

Transportation Impacts of Lower Snake Dams Removal

Background

The Snake River from Clarkston to Pasco contains four dams (Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose and Lower Granite). There has been much interest in removal of these dams for the benefit of salmon, steelhead, Pacific lamprey, bull trout, sturgeon and other native fish species. While there have been several studies that address the topic of removing the dams, there is limited understanding of how transportation would be affected.

The Washington State legislature directed WSDOT to conduct an analysis of highway, road and freight rail transportation needs, options and impacts of shifting the movement of freight and goods that currently move by barge to truck and rail. This study will fulfill that request by the Legislature.



About the Study

Currently, large quantities of freight and goods move by barge through the Lower Snake River dams. Several industries, especially the agricultural sector, have relied on barge transportation for decades. This study asks: what will be the impact on the region's transportation network if barges are eliminated due to dam removal?

We will attempt to answer this by generating truck and rail volume estimates and evaluating scenarios for changes in infrastructure and operations that would be necessary to accommodate additional volumes on roads and railways. As part of the study, a robust and inclusive public engagement process will be conducted to solicit feedback from agency partners, Tribes, key interested parties, and community members.



The study will:

Generate rail and freight volume estimates



Evaluate scenarios for changes in transportation infrastructure and operations



Include an analysis based on available financial and emissions data

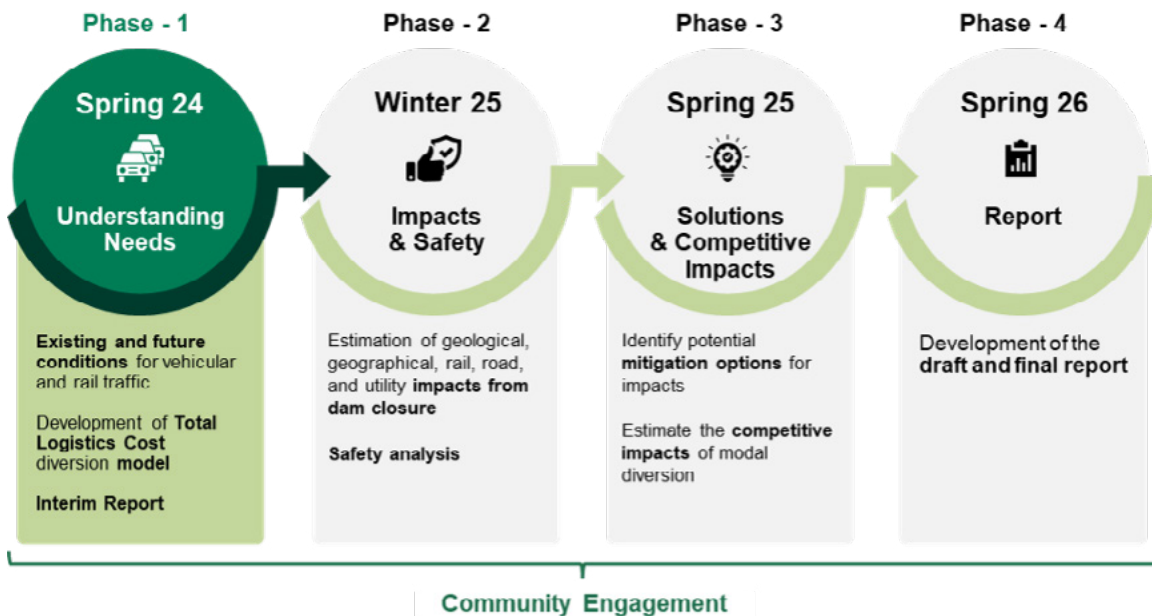


Conduct a robust, inclusive public engagement process to gather community feedback

Study Timeline

There are four phases to the study with community engagement activities being conducted throughout. To stay up to date on the study's progress and learn about opportunities to provide input, please visit the project webpage at tinyurl.com/5edffxux.

As of August 2024, we are in the middle of Phase 1. We are collecting information from companies that create and move freight to be able to build a transportation model. The transportation model will be used throughout the study to determine how the transportation network will need to change to continue moving goods into and out of Eastern Washington.



More information

We have three ways to stay informed about the study as it progresses.



First is an email distribution list through GovDelivery. Emails will go out at least

quarterly and when we have planned community engagement events or draft/final reports. You may sign up to receive project updates via GovDelivery by visiting tinyurl.com/2hbbyzfm or by scanning the QR code above.

We will also be regularly updating our project website. Access the page by visiting tinyurl.com/5edffxux or by scanning the QR code below.



Lastly, if you are unable to access the electronic communication options or need translation services, please contact project lead Jim Mahugh:

Jim Mahugh

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