



STATE OF WYOMING  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
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MIKE SULLIVAN  
GOVERNOR

September 8, 1993

Commissioner Daniel P. Beard  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Interior Building  
1849 "C" Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

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Dear Mr. Beard:

The State of Wyoming has been working with the Bureau of Reclamation regarding their operation of the upper Snake River storage facilities to utilize and take the fullest advantage of the flexibility in the system to provide improved habitat for the trout fishery below Jackson Lake Dam. Jackson Lake lies within Grand Teton National Park and the entire Snake River area is extremely important for its fishery potential and the tourism based economy in the Jackson area and northwestern Wyoming.

As a reflection of our commitment, in 1990 the State of Wyoming signed a contract with the Bureau to purchase 33,000 acre feet of storage in Palisades Reservoir. Through the Bureau's tracking of accounts between Jackson Lake and Palisades Reservoir, Wyoming is allowed to transfer its storage to Jackson Lake in order to make releases for enhanced instream flows below Jackson Lake. It was my understanding the Bureau would provide a minimum release level, and that the Wyoming storage water would then be available as circumstances required to enhance and supplement that minimum amount provided by the Bureau. Surprisingly, there appears to be reluctance on the part of the Minidoka Projects Office to firmly state the minimum release amount that will be provided by the Bureau. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has completed studies which show the minimum acceptable fall and winter release to be 280 cubic feet per second. This entire project has always appeared to me, given the fishery and the flexibility of the system, to be one of those rare win-win situations for everyone and for that reason I am anxious to assure we have clear understandings and agreement on the operations.

The Minidoka Project Office holds a public meeting each spring in Jackson, Wyoming to provide the public with the Bureau's planned operations for the upcoming season. At that meeting on May 19,

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1993, the Bureau was requested to explore their arrangement with the Corps of Engineers regarding the flood control space provided at Jackson Dam. Interested representatives from the public believe (and my people agree) that the evacuation of this flood space could be staged and extended into the fall and winter in order to provide additional flows in the critical October through December period to enhance the fishery without in any way compromising the ability to have space in Jackson Lake for flood control. This seems to make sense and again accomplishes both objectives without compromising either. I understand that the Bureau did agree to explore the operations of the flood control space and would contact the Corps of Engineers regarding the current October 1 date for evacuation of the space. Given current releases, several of my constituents in the Jackson area have contacted me to share their concern that perhaps the Bureau isn't exploring this option for providing flows as fully or as quickly as possible.

This project of purchasing Palisades Reservoir storage water was initiated during my tenure as Governor and because I see this as making sense in so many ways, I am committed to seeing that Wyoming's water be utilized for enhancement purposes as distinguished from maintaining the minimum flow required for the fishery (which I see as a Bureau position) and that we work collaboratively to improve the resource. Given that the irrigation users are all located below Palisades Reservoir, it would appear there is a large amount of flexibility in the system that could be utilized more fully for the Bureau to guarantee a larger minimum flow. I am advised we are not promoting any operational changes that would injure the existing contractors at your facilities, but am convinced the system flexibility can provide a greater commitment for instream flows and at the same time not put contractors at risk.

I would appreciate your looking into these matters on the upper Snake River system. Members from the Wyoming State Engineer's Office, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department will be meeting with staff from the Minidoka Projects Office on Friday, September 10, 1993 to discuss fall and winter operations for the balance of this year. I look forward to discussing these issues with you and believe the Snake River is an area where we can showcase a new direction and joint initiative.

With best regards, I am

Very truly yours,



Mike Sullivan

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cc: John Keys, Pacific Northwest Regional Director  
Gordon W. Fassett, Wyoming State Engineer  
Francis Petera, Wyoming Game and Fish Director