

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 7, 2024

The Honorable Michael Connor
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Assistant Secretary Connor,

Lake Pend Oreille and the Pend Oreille River play an important role in North Idaho. The defective spillway gate at Albeni Falls Dam creates long-term uncertainty regarding the levels of both the lake and the river. This situation is extremely concerning to us and we urge the Corps of Engineers to devote all necessary resources to resolve this situation as soon as safely possible.

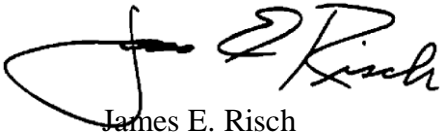
Albeni Falls Dam provides flood control, energy production, and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Since 1955, the dam has played a vital role in Columbia River system management, and the bodies of water it regulates fuel the regional economy. It is of great interest to us and our constituents how dam operations will be affected by the discovery of the defects in the spillway gate.

Without a spare spillway gate in service, and with the concern that the remaining spillway gates may have defects in their construction, Albeni Falls Dam cannot operate as intended. While we commend the Corps for ongoing communications with our offices and the public, there are still many uncertainties the Corps should work to address. The timeline for returning the dam to regular operations is chief among them.

We urge the Corps to give this matter the highest priority – to collaborate with Bonneville Power Administration and the local community, and find the resources necessary to return Albeni Falls Dam to regular operations. This must happen in the shortest timeframe possible that also prioritizes public safety. Tens of thousands of people depend on Lake Pend Oreille and the Pend Oreille River for their recreation and livelihoods, not to mention those who live on these bodies of water. If the dam remains at modified spillway operations into next year, these people, as well as the management of the overall Columbia River system, will be severely impacted.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this situation. We look forward to hearing the Corps' plan for returning Albeni Falls Dam to its regular operation, and request we be informed of the timeline to accomplish this.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of James E. Risch in black ink.

James E. Risch
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Mike Crapo in blue ink.

Mike Crapo
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Russ Fulcher in blue ink.

Russ Fulcher
Member of Congress