILL CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND  
2 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF  
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

5            We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of  
6 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully  
7 represent and petition as follows:

8            WHEREAS, In 1988 Congress asked the Secretary of the Interior to  
9 study alternative means of protecting the Hanford Reach, that fifty-one  
10 mile segment of the Columbia River stretching north from the Tri-Cities  
11 in Eastern Washington; and

12            WHEREAS, In June of 1992, the National Parks Service issued a draft  
13 environmental impact statement, the preferred alternative  
14 recommendation of which is that Congress designate the Hanford Reach  
15 and surrounding one hundred two thousand acres as a national wild and  
16 scenic river and national wildlife refuge; and

17            WHEREAS, The United States government happens to now own  
18 approximately ninety thousand of the surrounding one hundred two  
19 thousand acres; and

20            WHEREAS, The United States government took said portion during  
21 World War II, when it hurriedly, sterilely displaced American farmers

1 from their land to accommodate the government's production of nuclear  
2 weaponry; and

3 WHEREAS, The people of the region have maintained, more than mere  
4 hope, the expectation that their patriotism would be rewarded not with  
5 permanent federal ownership of this rich farmland, following its  
6 nuclear-related defense or energy utility, but that the land would be  
7 returned to private agricultural production; and

8 WHEREAS, Your Memorialists fully recognize the value of the Reach  
9 as a spawning habitat for one hundred thousand Chinook Salmon, a  
10 cultural resource of immeasurable importance, an environment for a  
11 great diversity of plants and animals including threatened species, and  
12 a recreational destination for salmon and steelhead anglers; and

13 WHEREAS, Although said attributes must unquestionably be preserved  
14 and protected, they already are and will continue to be preserved and  
15 protected under an existing regime of federal laws and  
16 intergovernmental agreements; and

17 WHEREAS, Said laws and agreements importantly also take into  
18 account the region's economy, its energy needs, and its local  
19 governmental integrity, and include: The Northwest Power Act which  
20 creates the Northwest Power Planning Council, which was directed to  
21 craft an energy plan that protects wildlife and realizes energy needs  
22 of a hydroelectric dependent region; and the Vernita Bar Agreement on  
23 river flows that protects the archaeological sites, the diverse plant  
24 and animal species, and over ninety-nine percent of the spawning  
25 Chinook Salmon in the Reach; and

26 WHEREAS, As such an additional federal governmental overlay would  
27 not only be redundant and therefore repugnant to the independent local  
28 populations, but would also pose a risk that the lives of the locals  
29 could be impacted in a more tangible way: That is, because the  
30 National Park Service is duty-bound to uphold but the environmental  
31 side of the heretofore carefully balanced approach to protecting the  
32 Reach, the Region is gravely concerned that control by the Park Service  
33 might leave forsaken the region's economic and energy needs; and

34 WHEREAS, The economic prospect that the federally owned portion may  
35 in the future again sustain private agriculture would be effectively  
36 erased forever should the National Park Service recommended  
37 designations occur;

38 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that for all  
39 the above reasons, Congress refrain from passing legislation

1 designating the Hanford Reach area of the Columbia River a national  
2 wild and scenic river or a national wildlife refuge, and return to  
3 private ownership that federally owned land that may, in balance with  
4 water availability and environmental protection, sustain agricultural  
5 production.

6 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
7 transmitted to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United  
8 States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the  
9 House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of  
10 Washington.

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