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BEFORE THE
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

- - - - -x
IN THE MATTER OF:
HELLS CANYON PROJECT
- - - - -x

: Project Number:
: P-1971-079

Weiser Senior Center
115 East Main Street
Weiser, ID

Tuesday, September 12, 2006

The above-entitled matter came on for scoping
meeting, pursuant to notice, at 7:20 p.m.

BEFORE:

ALAN MITCHNICK, FERC

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 7:20 p.m.

3 MR. MITCHNICK: Good evening, everybody. We're
4 about ready to begin. First, I want to thank you for making
5 it here. It shows you're a very persistent bunch of people.

6 I want to thank Idaho Power for, you know, doing
7 great undertaking to set up a new room to replace the room
8 that's put to bingo tonight, and hopefully we didn't lose
9 too many people to bingo. But we really appreciate it.
10 Otherwise, we'd really be in a pickle. We'd be outside the
11 senior center setting up a meeting.

12 I'm Alan Mitchnick. I am the coordinator, the
13 project manager for the Hells Canyon relicensing. With
14 today in various places, to my right is Allen Creamer,
15 that's C-R-E-A-M-E-R, and he is a fisheries biologist with
16 the Commission.

17 In the back of the room is Ellen Hall, and she's
18 with -- she's the contract manager with Louis Berger, and
19 Emily Carter with the Commission is somewhere between here
20 and the senior center.

21 Okay. Just some ground rules and housekeeping.
22 The rest rooms are straight through this door and to the
23 left. Exits are through that door to the left. No
24 browsing, except near the back.

25 I want to just talk a little bit before I give

1 everybody an opportunity to speak. I just want to talk a
2 little bit about the schedule and where we are and what
3 remains to be done during the rest of this seemingly
4 unending process.

5 The Commission issued the draft environmental
6 impact statement on July 25th, and copies of the CD version
7 are available in the back. Hard copies are available from -
8 - will be available from Ellen. We've located the 13 boxes,
9 and it will soon be in her office.

10 So if you want a hard copy or a dozen hard copies
11 or multiple dozens, you know, give Ellen a call and you can
12 talk to her later if you have a good use for those copies.
13 Hopefully you will, so we can make good use with them.
14 Unfortunately, we won't have any tonight to give people.

15 But if you do want a hard copy, just leave me
16 your name and address, and I'll get one out tomorrow.

17 Okay. This is the Center for -- this the fourth
18 of five public meetings that we've had set up for this week
19 and last week. The remaining public meeting is in Lewiston
20 tomorrow at 7:00 Pacific time.

21 The EIS was noticed by the Environmental
22 Protection Agency on August 4th, and the comment due is 60
23 days after the notice, after the EPA notice. Even though
24 the notice lists October 2nd as the due date, the FERC
25 notice lists October 3rd as the due date, and that is the

1 due date for comments, October 3rd.

2 There are two ways to file comments. We have two
3 handouts in the back of the room. One has information on
4 how to file. You can file electronically or you can file
5 hard copies and it has the address to file.

6 If you want to file electronically, this other
7 brochure has information on how to file electronically.
8 There are also instructions on the other handout.

9 This handout also has information on what might
10 be useful to you, e-Subscription. If you go to the website
11 and subscribe to this docket, there's information on how to
12 do it on the handout.

13 You can be informed of every time there's an
14 issuance or every time there's a filing, you'll get an e-
15 mail and you can click on the link and get access to the
16 particular document.

17 That could be useful to keep track of what's
18 going on in this proceeding. There's some other information
19 on -- e-Library is basically the Commission's database of
20 filings and issuances. So everything that is filed or
21 issued for any project can be accessed through the e-Library
22 system.

23 I did want to mention something about
24 intervention. As an intervenor, you have the right to file
25 a rehearing of any Commission decision, or you can file a

1 petition in the Court of Appeals.

2 In order to do that, you have to be a party. So
3 you need to intervene. The responsibility of an intervenor
4 is that every time you file something with the Commission,
5 you also have to serve it on all other intervenors.

6 So that's sort of the down side. But it gives
7 you the right to file a rehearing and file for a court
8 review.

9 So if you haven't filed, this is the second
10 opportunity for intervention. If you haven't filed
11 previously, this is another opportunity. If you have
12 already filed and have been granted, either you filed on
13 time or you filed late and the Commission granted later
14 intervention, which I believe they granted all late
15 interventions.

16 So this is another opportunity. But if you
17 already have filed one, there's no need to file another.
18 The final EIS is scheduled for February 27th of next year.

19 There's quite a few other things that need to be
20 done before we could get on to any licensing decision. I'm
21 just going to go through the four, five or six of those
22 processes that need to be completed.

23 The first is the water quality certification
24 process under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The
25 Commission can't issue a license until it receives a water

1 quality certificate from the state water quality agency.

2 In this case, it will be two; one from Idaho and
3 one from Oregon. The Commission can't issue a license
4 unless they have a certificate or the state agency waives
5 their certification right.

6 The states are expected to act by December 27th.
7 That's the end of the current one-year process. But it's
8 unlikely that they'll be making a decision by then.

9 So it's expected that Idaho Power will withdraw
10 their application for certification and then refile it, and
11 that would start the clock, the one-year clock over again.

12 There are also National Historic Preservation Act
13 issues that need to be resolved. The Commission typically
14 complies with the Act by preparing a programmatic agreement,
15 which sort of outlines how the Commission is going to
16 implement its responsibilities during the term of the
17 license.

18 In a lot of the guidelines will be contained in
19 the Historic Properties Management Plan, but -- which will
20 be prepared after licensing. But the Commission issued a
21 draft programmatic agreement in July, and we've received a
22 number of comments from the concurrent and signatory
23 parties, but we still are waiting for additional comments
24 before we could go ahead and issue a final programmatic
25 agreement.

1 We also need to comply with the Endangered
2 Species Act. We have requested formal consultation with the
3 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine
4 Fisheries Service for a number of species. Bald eagle with
5 the Fish and Wildlife Service and four species of salmon and
6 steelhead with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

7 We will have further discussions with them in
8 October, and we'll probably be setting a more finalized
9 schedule as we continue our discussions with them.

10 Another process is what we call the 10(j)
11 process, under Section 10(j) of the Federal Power Act, state
12 and federal fish and wildlife agencies have the opportunity
13 to provide terms and conditions to protect fish and wildlife
14 resources, and that the Commission must adopt them unless
15 the Commission can find them inconsistent with applicable
16 law.

17 In the draft EIS, the Commission made a number of
18 preliminary findings, that certain recommendations were
19 consistent. When that happens, the Commission has to
20 attempt to resolve those inconsistencies, and we will be
21 holding a series of meetings with the state and federal fish
22 and wildlife agencies in October.

23 We also have land management conditions that need
24 to be finalized. We have preliminary conditions that were
25 evaluated in the draft environmental impact statement.

1 Those were conditions issued by the Bureau of Land
2 Management and the Forest Service.

3 The Forest Service will issuing their final
4 conditions in their comments on the EIS, and I'm not sure
5 what the Bureau of Land Management's plans are. They may be
6 similar.

7 The last process that needs to be completed
8 before any decision is made, and that is compliance with
9 Section 7(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

10 The reach downstream of Hells Canyon Dam is a
11 wild and scenic river, and the Commission -- the
12 administering agency, which is the Forest Service, must
13 certify consistency with the basis for the protections.

14 So that is it. Before we -- a few more ground
15 rules. If you're going to be making a statement or you're
16 going to be asking a question, you're going to need --
17 probably the best thing is to come up to that podium behind
18 there, and give your name, spell your name, give your
19 affiliation if you have one before you speak.

20 But before we get to the list of speakers, I just
21 wanted to know if anybody had any question on the process,
22 from the things I talked about this evening.

23 (No response.)

24 MR. MITCHNICK: Otherwise, Chris gets upset, and
25 you don't want Chris to get upset.

1 MR. YATES: You didn't say the pledge of
2 allegiance either.

3 MR. MITCHNICK: We can do that before the --

4 MR. YATES: That's fine. I'll wait.

5 MR. MITCHNICK: Okay. I'm glad you did remind
6 me. It's become a recent policy or practice for the
7 chairman and former chairman to recite the pledge of the
8 allegiance before the Commission meetings, and we've sort of
9 been doing it for these meetings on the Environmental Impact
10 Statement.

11 So we will, if you'd like to join me, stand and
12 say the pledge.

13 (Pledge of Allegiance.)

14 MR. YATES: Mark Yates, M-A-R-K, Y-A-T-E-S,
15 Northwest Professional Power Vessel Association. You were
16 talking about the process. Would any of those processes
17 that are not completed, would they stall the final DEIS?

18 MR. MITCHNICK: Probably not. I mean at this
19 point in time, no. We will complete the 10(j) process in
20 between the draft and the final. We probably won't finish
21 the endangered species consultation, but one option is to
22 use the final to facilitate the endangered species
23 consultation.

24 So the final might be a very important step in
25 the endangered species consultation process. Water power

1 certificate, no.

2 We generally don't wait until the water quality
3 certificate is issued before we issue a final NEPA document.
4 There's nothing that I know of in this proceeding that would
5 change that, at least at this point in time.

6 The other process can either be finished before
7 the final or after the final, but would not affect the
8 processing schedule. Okay.

9 MR. YATES: I'm not sure of this question. You
10 mentioned, and I don't know whether I can mention previous
11 meetings; I've attended them all, that you would still allow
12 comments even after the final Environmental Impact
13 Statement.

14 Basically, what would be the process to get
15 those? I mean, they're going to be entered to the
16 Commission, but what's the process that they would even
17 consider them, because you've already made your final
18 recommendations at that point in time?

19 It would be heard to change those recommendations
20 or I'm assuming that you're going to give a staff
21 alternative, plus you're going to give maybe the other --
22 the agency alternatives, what they consider on your
23 recommendations on conditions for the terms of the license.

24 MR. MITCHNICK: I don't remember any discussion
25 about comments after the final EIS.

1 MR. YATES: First meeting.

2 MR. MITCHNICK: Did I say that?

3 MR. YATES: Uh-huh.

4 MR. MITCHNICK: I don't think so. There is no
5 opportunity to comment. Well, there is no official comment
6 period after the final. Now if the draft changes
7 significantly between the draft and the final, we may allow
8 an additional comment period after the final, say like 30
9 days after the final.

10 But we haven't made that point. If I had said
11 something that you interpreted to be that there was an
12 opportunity for comments, I apologize. But typically, there
13 is no official comment period. But you could always file
14 comments.

15 We may or may not address them. It depends on
16 where in the process they are. I mean if there's a gap
17 between the final and any decision that would give us an
18 opportunity to evaluate your comments, then it may be
19 reflected in the license decision, if there is one.

20 But there is no formal comment period, but you
21 can file and you know, it will be information in the record
22 that we would likely look at.

23 MR. YATES: So after October 3rd, that will be
24 the last comments?

25 MR. MITCHNICK: That's the last official comment

1 period.

2 MR. YATES: At this point in time.

3 MR. CREAMER: Allen Creamer. It's the last
4 official comment period, but as Alan said, you can file up
5 until the time the Commission issues its decision. Any
6 information that's filed is in the record. The Commission
7 will consider it.

8 Depending upon what that information is, and Alan
9 can correct me if I'm wrong, if it's substantive enough, it
10 may warrant -- and we've done this before, where we would
11 reissue the NEPA document. But that doesn't happen very
12 often.

13 More than likely, the licensing decision or the
14 order will have a section in it addressing any comments that
15 were filed on the final.

16 That's probably, you know, the more likely
17 scenario. Unless we get some substantial stuff with the 401
18 or the ESA consultation that we didn't already consider in
19 the NEPA document. Does that answer your question?

20 MR. YATES: Yes.

21 MR. MITCHNICK: Are there any other procedural
22 questions?

23 (No response.)

24 MR. MITCHNICK: Okay. So now to our speakers
25 tonight. I hope I pronounce your name correctly. Ron

1 Shurtleff? Could you pronounce that for me?

2 MR. SHURTLEFF: Shurtleff.

3 MR. MITCHNICK: Okay, thanks.

4 MR. SHURTLEFF: My name is Ron Shurtleff, S-H-U-
5 R-T-L-E-F-F. I'm a fourth generation food producer right
6 here in this Valley. We've been operating since 1888, and
7 currently we're in our 119th year of continuous production.

8 We got our start supplying the hunger miners when
9 this area was first developing, and of course the mining
10 kind of went away and then we became suppliers to the rest
11 of the community.

12 We've been able to do this because we used the
13 resources of the river. We've been diverting water from the
14 Payette River, about 30 miles downstream from our diversion
15 point from the canal that we've received water from.

16 We've been able because of that water diversion
17 to be able to live and be a producer for the last 119 years.
18 I'm here on another aspect. Later in life, I've taken on
19 some other duties, and I've become the water master of the
20 Payette River. I'm also the executive director of the
21 Payette River Water Users.

22 The Payette River Water Users represents the
23 majority of the users within 150,000 acres of irrigated
24 land. Our membership is about 136,000 out of that 150,000
25 acres of irrigated land.

1 We also have municipalities in our membership and
2 also some commercial entities. The Payette River Water
3 Users would like to go on record to strongly support the
4 relicensing.

5 We would like to be on record as agreeing with
6 the draft EIS, that there is a continued use for power and a
7 need for power that is going to continue to grow. We
8 believe that any alternative short of relicensing is not
9 reasonable.

10 We also agree with the draft EIS, in that passage
11 and reintroduction of anadromous fish is not feasible during
12 this license period. We also commend NMFS for coming to
13 this decision.

14 The Payette River Water Users also do not agree
15 that flow augmentation has been or is beneficial to
16 anadromous fish. We believe that science has proved that
17 there is no meaningful benefit to date, and to expect Idaho
18 Power to fund another study would only add a financial
19 burden to the ratepayers that are within their system.

20 We also believe that any minimum stream flows
21 should be subordinate to any upstream water rights, and we
22 believe that ramping rates should be left as flexible as
23 possible.

24 We believe that this is very necessary because
25 new forms of power generation are coming in, and they need

1 that consistent renewable resource that lays behind our
2 dams, to be able to shape those powers.

3 The wind power that is being talked about is
4 going to be a supplement, but it's certainly not going to be
5 the reliable source that hydropower has been. Solar power
6 will play in that, but it also will need that ramping
7 ability within the hydroplants in order to shape that power.

8 That's all I have to present this evening.

9 MR. MITCHNICK: Thank you, Ron. Our next speaker
10 is Beverly Ferrell.

11 MS. FERRELL: I didn't really have anything
12 planned.

13 MR. MITCHNICK: Could you read your button on
14 your -- do you want us to add that to the record?

15 (Laughter.)

16 MS. FERRELL: But I didn't -- I just live along
17 the river, and I'm concerned about the quality of the water
18 that flows by our house.

19 Beverly Ferrell, F-E-R-R-E-L-L. I've lived along
20 the Snake River for 25 years, and it's on Sunnyside next to
21 the sportmen's access. I've noticed the quality of the
22 water that flows past our house is often -- there's scum on
23 it and there's green debris and things that run through
24 there.

25 It especially gets bad in the summer. I just

1 thought that Idaho Power should do everything they could to
2 make sure that the quality of the water is improved.

3 MR. MITCHNICK: Okay, thank you. Did Diana
4 Thomas want to speak?

5 MS. THOMAS: I'll pass right now. I've had the
6 opportunity. I'm a county commissioner. I've had the
7 opportunity to express my thinking several times, so I'll
8 hold off right now. Thank you.

9 MR. MITCHNICK: Okay. Wayne Ferrell.

10 MR. FERRELL: Yes. Wayne Ferrell, F-E-R-R-E-L-L.
11 I'm pretty much a lifelong resident of this county. I live
12 along the Snake River, and I am also real concerned about
13 the degradation of the water quality in the Snake River.

14 I grew up here, you know, 60 years ago. I
15 remember when the water quality, before the dams were put in
16 Hells Canyon, was much, much better. I also clearly
17 remember salmon and steelhead running up the Weiser and
18 Payette Rivers.

19 I don't agree with Mr. Shurtleff back there,
20 who's produced food here for a long time, that the
21 anadromous fish runs should not be strongly considered and
22 perhaps put at the very top of the list of all
23 considerations, in considering this FERC relicensing.

24 Those anadromous fish runs outdate, you know, any
25 other use of the water that any of us in this room can even

1 consider. Thank you.

2 MR. MITCHNICK: Thank you, Wayne. Our next
3 speaker is Lee Daniels. Lee?

4 MR. DANIELS: My name is Lee Daniels from Weiser,
5 Idaho. Our family have lived on the bank of the Snake River
6 starting in 1956, about 50 years ago.

7 I had an acquaintance that used to be with Idaho
8 Fish and Game at the Rapid River Hatchery, as a young
9 scientist. He went to work for Idaho Power and helped kick
10 off, at the scientist studies and coordination and so forth.

11 His name was Larry Wimer and he died of cancer
12 some years ago now. But he got it started, and I think some
13 of us that knew him and his credibility as a scientist and
14 his background as a native Idahoan, felt pretty healthy that
15 this process would go better than it has.

16 He called it a collaborative process. Many of us
17 that tried to participate in this so-called collaborative
18 process were significantly disappointed. "Manipulated"
19 probably is the better word.

20 There didn't seem to be much of any effort to
21 come to the local rural areas where the major impacts were
22 and remain today, some of them even worse. Far too much in
23 the corporate palace in downtown Boise.

24 Many of us wasted our gasoline and wasted a lot
25 of time going over there to collaborate with Idaho Power, in

1 what appeared to be let's do things on a minimal, let's do
2 things on the cheap. That's not what Larry Wimer had in
3 mind as he relayed it to us.

4 John Prescott, who was the vice president that
5 helped head that up, quit or took an early retirement or
6 whatever, in part we were told, because he was increasingly
7 disillusioned with the process problems. Alan, you probably
8 had some conversation with Larry Wimer or Mr. Prescott. I
9 believe that's his name.

10 MR. MITCHNICK: Yes, I know both of them.

11 MR. DANIELS: Unfinished business. You know,
12 there's a limit to broken promises. There's a serious limit
13 to reasons why we can't do something. Most of what's been
14 put before Idaho Power Company is doable, it's feasible and
15 it's badly needed.

16 But for whatever the reasons, it's not happened.
17 Just some simple things like -- and if it takes another
18 Idaho Power Fish Hatchery like Rapid River or the Pahsimeroi
19 to start paying for 49 percent of Looking Glass up by, I
20 believe it's Elgin, Oregon.

21 There's a need for hauling surplus hatchery fish
22 to the Weiser River, not for propagation purposes for
23 various reasons, but for catching and fish, like the Little
24 Salmon River enjoys, and release some of that congestion.

25 Let's do some of that in the Monthugh (ph) River,

1 like we should be doing, the Burnt River, the Owyhee, all of
2 which have a rich history, as Mr. Ferrell related, to
3 anadromous fisheries.

4 It's a shame not to take advantage of this, but
5 all we seem to hear is that "Oh, we can't afford something
6 like that." Well, in a rural economic sense, these are way
7 too important to just be brushed aside or swept under the
8 rug. But that's exactly what's happened in too many cases.

9 I remember trying to participate a week ago or a
10 year ago February, I believe it was, in some consultation
11 stuff at a major meeting at Boise, involving the feasibility
12 of spawners and so forth, above the headwaters of Brownlee.

13 I for one and perhaps others were denied access
14 to what appeared to be a highly secretive discussions,
15 consultation maybe is a word, at the corporate palace in
16 downtown Boise.

17 Well, it doesn't take much of that to illustrate
18 right up close and personal the flaws in this project.
19 Idaho Power Company is pretty well insulated away from the
20 FERC and the staff folks, including yourselves, so far away
21 in Washington, D.C., that we are not able to follow, we're
22 not able to understand and we're not communicated with
23 enough.

24 Yes, this is important to Idaho Power's bottom
25 line. But it's darn well important to the rural economy.

1 It's very important that the museums, nothing is changed,
2 the historic nature of these areas flooded on the Oregon
3 side and the Idaho side, something over 300 miles of
4 reservoir shore line.

5 The rich Indian and other pioneer, if you will,
6 homesteaders value that are under water, old pictures and so
7 forth. Would it hurt Idaho Power to cost-share some serious
8 dollars, say 50 percent, that the Snake River Heritage
9 Museum at Weiser? Absolutely not.

10 So far, to my limited knowledge, we haven't heard
11 of a dime coming to that museum, in a county that's been
12 probably more damaged and more impacted than any, with the
13 exception possibly of Huntington and the Baker County as
14 being similar.

15 These museums are important, and it's almost a
16 sense of when you try to discuss this with scientists at
17 Idaho Power, like you know, I wish you graybeards would sort
18 of fade away a little faster, and then you'll all forget and
19 everything will be okay.

20 Well, we're not going to forget, and we are going
21 to intervene as best we can with limited resources. This is
22 a last stand, if you will. Same thing with these rural
23 libraries. It can't be that much of a problem in a draft
24 impact statement to have something at Huntington or Farewell
25 Bend or Richland, right on the reservoir edges, as an

1 alternative to Halfway, which is a little bit far removed.

2 Yes, I appreciate and I think others you, you
3 coming to Weiser. But that doesn't really satisfy the needs
4 that Cambridge and Council and Riggins, for those areas that
5 are heavily impacted.

6 Accompany this draft impact statement with some
7 equal rural economic analysis, some really good stuff, some
8 meat and potatoes of high credibility. None of that's being
9 done to our limited knowledge.

10 You've already heard me talk about at other
11 places the rural hospital at Weiser. When you look at the
12 revenue flow during even the drought years of the last half
13 a dozen, of \$300 million, \$350 million a year.

14 Then look at when we have some snow in the
15 mountains and water in the rivers, perhaps \$500 million
16 plus, you know. Don't tell us that there isn't funding in
17 an amortized and paid-for dam and reservoir system that are
18 cash registers financially, to get in and help with the
19 rural libraries like at Richland.

20 Get in and help with emergency services. Yes,
21 that means a significant proposal of a helicopter in this
22 day and age, with so much of this country is slow roads at
23 best and much of it pretty inaccessible.

24 As you've heard before at other hearings, there's
25 citizens from four or five states that come here from time

1 to time. This hospital at Weiser is critical. Yes, it's in
2 a hospital taxing district, but to my limited knowledge, it
3 gets very little, if any, property tax from Idaho Power.

4 Who's the impactee or you might say the largest
5 corporation that should be carrying these rural counties and
6 emergency services as just as important part of the cost of
7 doing business as fish hatcheries.

8 It's not insane to purchase some land, farm
9 ground if you will, and probably ones to look at are Porter
10 Flat over in the peninsula. Porter Flat has, I think, a
11 couple of thousand acres of very expensive to farm pressure
12 pump, that is also taking water out of the river.

13 It wasn't three or four years ago that Idaho
14 Power was buying back, at least in Idaho, the buyback
15 program, to shut farmers down for a year or two, to leave
16 more water in the Snake River. Well, how this has been --
17 it's neglected with a very expensive -- the farm
18 productivity on the Oregon side below Weiser is a real
19 puzzle.

20 2,000 acres is 2,000 acres, not to let it go to
21 noxious weeds and all of those kinds of adverse problems.
22 But put in state of the art drip irrigation systems for
23 trees and shrubs and nutritional food plots, hiding cover,
24 thermal habitat or in these tough winters, shelter belts.

25 A couple of thousand acres up to the Oregon State

1 Highway 201 would provide a very significant shot in the arm
2 for what's now under water and will continue under water
3 down through the reservoir systems.

4 I was out on some islands today, in fact. With
5 the drawdown that exists, that drawdown from the peak
6 reservoir levels down to current reservoir, I mean it's just
7 absolutely loaded with cockleburrs, of all things.

8 A species of noxious weed that is just totally
9 unproductive as far as any feed for wildlife, or any cover
10 or protection for wildlife.

11 In Washington County, we have something called a
12 cooperative, I believe it's called Washington County weed
13 control. I think the other counties have that.

14 Cooperatives have kind of gotten off track, and
15 the bottom line is to recruit enough dollars to get in and
16 do some serious, major big-time noxious invader weed
17 control, and Idaho Power may show up sometimes with one or
18 two people, and maybe help with a little bit of the chemical
19 spray.

20 That's not confronting in a good business venture
21 the way solutions should be confronted. That's just playing
22 around with band-aids to treat cancer. We're talking about
23 thousands of acres of invaded noxious weed areas in these
24 drawdown areas, in particularly, of course, Brownlee.

25 Neighboring land owners are increasingly

1 concerned about that, as they fight weeds and try to work
2 with and without the cooperative Washington County weed
3 control and Adams County as well. They don't see enough
4 being done on Idaho Power property or the areas below the
5 full reservoir down to the existing water.

6 Sure, the water can yo-yo up and down like water
7 in a bath tub. But that doesn't take care of the weed seeds
8 and the spreading of noxious weed. It certainly is a very
9 undesirable situation.

10 Back to emergency services, you've heard me
11 comment before about the state-of-the-art need for a
12 helicopter, and that can't be more heavily emphasized and
13 yet it's not that costly if -- if there's a partnership
14 possibility, which there is.

15 I think our U.S. Senators and Congressmen on both
16 sides of the river would assist and maybe do a little
17 supplemental budgeting with the BLM and the Forest Service,
18 to come up with 40, say 52 percent or 53 percent of the
19 funding, and Idaho Power would be the junior partner with 48
20 percent of the funding.

21 That's not going to hurt the executives in the
22 corporate palace at Boise, and it's sure not going to hurt
23 to any degree each and every year, to budget for this, just
24 like fish hatcheries are required.

25 So this old notion that "Oh, we're going to have

1 to increase our power bills to pay for this stuff. Well, if
2 you look at the last two general base rate increases, one
3 that went into effect June 1st this year, and the previous
4 one two years ago that are not tied to snow in the mountain
5 measurements and water flow, hydrologic measurements.

6 You'll find that it's amazing who got the
7 increases and that's the smallest businesses in Riggins as
8 well as Adams County and Washington County. Schools got
9 significant increases.

10 The town of Weiser just got hammered since
11 January '03 with I believe in the neighborhood of 40
12 percent, not four, but 40 percent increase that's just
13 almost putting the town under red ink.

14 Is that rural partnership? No, it's not. Sot
15 here's a major disconnect that has happened. It's happening
16 worse and worse, and as this progress drags on, it continues
17 to get worse and worse. This is what I think many of us
18 believe is a last standoff opportunity.

19 Why should we allow Firth or anybody else to say
20 "Well, take it before the 9th Circuit or the district
21 federal court." I think they've got -- their calendar's
22 probably full enough.

23 But if people would work together, if Idaho Power
24 Company would work with local people and with our elected
25 hospital board and with the local school boards and the city

1 halls, and rework out in a genuine let's solve this instead
2 of "Oh God, that's going to raise your power bill."

3 Well, if we're going to raise the power bill,
4 let's raise Wal-Mart's and Fred Meyers and Albertson's and
5 Simplox (ph) and Micron and Hewlett Packard, and the outfit
6 out at Arco that's a contractor, that enjoy in the
7 neighborhood of three cents per kilowatt hour, and slightly
8 less.

9 Those are the boys, even though they are the
10 folks that use probably volumes and cost of service is a
11 little less, well why isn't the Town of Weiser enjoying the
12 same price as those big boys, if cost of service is a fact?

13 So as you've heard me say before a couple of
14 previous times, maybe this process needs to be slowed down.
15 With the flaws in this document, it can't be just, you know,
16 an end-all, to produce a supplemental draft impact statement
17 and allow us to have public comment window December 31st,
18 not October 3.

19 There's certainly been some misunderstandings.
20 This little thing tonight as to where this one is. Last
21 night I think you mentioned the senior citizen center at
22 about -- it just adds to. I know there's a lot more people
23 interested in this than just the few of us.

24 So please consider one more trip out here, a
25 supplemental draft impact statement, and a trip to Riggins

1 like Halfway received. A trip to Council and/or Cambridge
2 that are close to the impact areas.

3 Cambridge is a good example of Idaho Power
4 disappearing. When we had electricity interruptions, there
5 was a crew for up until I'm thinking six or eight, nine
6 years ago maybe, at the Cambridge Service Center, Repair and
7 Service Center, that's been done away with, moved down to
8 the Valley because that's where more valleys are, and rural
9 entities, rural areas are again being forgotten.

10 Customer service centers that existed for 50
11 years, like the one in downtown Cambridge. Idaho Power says
12 "Whoa, we can't afford those any more." So they do away
13 with that business store front beach and in essence put up a
14 piece of tape with an 800 number and, you know, "call us."

15 Well, if anybody's tried to call them in recent
16 years, you just end up kind of throwing the entire telephone
17 out the door. They're so hard to reach or individuals or
18 people.

19 This last winter's wintertime interruption was a
20 disgrace. We live just outside the City of Weiser, and the
21 City of Weiser has their own repair service, I think four or
22 five people. Just like that, the lights were back on in
23 Weiser.

24 Those of us outside, I can't remember how many
25 hours it was, but it didn't sit too well to see the town of

1 Weiser with lights.

2 So moving these local, long-time repair of
3 service people to save a buck by the corporate folks at
4 Boise is not public or rural partnership. On the positive,
5 I do appreciate you folks coming and you're willing to
6 listen and maybe hear some of this stuff repetitive.

7 But one thing I think that would help, and I'm
8 not a newspaper person, but if more could be done in the
9 weekly newspapers, in the areas that are most locally
10 impacted by FERC, with or without Idaho Power or any other
11 licensee, it would a lot more interest.

12 It would add a lot more input, even at the
13 scoping, front end of this thing, you know, to have -- it
14 can't be that expensive to come to take out a full page
15 infomercial and summarize the process and what you're
16 interested in or the scoping part of it at the front of this
17 impact statement.

18 Then at the bottom of the page, for people clip
19 it out old fashion-like, with a post office box and send it
20 in from their kitchen table. But in this, you know, in this
21 electronic age, I think we've kind of walked off and forgot
22 our weekly newspapers.

23 It's not there for FERC or anybody else to say
24 "Mr. Newspaper Editor" -- you may only have one person
25 helping or a half person that covers the churches and the

1 local basketball games -- to try to try to sort out
2 something as complicated as this.

3 So they deserve a lot more in information, in at
4 least helping people. You know, what are some questions
5 that need to be asked? Could it hurt anything for a FERC
6 staff person to go to the various city councils and make the
7 rounds, as you start this process or at the beginning of --
8 like last November or November 19 and 20, '03, when the
9 scoping was done?

10 Those would be some sort of 8th grade ideas that
11 somehow would get more people involved, rather than just
12 trying to going through the motions and let's get this trip
13 over with and get on with the process.

14 Outfits like Idaho Power make a lot of money on
15 just having the most simple process and have good, quick
16 fast deadlines and shorten the entire time line and that's
17 not the way the public water business should be conducted.
18 Thanks for this opportunity.

19 MR. MITCHNICK: Okay. Thank you, Lee. Would
20 anyone else like to make a statement or ask a question? Do
21 the Washington County commissioners intend to file comments?

22 MS. THOMAS: Yes, I think we will be. I'm sorry.
23 I was going to try to avoid this tonight. I am Diana
24 Thomas, Washington County commissioner. Thomas, T-H-O-M-A-
25 S. As I look around, we do have very few people here.

1 But one of the things that I think we have tried
2 to do is we have tried to recognize that we have, as county
3 commissioners, residents and citizens who are on both sides
4 of the question about what's happening with the Idaho Power
5 relicensing.

6 We have folks that are concerned always about the
7 water, not only the quality of the water but also the amount
8 of the water. We have people who are concerned about the
9 rates; we have people who are concerned about the emergency
10 services.

11 So we have tried to approach the Idaho Power
12 relicensing on a pretty stable way, in a sense that what we
13 have looked at is how Idaho Power and the relicensing and
14 the complex affects the county as a whole. Putting aside
15 the water quality to a certain extent, putting aside some of
16 these other things. What are the impacts on the county?

17 So what we have done is approached Idaho Power
18 regarding, as Lee talked about, and I appreciate many of
19 your comments, Lee, and I know that you find that
20 surprising, because we don't -- I don't think Lee always
21 thinks that we're listening.

22 But the impact on the county as a whole, on
23 emergency medical services on our law enforcement, on the
24 noxious weeds, these are all things that we have approached
25 Idaho Power about and we continue to work with them on

1 issues that impact all of the residents on an equal basis.

2 We are concerned about the river also. We had
3 the opportunity to take a plane ride and look at the quality
4 of our river, what is left of it. As Wayne Ferrell talked
5 about, what it used to be like. I've heard those stories
6 too from one of our commissioners.

7 We're concerned about that, and wanting to work
8 with Idaho Power. We also recognize the fact that the
9 quality of the river as it is now is not all a result of the
10 complex. So there are many people that need to be at that
11 table.

12 I sat in on a negotiation and found out that you
13 can't put a lot of people at a table at the same time and
14 feel that you're going to gain a lot of ground. At least I
15 didn't see that process working very well for the year that
16 I went to those meetings.

17 But we would like to see Idaho Power sit down and
18 address some of these issues with the people that are most
19 profoundly impacted by them. Whether that's done before the
20 licensing or after the licensing, I do think that there
21 needs to be something within that agreement, within that
22 license, that allows our citizens to sit down and talk to
23 Idaho Power and work out solutions to some of the problems
24 that we have.

25 As we look at the licensing process, it is

1 difficult, I think, for the common person to be able to get
2 their ideas across. It's very, very difficult to come and
3 talk at one of these meetings, or to be involved in it.

4 I have received over the last couple of years
5 reams of paper. Thank goodness now we're going to putting
6 things on a disk, so it doesn't take quite so many trees.

7 But it's very, very difficult for the common
8 person and the common organizations that are small
9 organizations to weed through this whole process and all the
10 paper work it takes to try to get their views and their
11 comments to you folks.

12 Somehow, there needs to be a better line of
13 communication that allows our residents to do that. We are
14 concerned about the water. We're concerned about the
15 wildlife.

16 Our people in this county see that as our river,
17 and I was told at the meetings that it was not our river; it
18 is a national treasure, and I accept that.

19 But the people in our county still see it as our
20 river. It is still our area to go down and go fishing, our
21 area to go down and go hunting, our area to go down and go
22 camping.

23 To see our folks locked out of that, to not have
24 any input into it or not be able to utilize what actually
25 has been there for many, many years to be able to use, is

1 disappointing.

2 They need to have the opportunity to express that
3 and the opportunity to contribute in some way to seeing that
4 the problems that are an impact of the complex and those
5 things that are not, they ought to be able to have the
6 opportunity to take part in that communication. I don't
7 know what that vehicle is.

8 But we as a board of commissioners have a lot of
9 the same concerns that you've heard here tonight, and a lot
10 of other concerns that go with it. We are concerned about
11 the price of power for our citizens, because it impacts our
12 farmers, it impacts our cities that takes the water out of
13 there, it impacts all of us in some way.

14 So that's something that we've had to keep in
15 mind as we've gone through and watched this process.

16 So I guess my comments would be we are still
17 talking to Idaho Power, and our hope is that you, as the
18 people making some of these decisions, will make sure that
19 our residents have the opportunity, not only this one time
20 or the one other time that I know that you were in town and
21 I was there, would set up some way so that there could be
22 greater communication with the residents who are most
23 directly affected by having the complex here, having the
24 water quality lower, losing the opportunity to actually use
25 what we consider was ours to start with.

1 So we hope that that will be part of what you do
2 too. I represent one of three people, so I'm only one
3 person expressing an opinion at this time. But I think I
4 have the support of the other two gentlemen that sit on the
5 board with me also. Thank you.

6 MR. MITCHNICK: Thank you. Are there any other
7 comments or questions?

8 MS. HALL: Alan, just one thing. I was wondering
9 if like after we finish, if Mr. or Mrs. Ferrell could show
10 me on a map where all you live on the river?

11 MS. FERRELL: She lives on the river too.

12 MS. HALL: Okay, thanks.

13 MR. MITCHNICK: Okay.

14 (Pause.)

15 MR. MITCHNICK: The draft Environmental Impact
16 Statement basically is, you know, out for a shot at, you
17 know, examining all the issues, you know, all five, six in
18 the recommendations that we received.

19 But it's a draft. It's our first shot, you know.
20 The comments made at the public meetings, comments provided
21 before October 3rd, are extremely important to, you know,
22 let us know, you know, what we got right, what we didn't get
23 right, what needs to be changed.

24 It's a long, complicated process. It's not
25 getting any easier either. So we appreciate your comments

1 tonight, and look forward to your comments by October 3rd.

2 I appreciate you coming tonight. I know you
3 could have been at bingo, but you chose to come to this
4 meeting tonight. So I thank you for coming. Thank you.

5 (Whereupon, at 8:15 p.m., the meeting was
6 concluded.)

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