



**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL
ENGINEERS, LOCAL 97**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Workers at US Army Corps of Engineers were given a “take it or leave it” ultimatum at the town hall meeting last week where they learned of the misguided scheme to alter the way that the agency balances the needs of the various users of the Columbia River. They were told by Army Corps’ management that the decision had been made and that they need to get in line with it or find somewhere else to work. Some already have.

“Management cooked up this scheme behind closed doors without adequate employee involvement,” said Gordon Taxer, President of IFPTE Local 97 representing the affected workers, “Likely, the drivers of this plan have less total combined experience regulating rivers than the least experienced of the actual river regulators.” The Corps of Engineers plans to spread responsibility for reservoir regulation between 4 individual offices, instead of retaining centralized control, as it has for over 40 years at its Northwestern Division headquarters in Portland.

“Experienced regulators are leaving the Corps; these people don’t grow on trees,” added Taxer, “With National Weather Service forecasting a wetter than average Fall, we are speeding toward a train wreck.” River Regulators are responsible to operate the Columbia Basin reservoir system to protect salmon, generate hydropower, and to provide navigation, flood prevention, and irrigation.

“This has a chilling affect on the entire workforce; when our membership sees the slash and burn strategy carried out on the very group credited with preventing over \$3 billion in flood damages during the 1996 flood, they are not inspired.” said Taxer.

The Northwestern Division Reservoir Control Center in Portland has regulated Columbia Basin river operations for some 40 years to prevent floods, generate hydropower, protect fish and wildlife, and provide navigation, recreation, irrigation, and municipal water supplies, while adding value to the region.

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IFPTE Local 97 represents approximately 120 professional and administrative employees of the Northwestern Division, US Army Corps of Engineers, located in Portland, Oregon and Omaha, Nebraska responsible for water resources development throughout the Columbia and Missouri River Basins and military construction throughout the northern states west of the Mississippi River.