



**Testimony of Ted Case
Executive Director of the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association
April 16, 2015
House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use, and Water
Public Hearing on HJM 15**

Good afternoon Chair Clem and members of the Committee. For the record, I am Ted Case, Executive Director of the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association (ORECA).

ORECA represents the state's 18 not-for-profit electric cooperatives that serve 206,000 meters, 65 percent of the land mass of Oregon and 11 percent of the population with more than 30,000 miles of transmission and distribution lines.

I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony on House Joint Memorial 15, urging the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide a preliminary statement of feasibility for temporarily lowering the reservoir behind The Dalles Dam to reveal Celilo Falls. While Oregon's electric cooperatives are sensitive to the history of Celilo Falls as an ancient traditional fishing site, there are several other issues that must be considered.

Oregon's electric cooperatives receive a bulk of their electricity from the Federal Columbia River Power System through the Bonneville Power Administration. BPA markets the power produced by the 31 federal hydropower projects in the Columbia River Basin. The Dalles Dam, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is the fourth largest federal hydropower project in the Basin. The generating capacity of The Dalles Dam is about 2000 megawatts, which is roughly enough megawatts to power 1.5 million homes in the Pacific Northwest.

A significant drop in the reservoir level at The Dalles Dam would substantially reduce generation capacity and eliminate the operating flexibility BPA uses for matching loads and resources (for example, balancing wind generation.) In response to a temporary reduction in generation, BPA would rely on market purchases to replace the hydropower generation and balance loads and resources. Market purchases would include fossil fuel generation, which would have both economic and environmental costs for the citizens of Oregon.

Fish operations on the Columbia River would also need to be considered. The fish passage facilities at the dams would also be impacted, affecting migrating salmon. It is likely the exits to

the fish ladders would be high and dry and adult fish passage would be blocked for a period of time.

In addition to power generation, another congressionally authorized purpose of The Dalles Dam is navigation. While other organizations are better suited to discuss the navigation impacts of lowering the reservoir, we do note that The Dalles Lock and Dam passes up to 10 million tons of river cargo annually.

It is also important to point out that the Columbia River System is fully integrated, and that the projects serve multiple purposes. Changing the elevation of one project will undoubtedly have ramifications for other projects. To carry out a thorough study as envisioned in HJM 15, the Corps will be forced to look at other issues such as flood risk management, water supply and recreation. Undoubtedly, the study will find significant impacts far beyond The Dalles Dam. We hope this information is helpful as the Committee considers the merits of HJM 15.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our perspective.