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**Testimony of Judie Graham, Executive Director, Washington Trollers Association
Before the Bonneville Power Administration, Seattle, WA
August 20, 2002**

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Judie Graham and I am Executive Director of the Washington Trollers Association (WTA). Since 1977, WTA has represented the interests of its members in relations with federal and state agencies, working to promote healthy and abundant salmon stocks, maximize fishing opportunities, and educating the public about salmon trolling. Our membership of fisher-men and women operate vessels that range in size from 23 ft. to 64 ft. with crews of one to three – often working families. We represent over 180 fishing families in addition to the many businesses in Washington’s coastal communities of Ilwaco, Westport, La Push, and Neah Bay to name a few, and all along the Pacific Coast – even as far inland as Colorado.

At the last set of public meetings in August, I asked BPA to consider the enormous impact that its financial decisions have on fishing families and communities. Simply put, salmon trolling, one of Washington State’s oldest industries has historically received little consideration when it comes to important decisions regarding the management of the Columbia and Snake Rivers. For far too long, it is our commercial fishing families that have shouldered the burdens of the hydropower decisions.

Tonight’s meeting asks broad questions about BPA’s future role in our region. I believe that this future is closely linked to the future of our region’s salmon trolling industry, and the future well-being of the families and communities that depend on our industry. The Washington Trollers Association hopes that in this meeting and during BPA’s self-evaluation, it will learn to more effectively balance its responsibility to generate and sell power with its responsibility to restore and protect salmon. Furthermore, we trust that BPA will seize this opportunity not just to reevaluate the share of federal power for each utility, but to create a system of river operations that can effectively restore salmon.

As I have listened to the utilities present their proposal tonight, I realized that in many ways they desire the same sorts of economic conditions as we do. Like the utilities, the commercial fishing community desires increased stability and a more certain future for our communities and families. Over the last three decades, we have seen salmon on the Columbia and Snake, once the backbone of our industry, slowly disappear.

A first step that BPA can take to begin to help provide stability for commercial fishermen is to adopt the public interest proposal that has been submitted by commercial and sport fishing associations, conservation organizations and clean energy advocates. This proposal would ensure that salmon have an equal voice in the way we manage the Columbia and Snake River system and point the way towards an effective recovery plan that will successfully restore salmon stocks.

Today I ask BPA to recognize that it is not simply a power marketing entity. BPA's responsibility to enhance and protect salmon is etched in federal law and tribal treaty. Ocean salmon trollers and coastal communities are counting on this agency to live up to that responsibility and take steps to repair damage that has been done to our economies over the last thirty years of failed salmon recovery programs.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Washington Trollers Association, I urge BPA to seize this opportunity and move forward as an agency that more effectively balances its responsibilities to produce power and restore salmon. The commercial fishing industry cannot afford another twenty years of failed salmon restoration.

