



SNOHOMISH BASIN SALMON RECOVERY FORUM

The Honorable «Role» «First» «Legislator»
«District» Legislative District of the State of Washington
«Address»
«PO_Box»
Olympia, WA 98504

February 7, 2019

RE: Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum State Legislative Priorities

Dear «Role» «Legislator»:

On behalf of the Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum, Water Resources Inventory Area (WRIA 7), we are writing to share our support for salmon recovery funding programs being considered during the 2019 State legislative session. Because a portion of your district is located within WRIA 7, your leadership is critical to ensuring that we can continue our efforts—and Washington State's commitment—to **protect and restore habitat for salmon listed under the Endangered Species Act**. Restoring salmon habitat is critical to ensure the long term availability of Chinook as the primary prey resource for our endangered Southern Resident killer whales.

The state's investment in salmon recovery for the 2019-2021 biennium supports watersheds and the Puget Sound region in making significant progress on our highest priorities. Your support for the **Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the Estuary Salmon and Restoration Program**, and the **Brian Abbot Fish Barrier Removal Board** helps watersheds enhance our science-based salmon recovery efforts and implement priority habitat restoration and protection projects. Support of the **Floodplains by Design** program advances the implementation of multiple benefit floodplain management projects that restore critical salmon habitat, reduce flood hazards, and improve water quality. Funding for the **Washington State Conservation Commission** supports non-regulatory efforts to work with private landowners to implement projects that address resource concerns that provide public benefits and support orca and salmon recovery.

While we are making progress, salmon continue to be in trouble. For the 2019-2021 biennium, we encourage you to accelerate the progress and momentum for salmon recovery in Puget Sound and statewide. Specifically, we ask that you support the following agency budget requests:

- **\$79.6 million** for the **Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration** program in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which will fund a prioritized list of major salmon recovery projects around the Puget Sound region and provides funding to each Puget Sound watershed to run a competitive grant process for implementing critically important habitat projects. Moreover, every \$1 million dollars invested in PSAR creates 17 jobs and generates \$3 million in economic activity. Funding beyond the \$30 million mark provides \$ for regionally-significant large capital projects. This is not the time to reduce this allocation as there are 13 large capital projects ready to be implemented and needing funding.

- **\$88.9 million** in general obligation bonds for the **Salmon Recovery Funding Board** in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which funds habitat protection and restoration projects statewide.
- **\$50 million** for the **Fish Barrier Removal Board** grant program, in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which provides funding to remove barriers that prevent salmon from reaching hundreds of miles of streams and thousands of acres of pristine and restored habitat.
- **\$20 million** for the **Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program** in the in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which provides funding and technical assistance for nearshore restoration and protection efforts in Puget Sound.
- **\$70 million** for the **Floodplains by Design** capital budget request through the Department of Ecology, which will support a prioritized list of multi-benefit floodplain management projects around the state that protect public health and safety while also enhancing salmon habitat.
- Specific programs of the **Washington State Conservation Commission** including:
 - **\$17.1 million** for **Conservation Technical Assistance** to build capacity for conservation district work with private landowners to implement on-the-ground projects that support natural resource management improvements and help address salmon recovery, Puget Sound recovery, and agriculture viability.
 - **\$16 million** for **Natural Resource Investments to support** high priority and on-the-ground capital projects with private landowners. These projects include actions that improve water quality, enhance endangered species habitat, and preserve viable farms.
 - **\$7.5 million** for the **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)** to accelerate the voluntary implementation of projects that protect and enhance critical salmon habitat. This is needed to match approximately \$30 million in federal support

Thank you again for your work to continue Washington State’s commitment to salmon recovery, tribal treaty rights, and to restoring the health of Puget Sound in addition to creating jobs and stimulating our local economy.

If you have any questions about projects funded in WRIA 7 or how these priorities advance our salmon recovery objectives, please feel free to contact Gretchen Glaub, Snohomish Basin Lead Entity Coordinator at 425-388-6403 or gretchen.glaub@snoco.org.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Terry Williams
Chair, Snohomish Basin Salmon
Recovery Forum

Jim Miller
Vice-Chair, Snohomish Basin Salmon
Recovery Forum

cc: Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum Members
Gretchen Glaub, Lead Entity Coordinator, Snohomish Basin