



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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Committee Field Hearing Stresses Importance of Power, Flood Control in Future Columbia River Treaty Negotiations

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The House Natural Resources Committee held a Full Committee oversight [field hearing](#) today in Pasco, WA on “*The Future of the US-Canada Columbia River Treaty - Building on 60 years of Coordinated Power Generation and Flood Control.*”

The Columbia River Treaty between the United States and Canada was put in place in 1964 and since then has provided the framework for coordinated hydropower generation and flood control on the Columbia River system. Starting next year, either side can terminate or propose changes to the Treaty with 10 years notice. The U.S. Entity has released draft recommendations regarding potential modifications to the Treaty and will soon send final recommendations to the State Department.

Today’s hearing featured testimony from the Bonneville Power Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Canadian Entity, public utility districts, rural electric cooperatives, irrigation, navigation, tribes, and other local stakeholders. At the hearing, Members and witnesses discussed the benefits of the Treaty and ways it can be improved and modernized. Numerous witnesses noted the importance of hydropower in providing clean, low-cost electricity to the Pacific Northwest; stressed the need to rebalance the Canadian entitlement, noting that it exceeds the actual power benefit received; and discussed the need to keep the Treaty focused on the core functions of coordinated power generation and flood control.

“While modest improvements have been witnessed in the U.S. Entity’s draft recommendations, I remain concerned that ‘ecosystem issues’ continue to be emphasized over the core Treaty functions that plainly will need to be addressed in bilateral discussions with Canada. It is my hope and expectation that the final recommendation from the U.S. Entity will make clear to the State Department that the priorities we need to address are the entitlement and flood control,” **said Chairman Doc Hastings (R-WA).** *“I want to thank Ranking Member DeFazio for his work on this issue and for coming to today’s hearing. I think we share many of the same concerns and I am committed to working with him in a bipartisan fashion as we move forward with our oversight in this area.”*

“The Columbia River Treaty is an incredibly complex issue that has – and will continue to have – a profound impact on Pacific Northwest communities, businesses, and environment. The

future of the Treaty has implications for power generation, navigation, irrigation, recreation, fish, cultural and tribal resources to name a few. That's why it is absolutely critical that our region work together to produce a consensus framework for renegotiating the Treaty that will continue the generation of reliable, inexpensive, carbon-free power; protect public safety and property from floods; and build upon existing domestic investments to restore salmon populations in the Columbia River Basin," **said Ranking Member Peter DeFazio (D-OR).**

[Click here](#) to read opening statements and witness testimony from today's hearing.

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