



**World Headquarters
3103 10th Street North, Suite 300
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January 29, 2024

**The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Chair
The Honorable Frank Pallone, Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce Committee**

**The Honorable Jeff Duncan, Chair
The Honorable Diana DeGette, Ranking Member
Energy, Climate, and Grid Security Subcommittee**

**2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515**

Dear Chairs, Ranking Members, and Members of the Committee:

U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) is the export market development organization representing the interests of U.S. wheat farmers in international markets. We are sharing important information about, and full support of, the locks and dams on the Columbia Snake River System for the record for the Energy, Climate, and Grid Security Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee hearing on January 30, 2024.

The Columbia Snake River System provides essential service and critical infrastructure for U.S. wheat farmers, their customers, and the wheat export system in the Pacific Northwest (PNW).

Barging on the Columbia Snake River System is a crucial part of a logistical web that moves over half of annual U.S. wheat exports. Six PNW export elevators serve some of the world's largest U.S. wheat buyers in more than 20 Pacific Rim countries. That wheat is delivered by truck, rail, and barge. The Snake River moves more than 10 percent of all wheat exported from the United States each year. An estimated 75 percent of all exported soft white wheat grown by farmers in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho moves by barge.

The sustainability and reliability of wheat transportation by barge to port locations is unquestioned. Research indicates that one four-barge tow can move the same volume of grain as 144 rail cars or 538 semi-trucks with far greater fuel efficiency and lower carbon emissions. Barging also supports economic sustainability for farmers who bear the cost of wheat transportation. Moving a larger volume of wheat by barge provides a check on the increasing cost of rail transportation and helps ensure U.S. wheat export costs remain competitive in the global wheat market. Loyal U.S. wheat buyers agree.

Mr. Sergio Morales, Director of Molino San Cristobal flour mill in Chile, said “for the United States to continue to be a competitive supplier for our company, the transportation system that feeds wheat through the Columbia Snake rivers must continue working in a stable and efficient way.”

Japan imports approximately 85 percent of wheat consumed by its citizens. More than half its imports are from the United States, and all is shipped from PNW ports. Mr. Kenichi Hirano, Director of the Grain Trade and Operations Division of Japan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), said “U.S. Western White wheat is a vitally important ingredient in Japanese confectionary products and fine cakes, and I expect the United States will continue providing a stable supply, barged economically and efficiently on the Snake and Columbia rivers.”

“The Philippines has a long history of using flour made from U.S. wheat that is milled by our domestic flour mills and has become the world’s top destination for hard red spring and soft white wheat classes,” said Mr. Ric Pinca, Executive Director, Philippine Association of Flour Millers (PAFMIL). “As I have traveled to the United States and seen its robust supply chain from the farm to inland elevators, the railroads and barges along the Snake and Columbia rivers, and finally to its export facilities, it has become clear to me how each piece is essential to maintain the reliability and competitiveness of the U.S. wheat supply which is critically important for Filipino flour mills and consumers.”

Locks and dams on the Lower Snake River and the Columbia River provide essential infrastructure for moving U.S.-grown wheat to high-value markets around the world. We cannot overstate the positive value they create for U.S. farms, as well as the industrial economy of the Pacific Northwest and far beyond. U.S. Wheat Associates appreciates the opportunity to share this information and restate our unwavering support for the Columbia Snake River System.

Sincerely,



Vincent R. Peterson
President
U.S. Wheat Associates

cc: Casey Chumrau
Amanda Hoey
Britany Hurst Marchant
Michael Peters
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