



IDAHO



OREGON



WASHINGTON

January 25, 2018

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici  
439 Cannon Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer  
1111 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
2134 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Suzan DelBene  
Beutler  
2442 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Denny Heck  
425 Cannon Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jaime Herrera  
1107 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pramila Jayapal  
319 Cannon Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Derek Kilmer  
1520 Longworth Office Building  
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The Honorable Raúl R Labrador  
1523 Longworth Office Building  
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The Honorable Rick Larsen  
2113 Rayburn Office Building  
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The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
1314 Longworth Office Building  
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The Honorable Dan Newhouse  
1318 Longworth Office Building  
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The Honorable David G. Riechert  
1127 Longworth Office Building  
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The Honorable Kurt Schrader  
2431 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson  
2084 Rayburn Office Building

The Honorable Adam Smith  
2264 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden  
2184 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Northwest House Delegation Members:

As Governors that are working to recover Columbia basin salmon and steelhead, we urge you to support legislation aimed at reducing sea lion predation on threatened and endangered and other at-risk fish populations. Although several hundred million dollars are invested annually to rebuild these native fish runs, their health and sustainability is threatened unless Congress acts to enhance protection from increasing sea lion predation.

Over the last decade, predation by sea lions on salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, and lamprey in the Columbia River has increased dramatically. State researchers have estimated that sea lions consume about 20 percent of the entire spring Chinook run. More recent year research by NOAA Fisheries has found that up to 45 percent of spring Chinook adult salmon disappear between the estuary and Bonneville Dam. Much of that loss can be attributed to sea lions.

The risk is not unique to spring Chinook. Oregon scientists have concluded that wild winter steelhead are at extreme risk of extinction if the current rate of sea lion predation continues in the Willamette River. Additionally, Columbia River sturgeon are being impacted by sea lion predation at alarming rates.

It's hard to imagine successful recovery of threatened and endangered fish populations with these high levels of interception by sea lions.

H.R. 2083, the Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Protection Act, augments existing state, federal, and tribal authorities and allows quicker and more efficient intervention but still limits lethal removal. Hopefully, both parties can agree on a version of this bill that will gain broad bipartisan support in the Senate as well as the House.

No one wants to harm these great marine mammals, but effectively dealing with a small fraction of the healthy sea lion population is preferable to losing unique and irreplaceable species of salmon.

Sincerely,



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C. L. "Butch" Otter  
Governor  
State of Idaho



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Kate Brown  
Governor  
State of Oregon



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Jay Inslee  
Governor  
State of Washington