



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, November 14, 2013
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Committee Passes Legislation to Help Protect Endangered Salmon Survival in the Pacific Northwest

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed H.R. 1308 the “*Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act*” by a vote of 22-16. This legislation is aimed at protecting endangered Columbia River salmon and other fish species from predation by California and Steller Sea Lions. The bill only addresses sea lions that are not listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

“For years, Northwest ratepayers have paid hundreds of millions of dollars every year on measures to protect endangered salmon migrating through the Columbia River dams, only to see a growing number fall prey to aggressive sea lions that wait at the base of the Bonneville Dam and other locations to feast on these fish. This bill is a common sense path forward to protect our substantial investment in Northwest salmon recovery, and provide federal, state and tribal fish managers the tools necessary to control sea lions rather than having to rely on lawyers and uncertain court rulings,” **said Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04).**

[Click here](#) to read Chairman Hastings’ statement on H.R. 1308.

In recent years, sea lions have been entering the lower 205 miles of the Columbia River around Bonneville Dam and feasting on endangered fish. Recent state court filings say that during winter and spring months, as many as 1,000 California Sea Lions can be in the lower Columbia River, each of which consumes fifteen to thirty pounds of fish per day. Conservative estimates show that sea lions during April and May eat 12,000 to 20,000 fish throughout the Columbia River and its tributaries.

As record and near-record runs of salmon are returning to the Columbia River to spawn, the sea lion populations have substantially increased and are a growing threat to endangered salmon runs and other fish species. Despite dramatic population increases in recent decades, sea lions enjoy strong federal protection making it virtually impossible to control them.

Multiple scientific task forces have been convened for several years and have concluded that non-lethal removal have not been effective. Three separate National Environmental Policy Act analyses have been conducted since 2006, which examined the effects of the lethal removal of California and Stellar Sea Lions in the Columbia River, including extensive review of the impacts on air, water quality, marine mammals, ESA-listed salmon, other fish

species and habitats, wildlife and birds, vegetation, social and economic resources, tourism and recreation, cultural resources, noise, aesthetics, transportation public services and human health. Each analysis took several months and was followed by frivolous lawsuits and unnecessary, lengthy court hearings that have delayed action for years incurring unknown costs and economic impacts for the states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

H.R. 1308 is identical to legislation introduced last Congress that passed the House in June 2012 by a bipartisan vote of 232 -188 and is supported by the [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) and the [Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) and the [Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission](#).

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