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Bellevue, WA 98004
June 1, 1999

Mr. Thomas Ferns
U. S. Department of Energy
Richland Operations Office
P. O. Box 550
MSIN HO-12
Richland, WA 99352

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DOE-RL/DIS

Dear Mr. Ferns:

I am writing in support of the strongest possible protection for Hanford Reach of the Columbia River. The Steelhead Committee of the Federation of Fly Fishers endorses the Department of Energy alternative, plus the Save the Reach Coalition's amendments in favor of a comprehensive National Wildlife Refuge and in opposition to expanded grazing.

As the last remaining stretch of free flowing river in the Columbia/Snake from Bonneville upstream to the Canadian and Idaho borders, Hanford Reach is unique and worthy of maximum protection. It is no coincidence that the Reach supports the only remaining healthy spawning run of wild chinook salmon above Bonneville.

The Columbia/Snake salmon and steelhead crisis has water shortage written all over it, not in a heavy snow pack year like 1999, but in the periodic dry years that stress the sea-run salmonids most severely. Further development and agricultural irrigation along Hanford Reach can only increase the severity of water shortages and the resulting impacts on the fish during these drought years.

The overwhelming majority of the people of the Northwest want Hanford Reach to be protected. Thank you for considering these issues.

Sincerely yours,



Bill Redman
Steelhead Committee
Federation of Fly Fishers