



**For Immediate Release  
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**Contacts:** **Dave Hunt, Channel Deepening Coalition**, 503-285-6343  
[Dave@Channelcoalition.com](mailto:Dave@Channelcoalition.com)  
**Elisa Dozono, Port of Portland**, 503-944-7061  
[Dozone@portptld.com](mailto:Dozone@portptld.com)

## **COLUMBIA RIVER PROJECT MEETS IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL MILESTONE**

The executive directors of lower Columbia River port sponsors jointly announced today they are pleased that the Columbia River Channel Deepening Project has met the stringent regulatory requirements of the Endangered Species Act. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) today issued their Biological Opinion of “no jeopardy” on the project.

“This project is a critical component of the region’s economy, benefiting both rural and urban communities in Oregon and Washington,” said Ken O’Hollaren, executive director of the Port of Longview and chair of the Interstate Columbia River Improvement Project (ICRIP). “We are all very pleased that it has met the rigorous requirements of the Endangered Species Act.”

“This is an important step in the environmental review process,” said Larry Paulson, executive director for the Port of Vancouver. “We will continue to support an environmentally sound project that leaves the river in better shape than it is today.”

During a six-month public process conducted last year by the Corps, NMFS, USFW and the sponsor ports, an independent scientific panel of nationally known ecosystem experts appointed by Sustainable Ecosystems Institute convened to review the environmental and technical issues associated with the project. The group established the best available science by which the channel deepening project should be measured and that it would have no measurable effect on endangered fish.

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The Army Corps of Engineers will supplement the Environmental Impact Statement for the project later this year. They will evaluate any changes including added restoration components, and update the cost/benefit analysis. “This next step is an important phase of the project when the public can provide additional feedback on environmental aspects of channel deepening and river restoration,” said Bill Wyatt, Port of Portland executive director.

Also occurring this summer, the states of Oregon and Washington will review water quality certifications, coastal zone consistency and other environmental regulations. If the project meets these regulatory requirements, plans call for restoration to be done up front.

“We realize there is still much work to be done,” said Lanny Cawley, executive director of the Port of Kalama. “In addition to the final environmental considerations, we will continue to work to find solutions that are good for the fish, the river and the people who live along its shores.”

## **MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

### **Please coordinate interviews with sponsoring ports through Dave Hunt:**

- Ken O'Hollaren, Port of Longview Executive Director
- Larry Paulson, Port of Vancouver Executive Director
- Bill Wyatt, Port of Portland Executive Director (contact Elisa Dozono)
- Lanny Cawley, Port of Kalama Executive Director
- Dianne Perry, Channel Coalition Project Manager (contact Elisa Dozono)
- David Ripp, Port of Woodland General Manager
- Pete Williamson, Port of St. Helens General Manager

*For public meeting schedules and more information, visit the Port of Portland's website at [www.portofportland.com](http://www.portofportland.com) or [www.channeldeepening.com](http://www.channeldeepening.com).*

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