

April 12, 2021

Dear Members of the Northwest House and Senate Delegations:

As hunting and fishing dependent organizations, we are writing to request your leadership in service of the recovery of abundant wild salmon and steelhead in the Pacific Northwest. Our millions of members, supporters, business employees and customers share a strong appreciation for Northwest salmon and steelhead, and we are excited about Representative Mike Simpson's bold proposal to make smart investments in the future of the Northwest. We urge you to take a strong leadership role by working with Representative Simpson and other colleagues from the Northwest to take full advantage of this rare opportunity.

Having worked with you on key conservation issues over the years, we know many of you share Congressman Simpson's vision – to see salmon return in abundance to the Columbia-Snake River Basin. It is our vision as well, but we are running out of time. Scientists tell us that without corrective action, we could lose Idaho's salmon and steelhead within 20 years.

Although imperiled, these fish are resilient. They are integral to Tribes, anglers, our businesses, and our way of life. The benefits they provide stretch all the way from Salmon, Idaho, to the Grand Ronde in Oregon, to the coastal communities of Washington and Oregon state, to southeast Alaska salmon fisheries.

Even in their reduced status these fish provide jobs and recreation. Outdoor recreation employs 500,000 people and contributes \$57.5 billion to the economies of Idaho, Oregon, Montana, and Washington. The industry is made up of countless small businesses and large corporations, rooted in communities big and small. The Outdoor recreation economy is heavily reliant on salmon and steelhead fisheries especially in rural communities.

The science is clear. The removal of the four lower Snake River dams is necessary for salmon and steelhead to survive and thrive in what was once the largest producer of spring Chinook and steelhead in the Columbia system. The restorative power of transforming slackwater reservoirs into 140 miles of free-flowing river cannot be overstated.

The proposal also includes significant new outdoor recreation opportunities, including a 14,000 acre National Recreation Area comprised of lands currently flooded by the four reservoirs. Simpson has proposed \$125 million for development of the Lower Snake River National Recreation Area that would provide accessible recreation and tourism for jet boating, rafting, camping, fishing and hunting.

We have witnessed the restoration success of similar dam removal projects across the nation – from Elwha in Washington to the Penobscot in Maine. When free-flowing rivers are restored and their natural, life-sustaining processes return, fisheries prosper, communities benefit, and watersheds become resilient to climate change.

With your leadership, we can make the Snake River the largest river restoration success in our nation's history, and do that in a way that secures a prosperous future for the Northwest by investing in reliable,

affordable clean energy, the regional transportation system, river-dependent communities, and Native American tribes.

Congressman Simpson's proposal is an investment in the future of the Northwest. His proposal seeks to address all affected interests in a way that can simultaneously restore the Columbia Basin's once-storied salmon runs; meet our treaty responsibilities with Tribes; help orca and other wildlife that rely on healthy, abundant salmon; create jobs and bring sustained prosperity to local economies; and strengthen the region's legacy of clean, affordable, and reliable energy. It is the first comprehensive proposal ever offered to address these complex and controversial issues. We enthusiastically endorse the spirit in which it was developed and urge you to work directly with him to develop and pass legislation.

Bonneville Power Administration has spent \$17 billion in tax and rate-payer funds over the past decades in a failed effort to recover Pacific salmon. Congressman Simpson's proposal is about empowering the people of the Northwest to build a future in which both fish and people can thrive. Salmon have been a pillar of the Northwest economy and a defining feature of the region, and they must be a vibrant part of its future, too.

Your active involvement and leadership are needed to shape and refine Congressman Simpson's proposal. Thoughtful work is urgently needed to resolve these important, inter-linked issues that his proposal seeks to address, to turn this bold proposal into federal legislation and seize this unique/once-in-a-generation opportunity. With your leadership, we are confident we can accomplish an extraordinary, historic result—and one that will also be just, equitable and affordable.

We urge you in the strongest terms to work with us, the Northwest Tribes, with your colleagues in Congress, the Northwest governors, the Biden administration—and Congressman Simpson—to turn a bold proposal into legislation that will garner broad support and provide an enduring legacy for all. We stand ready to help in any way we can.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

- American Fly Fishing Trade Association
- American Sportfishing Association
- Angler Action Foundation
- Association of Northwest Steelheaders
- Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- The Billfish Foundation
- Clearwater Chapter, Idaho River Community Alliance
- Conservation Northwest
- The Fisheries Fund
- Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana
- Fly Fishers International

- Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation
- Idaho Chapter, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Idaho Council of Trout Unlimited
- Idaho Hunters Education Association
- Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association
- Idaho Wildlife Federation
- Izaak Walton League of America
- McKenzie River Guides Association
- National Deer Association
- National Wildlife Federation
- North American Grouse Partnership
- Northwest Guides and Anglers Association
- Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association
- Oregon Chapter, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited
- Oregon Division, Izaak Walton League of America
- Orion: The Hunters Institute
- Pope and Young Club
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
- Trout Unlimited
- Washington Chapter, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Washington Council of Trout Unlimited
- Washington State Council, Fly Fishers International
- Wild Steelhead Coalition