



March 27, 2018

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
United States House of Representatives  
1314 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: H.R. 3144**

Dear Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers:

Tidewater operates a fleet of tug boats, barges and marine terminals on the Columbia and Snake River System (CSRS) and is the largest inland marine transportation company west of the Mississippi River. Tidewater has been in business since 1932 and its vessels help to move millions of tons of freight every year on the 465 miles of the CSRS, reducing congestion and wear and tear on the nation's highways and railroads while producing far fewer pollutants and carbon emissions than other modes of transportation moving equivalent tonnage.

For many years, navigation interests on the CSRS have faced an uncertain future. Barge operators such as Tidewater that serve the System rely on the four Columbia River locks and the four Snake River locks to navigate the entire inland waterway from Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington to Lewiston, Idaho and Clarkston, Washington. However, going back to 2008, litigation around each of three successive Federal Columbia River System Biological Opinions (FRCPS BiOp) has generated calls from Snake River dam opponents to breach the dams and effectively end commercial navigation on the Snake River.

Tidewater would like to thank you for introducing H.R. 3144 and express our strong support for the bill. The bill, which would keep the 2014 BiOp in place while federal agencies prepare a new plan by 2021, would serve a vital interest by providing consistency and stability around navigation on the CSRS. By mandating that the FRCPS be operated in a manner consistent with the reasonable and prudent alternative set forth in the 2014 BiOp, towing vessel operators can continue to provide reliable, environmentally-sustainable, low-cost freight transportation throughout the entire navigable portion of the CSRS.

Tidewater is extremely grateful for your efforts to highlight the good work that has been done to balance the authorized purposes of the river system with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act. We are encouraged that the 2014 BiOp was the product of the best available science, a significant collaboration between the federal agencies, four states and sovereign Northwest tribes and contributed to record fish runs. Tidewater will continue to support salmon recovery efforts that preserve the many important uses of the CSRS. We thank you for your leadership on this vital issue.

Sincerely,



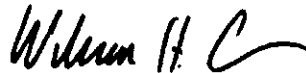
Robert A. Curcio  
President & Chief Executive Officer



Bruce Reed  
Vice President & Chief Operating Officer



Jim McGovern  
Vice President & Chief Financial Officer



William H. Collins  
Environmental, Health, Safety & Security Director

Cc: Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Representative Dan Newhouse  
Representative Kurt Schrader  
Representative Greg Walden  
Representative Raul Labrador  
Representative Greg Gianforte