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BIG BEND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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Richland, WA 99352-0550

June 1, 1999

Subject: Use of the Hanford Reach

The Big Bend EDC Board of Directors supports multiple use of the Hanford Reach lands.

When these lands were forcibly taken from private property owners, it was with the understanding that they would be returned to the Columbia Basin Project, when no longer needed. To renege on this promise, would be a breach of faith by the US Government.

The BBEDC Board of Directors supports the Hanford Reach Protection and Management Plan (2 April 1999) prepared by the Boards of Commissioners of Benton, Franklin, and Grant Counties. This plan was developed with the input of a " Citizens Advisory panel", numerous public hearings, and the assistance of professional planning staff of Benton, Franklin, and Grant counties.

This plan took approximately 4 years of planning and preparation, offered an opportunity for input from all the various interested and affected parties. It is truly the result of a "grass roots" planning and public participation process.

This plan is the only regional, grass roots, multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan to date. It is the blueprint for a management strategy developed in an open and democratic fashion.

We urge the adoption of the Hanford Reach Protection and management Plan developed by the three counties as the governing document for the Hanford Reach.

We are opposed to the lands being turned over to the US F&W Service for permanent protection as a wildlife refuge.

We are opposed to the lands being designated as Wild & Scenic.

We are opposed to Federal Control of the Hanford Reach Lands.

Sincerely,

Irwin W. Graedel
Chairman Pro-Tem

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