



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR

RECEIVED
OCT 10 2014

BY:-----

October 3, 2014

Ralph Sletager
Lake Pend Oreille Alliance
120 Lake St., Suite 100
Sandpoint, ID 83864

Dear Ralph and Members of the Alliance,

Thank you for your recent letter regarding operations at Albeni Falls Dam. As you know, the current lake level management plan expires this year. Strong involvement of all stakeholders will be critically important as we move toward development of a new longer-term plan. I remain convinced there is an acceptable way to operate Albeni Falls Dam that will keep water at a higher level in Lake Pend Oreille for a longer period of time.

I also share your concern about a potential late summer drawdown of the lake, and I have made it clear to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) that any additional call on water is simply unacceptable to Idaho. Doing so would cause further economic harm while providing marginal benefit at best to downstream cooling. There are better options available to help local bull trout than drawing down Lake Pend Oreille. Rest assured I intend to use all available means to protect the sovereign rights of our state.

I can report that we are making good progress in resolving these issues. Two weeks ago, I met with the Commander of the Corp's Seattle District and BPA's senior management in Coeur d'Alene. Ford Elsaesser, chairman of the Lakes Commission, and Senator Shawn Keough also were in attendance. We secured a commitment from the federal agencies to begin an open public process to develop a new lake level management plan, with a goal of having it in place for next year's operations.

The first step will be a public hearing in Sandpoint on October 23. The hearing will be led by the Lakes Commission. Executive decision makers from both the Corps and BPA will be in attendance. We will make sure it is well advertised and that all stakeholders get an opportunity to have their say. I will rely heavily on input from the community and on the Lakes Commission's advice in creating a new plan.

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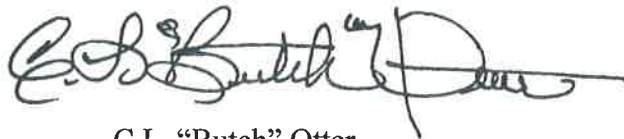
The federal agencies also promised to put a high priority on working with the Kalispel Tribe to find an alternative to the late summer drawdown being studied in their 2012 Memorandum of Understanding. My staff met recently with the tribe as well. These discussions have been quite positive, and I believe we can reach a solution that will work for all parties.

Regarding the Columbia River Treaty with Canada, as you know that matter now is in the hands of the U.S. Department of State. Idaho has consistently taken the position that flood control and equitable sharing of the hydropower system's benefits should be the Treaty's only function. I have steadfastly opposed the addition of Environmental (ecosystem) Function as a part of the Treaty. However, we must remain vigilant and our state will stay fully engaged in the Treaty process. I will continue to fight any threat to sovereign water rights, and will strongly oppose any adverse alterations or modifications to any of our Idaho dams.

You raised the issue of additional funding for the Pend Oreille Basin Lakes Commission. This will need to be addressed in the normal budgeting process and ultimately approved by the Legislature. We will need to work together to ensure adequate funding for the Lake's Commission.

I appreciate the passion and commitment of the Lake Pend Oreille Alliance. With your input and the leadership of the Lakes Commission, I believe we are in a good position to craft a positive outcome for your community and the State of Idaho.

As Always – Idaho, "Esto Perpetua"

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C.L. Butch Otter". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor of Idaho

CLO/sg

Cc: The Honorable Shawn Keough
Ford Elsaesser
Bill Booth