

5/24/2024

RE: Lake Pend Oreille Refill

Dear Lake Pend Oreille Stakeholders, Members of the Public, and Local Media,

We are writing to express our pressing and serious concerns regarding the refill of Lake Pend Oreille this spring, this summer, and in upcoming years. The economy of our waterfront community rises and falls with the level of the lake and impacts every business and person. While we enjoy both passive and active recreational opportunities all year round, the summer season is what we depend on and what sustains our economy through slow times

While we certainly understand that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers needs to exercise a high degree of caution regarding the spillway gate defect now being studied, our greater concern is the impact these lower-than-normal lake levels will have on the communities that surround the lake. Our hope is to help foster interest from the public on this issue and send that feedback to the Governor of Idaho, the Idaho Attorney General, and all elected officials tasked with representing the people of Idaho, the economy of Idaho, and holding the federal government accountable to the laws they promised to uphold when Albeni Falls Dam was built.

The Corps of Engineers, and specifically local staff at Albeni Falls Dam, have kindly held stakeholder meetings and are sending out regular updates, however the facts presented demonstrate this is a long-term situation and those facts don't alleviate the impacts we are experiencing now or the potential impacts to come, which include the inability to plan and predict from month to month and year to year. As residents of this beautiful and remarkable place, we know from firsthand experience that maintaining high water quality and quantity in our lakes, rivers and streams is paramount to the overall health of Bonner County and Idaho.

We would ask that you contact our governmental representatives including Governor Brad Little, Attorney General Raul Labrador, Senator Mike Crapo, Senator James Risch, Congressman Mike Simpson and Congressman Russ Fulcher, and let them know your specific concerns. See below for contact information for these and other key representatives.

NOTE: The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers is holding a public meeting Thurs May 30th at 6pm at the Ponderay Event Center. They have recently provided a virtual option. [Army Corps hosts Albeni Falls Dam public information meetings May 30-31 > Seattle District > Seattle District News Releases](#) Please plan to attend if you can.

Respectfully,

Ford Elsaesser, Lakes Commission Chair

The Lakes Commission is an advisory board to the State of Idaho, charged with studying, investigating, and selecting ways and means of controlling the water quality and water quantity as they relate to waters of Lake Pend Oreille, Pend Oreille River, Priest Lake and Priest River for the communities' interests and the interests of the State of Idaho and for the survival of the native species fish contiguous to the Pend Oreille/Priest River

Governmental Contacts

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U.S. Senator Mike Crapo

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U.S. Senator James Risch

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