



From the Office of Representative Javadi

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Rep. Javadi: BPA Funding Cut Puts Lower Columbia Fisheries and Coastal Jobs at Risk

ASTORIA, Ore. – State Representative Cyrus Javadi (D-Tillamook) is calling on the Bonneville Power Administration to reconsider its decision to end funding for the Select Area Fisheries Enhancement Program, known as SAFE, in the Lower Columbia River.

According to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the decision would take effect September 30 and leave a **\$2.4 million funding gap among Oregon, Washington, and Clatsop County**. It could also put more than **7 million hatchery salmon currently in production at risk**.

“This may sound like one more fight over a government program with a long name,” Rep. Javadi said. “But for people who live and work along the Lower Columbia, it is much simpler than that. It is about whether there are fish to catch, jobs to work, and paychecks to bring home.”

The SAFE program supports hatchery production and terminal fisheries in the Lower Columbia River. It creates fishing opportunities for commercial and recreational fishers while directing more harvest toward hatchery fish and reducing pressure on weaker wild salmon stocks.

SAFE fish account for nearly all spring Chinook and most coho caught by the Columbia River commercial fishery. The commercial fishery produces roughly **\$5 million a year in value paid directly to fishermen** at the dock, before counting the work created for processors, restaurants, hotels, marinas, fuel docks, boat builders, mechanics, and other local businesses.

“People sometimes talk about the fishing economy as though it begins and ends with the person holding the rod or standing on the boat,” Javadi said. “It does not. When the fish disappear, the effects travel quickly. The deckhand loses hours. The processor handles less product. The restaurant buys less seafood. The marina sells less fuel. The hotel has fewer Guests.”

BPA has helped fund SAFE for more than 30 years as part of regional efforts to address the effects of the federal Columbia River hydropower system on fish and wildlife.

“There is a basic principle here,” Javadi said. “When federal decisions impose costs on local communities, the federal government should not simply hand those costs back to the people who had the least say in creating them.”

Members of the bipartisan Oregon Coastal Caucus are working with fishery partners, state agencies, the Governor’s Office, and Oregon’s federal delegation to urge BPA to reconsider its decision.

“No government program should be immune from scrutiny,” Javadi said. “But ending a program that has supported fisheries, protected weaker wild stocks, and sustained coastal jobs for decades is not reform merely because someone found a line to cut in a budget.”

Javadi said the focus should remain on the people whose lives depend on the fishery.

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