



March 23, 2015

The Honorable Jaime Herrera-Beutler
1130 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kurt Schrader
2431 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Please Advance HR 564

Dear Representative Herrera-Beutler and Representative Schrader:

Chelan, Douglas and Grant PUDs (Mid-Columbia PUDs) strongly support H.R. 564, the Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act. Protecting salmon and steelhead from predation throughout their lifecycle is critical to ensuring that regional investments in hydropower improvement, hatcheries and habitat achieve the desired result of protecting and enhancing fish populations.

The Mid-Columbia PUDs own and operate five hydropower dams on the Columbia River. As part of our hydropower operating licenses, we are obligated to protect salmon and steelhead migrating through our project areas. And we do this with great success. However, we have little control over survival of adult fish beyond the immediate area of our projects.

Returning adult fish are particularly valuable for meeting recovery goals and the future of the fishery. A February 2015 study by the Independent Scientific Advisory Board suggests that predation on adult fish during upstream migration reduces the potential spawning population much more than an equivalent rate of predation at earlier life stages. In order to support the combined anadromous fish protection efforts of many federal and non-federal entities in the region, we believe it is appropriate to aggressively protect returning adults from sea lions and seals.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. We support this legislation and hope to work with you as the bill advances.

Sincerely,

Steve Wright
Chelan PUD General Manager

Bill Dobbins
Douglas PUD General Manager

Tony Webb
Grant PUD General Manager



Coastal Conservation Association

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September 21, 2016

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva,

We are writing on behalf of the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) state chapters in Washington and Oregon to urge the Committee on Natural Resources to take favorable action on H.R. 564, the Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act. There is an urgent need for the new authorities this legislation would provide state, tribal and federal fish and wildlife managers to protect endangered salmon and steelhead populations in the Columbia River basin – an effort that is worthy of bipartisan support.

CCA Washington has sixteen chapters across the state, spanning across western, central and eastern Washington. CCA Oregon has a dozen chapters, including four in the Portland metro area. CCA is a nationwide organization comprised of conservation-minded recreational anglers with an objective to conserve, promote, and enhance the present and future availability of fishery resources for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public.

As you know, the full House approved this legislation in the 112th and 113th Congresses. Unfortunately, the Senate failed to take action on the legislation. We appreciate the Natural Resources Committee's commitment to moving this important legislation forward once again. We know that over 1,000 CCA members and concerned conservationists have written members of the Northwest Delegation – House and Senate – to urge their support for the legislation. There is a clear need for action:

- A recent [NOAA study](#) found that 45 percent of returning Columbia River spring Chinook, including the wild ESA-listed population, went missing in the lower Columbia River (even after harvest and other known impacts). The reduced survival for spring Chinook corresponds closely with the huge increase in California sea lions entering the Columbia. In fact, in just five years, the number of sea lions counted in the Columbia River at Astoria has exploded by 10 times from about 200 to nearly 2,500.
- In 2014, [ODFW estimates](#) that California sea lions below Willamette Falls consumed 8 percent of the wild, ESA-listed upper Willamette River spring Chinook run and 13 percent of the wild, ESA-listed Willamette River Steelhead run. These impacts increased in 2015 and 2016. Our ESA-listed species cannot sustain year over year predation impacts of this magnitude.

30 Years of Conservation

Dedicated to the Conservation and Protection of Marine and Freshwater Life
11805 NE 99th Street #1350 • Vancouver, WA 98682 • (877) 255-8772 • Fax (877) 255-8774
www.ccaoregon.org www.ccawashington.org



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The current removal authority provided under Section 120 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act is insufficient to address the serious threat posed by growing, unnatural marine mammal populations to the 13 ESA-listed stocks of Columbia River Basin salmon and steelhead. The need for action is particularly acute in the Willamette River where ESA-listed Steelhead will likely go extinct in the near future if nothing is done to reduce marine mammal predation.

We support the Committee's intent to once again approve H.R. 564 and hope that the House and the Senate can come together on a compromise solution that can be passed during the final days of the 114th Congress.

Sincerely,

Chris Cone, Executive Director
CCA Oregon

Nello Picinich, Executive Director
CCA Washington

CC: Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler
Congressman Kurt Schrader

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www.ccaoregon.org

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Pacific Fishery Management Council

7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101, Portland, OR 97220-1384
Phone 503-820-2280 | Toll free 866-806-7204 | Fax 503-820-2299 | www.pcouncil.org
Dorothy M. Lowman, Chair | Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director

June 25, 2015

The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler
U.S. House of Representatives
1130 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: Requested Pacific Fishery Management Council Comments on the Endangered
Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act (H.R. 564)

Dear Congresswoman Herrera Beutler:

Thank you for the June 15, 2015 request from your office for review and comment on H.R. 564, the Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Pacific Council). At its June 2015 meeting, the Pacific Council and its Legislative Committee reviewed H.R. 564 and the Pacific Council directed me to convey the following comment.

The Pacific Council is committed to sustainable West Coast salmon fisheries and the recovery of salmon stocks listed under the Endangered Species Act. The Pacific Council is encouraged by the success of the Marine Mammal Protection Act in restoring healthy marine mammal populations, but is concerned about marine mammal predation on salmon and other stocks at critical migration areas of the Columbia River basin. The Pacific Council appreciates your efforts to balance the important statutory requirements of the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act through H.R. 564's measured and cooperative approach to salmon predation issues on the Columbia River and its tributaries.

Existing predation control efforts are the result of strong coordination between the Oregon, Washington, and Federal natural resources agencies and the tribes. The Pacific Council believes that this coordination is critical for future management decision and is supportive of H.R. 564's continuation of this cooperative environment. Although lethal removal of California sea lions has occurred in the absence of new legislation, the current process is cumbersome, requiring a lengthy approval process that results in limited and/or delayed removals. The Pacific Council generally supports H.R. 564 as a way to simplify and streamline the permitting process to allow a more rapid response to time-sensitive conservation situations. The Pacific Council offers the following comments on the bill:

1. The states and tribes have conducted and documented extensive field studies on salmon predation by marine mammals and have demonstrated sound and responsible stewardship. Therefore, the Pacific Council recommends the permitting process afford greater management flexibility and authority to the States and Tribes. The Pacific

Council supports reasonable Federal oversight, but believes more decisions could be delegated to the permitted state and tribal entities.

2. Under the current version of H.R. 564, issued permits would be valid for up to one year. The Pacific Council believes this time interval is appropriate and will eliminate the need for repetitive renewals.
3. H.R. 564 does not require the states and tribes to document predation by individual animals before lethal removal permits can be issued and it does not limit the area where removal can occur to the immediate tailrace area of Bonneville Dam. The Pacific Council believes that these natural resource management entities have considerable experience and expertise in determining when and where lethal removal is appropriate.
4. The Pacific Council notes that analyses in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) have been conducted for previous efforts to manage marine mammal predation. In the interest of streamlining the permitting process and to allow a more rapid response to urgent predation issues, the Pacific Council supports the provisions in H.R. 564 that would exempt the proposed process from NEPA so long as this exemption would not delay or diminish the program's effectiveness.

Thank you again for requesting Pacific Council comments on H.R. 564. Should you or your staff have any questions about this letter, please contact me or Ms. Jennifer Gilden, the lead Staff Officer on this matter, at 503-820-2280.

Sincerely,



D. O. McIsaac, Ph.D.
Executive Director

JDG:kma

Cc: Pacific Council Members
The Honorable Kurt Schrader
The Honorable Dan Newhouse
The Honorable Cathy McMorris-Rodgers
The Honorable Michael Simpson
Salmon Technical Team
Salmon Advisory Subpanel



April 29, 2015

The Honorable Jaime Herrera-Beutler
1130 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kurt Schrader
2431 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dan Newhouse
1641 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Re: RiverPartners' Support for HR 564

Dear Representatives Herrera-Beutler, Schrader and Newhouse:

Northwest RiverPartners' (NWRP) appreciates the leadership you have shown in sponsoring H.R. 564, the Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act. We strongly support this legislation which will help protect salmon listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as well as unlisted salmon, sturgeon and other species from ever increasing and devastating predation by sea lions. We look forward to working with you and others in the region including tribes, fisherman and state and federal agencies, to assist in its passage.

NWRP's member organizations include more than 40,000 farmers, 4 million electric utility customers, northwest ports, and small and large businesses that rely on the economic and clean energy benefits of the Columbia and Snake rivers and the federal hydro system. We support salmon restoration polices based in sound science and cost-effectiveness. Our members, their constituents and customers pay for the regional Fish and Wildlife Program through their wholesale power purchases from the Bonneville Power Administration, which reports that about one-third of the power rate is attributable to fish and wildlife commitments.

It is a fact that the Northwest's fish and wildlife program is the largest restoration program for species anywhere in the nation. While killing sea lions is a last resort, it is a necessary one to protect the hundreds of millions being spent annually by Northwest residents to protect and enhance salmon and other species. Other methods such as hazing, exclusion devices and removal of worst offenders have been ineffectual, and an expedited procedure and expanded list of authorities eligible to assist in sea lion removal and lethal take, such as H.R. 564, is needed.

Sea lion predation is indisputably a huge problem and this legislation is critically needed:

- NOAA Fisheries' research indicates that a larger pool of sea lions and seals is taking a much larger toll on the spring chinook salmon run in the lower river estuary, including potentially **45 percent** or more of the adult spring chinook return in 2014;
- In 2014 this means 99,000 adult fish out of 220,000 did not have the chance to make it upriver to their spawning grounds. These returning adult fish are the "lotto" winners of the species having survived numerous obstacles in their lifecycle and carrying the next generation;

- The number of sea lions overall has grown steadily over time. Since March 28, 2015, the number of pinnipeds per day at Bonneville dam has been at least double the 2002-2014 daily average, according to a recent U.S. Army Corps report;
- NOAA Fisheries also reports that the number of sea lions is ever-increasing. For example, the number around Astoria rose from a few hundred sea lions in January 2015 to 2,000 in February 2015 – and this compares to only 200 back in 2010;
- Such numbers exact a human toll as well: boat docks in Astoria are currently over-run by pinnipeds, causing expensive infrastructure damage and frustrating fishermen and residents alike. All methods to deter the animals have failed.

In short, a crisis exists. H.R. 564 is part of a much-needed solution. Predation by California and other sea lions is a significant, unmanaged source of mortality resulting in an unacceptable loss of adult salmon and steelhead returning to the Columbia River. The region needs a sustainable program that balances healthy sea lion populations while supporting the region's goal of successfully recovering salmon and steelhead. H.R. 564 is a common sense approach that will help salmon and other species recover and protect the hundreds of millions of dollars Northwest families and businesses spend every year in salmon protection.

Thank you for your leadership. We look forward to working with you and other supporters as the bill advances.

Terry Flores, Executive Director



Northwest RiverPartners
101 SW Main, Suite 1605
Portland, Oregon
(503) 367-9997 cell
(503) 274-7792 office

Cc: Northwest Delegation House members
Lorri Bodi, Bonneville Power Administration
Bill Maslen, Bonneville Power Administration
Dave Ponganis, U.S. Army Corps
Rock Peters, U.S. Army Corps
Paul Lumley, Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission
NW Power and Conservation Council Members



Washington State
Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, WA 98501
Phone: (360) 902-2200



Oregon State
Department of Fish and Wildlife
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, OR 97302
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Idaho State
Department of Fish and Game
Post Office Box 25
Boise, ID 83707
Phone: (208) 334-3700

July 1, 2015

Northwest Congressional Delegation
United States Senate and
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Northwest Delegation Members:

Over the last decade, predation by sea lions on salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon in the Columbia River, has increased. The long-term success of these fish species, and the significant annual investment in the health and sustainability of native fish runs and fisheries, is threatened unless Congress acts to enhance their protection.

Just in the last year, sea lions and seals in the Columbia River estuary have increased dramatically to numbers far beyond any seen in recent memory. Surveys by Washington and Oregon fish and wildlife department biologists have counted more than 2,300 sea lions and 6,000 harbor seals in the vicinity of Astoria, Oregon, which is a significant increase from this time last year. Many of the sea lions swim over one hundred miles upstream to feed on endangered salmon as they migrate up the Columbia River to spawn in their natal streams

Ongoing research by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries has found that as much as 45 percent of spring Chinook adult salmon may be disappearing between the estuary and Bonneville Dam. This conclusion was reached by installing minute tracking devices on these fish in the estuary and then monitoring their passage to the dam, 140 miles upriver. While accounting for other sources of mortality, the lead NOAA researcher has reported there is a probable, but not yet verified link between salmon losses and predation by seals and sea lions.

We support legislation to address this growing problem and reduce the impacts of marine mammals on Columbia River fish runs and fisheries. We urge your support of legislation to enable state agencies and tribes to more effectively deal with aggressive marine mammal predators while also increasing protection, encouraging rebuilding, and reducing predation on Columbia River fish, especially salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, and

lamprey, which are critically important to the environment, economy, and culture of the region.

Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA) and Congressman Kurt Schrader (D-OR) recently introduced H.R. 564, which would amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to reduce predation on threatened and endangered Columbia River Basin salmon and steelhead, and other non-listed species. The legislation provides a temporary expedited process for the issuance of permits to northwest states and tribes to allow for the lethal removal of aggressive sea lions in the Columbia River that are not deterred by conventional hazing methods. The bill also stipulates that only sea lions that are part of a healthy population, which is not listed as threatened or endangered, could be targeted for removal. This legislation is a very good start to address an increasingly serious problem.

We join many Northwest entities, including electric utilities whose customers invest significant sums annually in fish protection and recovery efforts, and Indian tribes with Columbia River treaty rights, in expressing our concern that predation by marine mammals threatens the progress of the many coordinated efforts to protect, rebuild, and harvest salmon and steelhead. Legislation is needed to enhance the ability of fishery managers to reduce these threats.

Thank you for your continued interest in the natural resources of the Columbia River Basin.

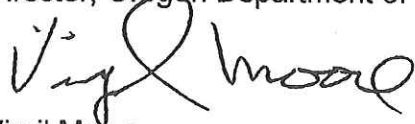
Sincerely,



James Unsworth
Director, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Curt Melcher
Director, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife



Virgil Moore
Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

cc: Congresswoman Jamie Herrera Beutler
Congressman Kurt Schrader

Phil Rockefeller
Chair
Washington

Tom Karier
Washington

Henry Lorenzen
Oregon

Bill Bradbury
Oregon



Northwest **Power** and **Conservation** Council

W. Bill Booth
Vice Chair
Idaho

James Yost
Idaho

Pat Smith
Montana

Jennifer Anders
Montana

February 18, 2015

The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler
U.S. House of Representatives
1130 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Herrera Beutler:

Over the past decade, predation by sea lions on salmon, steelhead, white sturgeon, and Pacific lamprey in the Columbia River has increased, and the significant investment in salmon recovery by taxpayers and Northwest electricity ratepayers is threatened unless legal authority to remove the most aggressive sea lions is expedited.

Accordingly, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council strongly supports your legislation, H.R. 564, to provide tribal and state fish managers in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon, and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, with the means to respond rapidly to remove sea lions from areas where they pose the most harm to threatened and endangered salmonids and other native fish species.

The Council shares your concern that extensive hazing measures near Bonneville Dam have not been effective at reducing predation, and that a temporary expedited procedure is needed to remove the minimum number of animals necessary to protect fish, particularly threatened and endangered species.

The number of sea lions counted at the east mooring basin in Astoria, Oregon, a favorite resting spot for the animals, has increased dramatically over time. The numbers peak twice during the year, in the spring and fall. According to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, in the spring of 2004 the peak was 206; in the spring of 2014, it was 1,420. Similarly, in the fall of 2004, the peak was 195; in the fall of 2014, it was 377. Between 2002 and 2014, California sea lions are believed to have taken about 40,000

adult salmonids in the Columbia River near Bonneville Dam, and between 2005 and 2014, Steller sea lions are believed to have killed 7,800 adult salmonids and more than 12,000 white sturgeon. Additional predation on sturgeon occurs well downstream from Bonneville, but the number has not been quantified.

Representatives of the Oregon and Washington departments of fish and wildlife testified before the Council recently that during a single-day survey last spring, they observed 100 Steller sea lions and 300 California sea lions near Astoria, where their numbers have been growing steadily since 2005, and about 40 Stellers and 25 California sea lions at Bonneville Dam. Preliminary research by NOAA Fisheries suggests that survival of spring Chinook salmon between Astoria and the dam has decreased steadily since 2005, and the highest observed mortality coincides with peak sea lion presence in the river.

Under Section 120 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the states of Oregon and Washington removed (either sent to zoos/aquariums or euthanized) a total of 73 California sea lions from the Bonneville Dam tailrace area between 2008 and 2013. No Steller sea lions have been removed to date. With the overall sea lion population -- and adult fish predation -- increasing, the states and tribes need expedited authority under the law to remove the most aggressive predators, as your legislation would authorize.

As the Council has commented in the past, taxpayers and Bonneville Power Administration ratepayers invest significant sums in the protection and enhancement of fish in the Columbia River Basin, including threatened and endangered species. Your legislation would enhance the managers' ability to remove the most problematic sea lions when they threaten the health and recovery of fish.

Thank you for your continued interest in protecting and restoring fish and wildlife in the Columbia River Basin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Rockefeller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Phil Rockefeller
Chair

cc: Northwest congressional delegation