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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Fleming
Chairman

Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs
Statement on the Endangered Salmon Predation Prevention Act
House Natural Resources Committee
June 14, 2011

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Good morning, we are here today to discuss H.R. 946, the Salmon Predation Prevention Act, a bill sponsored by our Full Committee Chairman, Doc Hastings.

Marine Mammals were given federal protection in 1972, with the enactment of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Congress enacted the law in part to address the decline of many marine mammal populations from various human activities.

The Act has been very successful in protecting and restoring marine mammal populations to abundant levels - the California sea lion population is an example of the Act's success. However, the high number of sea lions is having an adverse impact on salmon and steelhead, species listed under the Endangered Species Act.

In 1994, the Marine Mammal Protection Act was amended to authorize the use of deterrence methods to reduce sea lion predation on the listed fish species. However, the nonlethal removal measures have not been successful. H.R. 946 would require the Secretary of Commerce to make a determination that nonlethal deterrence measures are not working to protect listed salmon species. The Secretary would then be authorized to use a temporary expedited permit process to allow the states to lethally remove a limited number of sea lions to protect threatened and endangered salmon migrating up the Columbia River to spawn.