



Beaux Arts Village
 Bellevue
 Bothell
 Clyde Hill
 Edmonds
 Hunts Point
 Issaquah
 Kenmore
 Kent
 King County
 Kirkland
 Lake Forest Park
 Maple Valley
 Medina
 Mercer Island
 Mill Creek
 Mountlake Terrace
 Mukilteo
 Newcastle
 Redmond
 Renton
 Sammamish
 Seattle
 Shoreline
 Snohomish County
 Woodinville
 Woodway
 Yarrow Point

Cedar River Council
 Friends of the Cedar River Watershed
 Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery
 Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce
 Long Live the Kings
 Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group
 Mountains to Sound Greenway
 Northwest Marine Trade Association
 Sno-King Watershed Council
 Trout Unlimited
 Water Tenders

Alderwood Water and Wastewater District
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 US Army Corps of Engineers
 Washington Departments:
 Ecology
 Fish and Wildlife
 Natural Resources
 Washington Association of Sewer and Water Districts
 King Conservation District

September 14, 2017

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RE: Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Salmon Recovery Council State Legislative Priorities

«GreetingLine»

The Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Salmon Recovery Council (Council) submits this letter to you to express concern over the current lack of a state capital budget for the 2017 – 2019 fiscal biennium. The Council is comprised of 28 local governments and stakeholder representatives from businesses, community groups, concerned citizens, and state and federal agencies who have been working collaboratively since 2000 to recover Chinook salmon in our watershed. Funding allocated through the state capital budget is an essential component of our ability to improve habitat for threatened salmon, and our efforts are being hampered without this legislation.

In January, we submitted a letter to you outlining our priorities for the state fiscal biennium (see attached). The priorities include the *Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration* (PSAR) and *Salmon Recovery Funding Board* (SRFB) programs, which are used to implement priority salmon habitat restoration and protection projects. We also outlined our support for the *Floodplains by Design* program, which advances implementation of multiple benefit projects that restore salmon habitat, reduce flood hazards, and improve water quality. We thank you for your past support of these programs and urge the highest possible funding levels for each.

The WRIA 8 Council is the local body that approves funding recommendations for SRFB and PSAR grants. In this role, WRIA 8 has directed over \$12 million in state capital funds to priority salmon recovery projects in our watershed. These state dollars have leveraged nearly \$9 million in federal funding from the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) and at least \$14.5 million in sponsor matching funds. The true amount leveraged from local sources is likely much higher.

Earlier this year, Washington received its 2017 federal PCSRF award, but the authority to spend these federal funds, and the required state match, are derived from the state capital budget. Absent a new capital budget, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) cannot extend contracts for habitat restoration projects under this federal grant. Furthermore, the RCO is awaiting adoption of the capital budget to issue grant agreements for already-approved PSAR proposals, as is the Department of Ecology with the Floodplains by Design program. Projects are approved and ready to move forward, they need only the funding to do so.

«GreetingLine»

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In addition to delaying important progress on priority habitat protection and restoration projects, the lack of a capital budget may affect state agency personnel assignments and also carries implications for the local, community-driven salmon recovery process in Washington. Project sponsors anticipate and depend on these funds to keep project implementation schedules on track. Ultimately, state capital funds are essential to maintaining our approach to—and local support for—efforts to recover the State’s federally-listed salmon populations. State funds serve as the backbone for leveraging outside resources for projects across the state, and these projects provide economic, social, and cultural benefits that extend long-term.

WRIA 8 understands there are significant challenges involved in making state budget decisions, and we greatly appreciate your continued support and acknowledgment of the importance of our irreplaceable salmon populations. If you have any questions about salmon recovery in WRIA 8, please feel free to contact Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed Salmon Recovery Manager, at 206-477-4780 or jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Andy Rheume
Chair, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council
Mayor, City of Bothell

Enclosure

NOTE: This letter was sent to all legislators in the following legislative districts: 1, 5, 11, 21, 32, 36, 37, 38, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, as well as the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, Senate Energy, Environment, and Telecommunications Committee, House Capital Budget Committee, and House Environment Committee.

cc: Sheida Sahandy, Director, Puget Sound Partnership
Kaleen Cottingham, Director, Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
Maia D. Bellon, Director, Washington Department of Ecology
Jim Unsworth, Director, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Justin Parker, Executive Director, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
David Troutt, Chair, Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board
Steve Martin, Executive Coordinator, Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office
Alicia Olivas, Chair, Washington Salmon Coalition
Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed Salmon Recovery Council members
Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Salmon Recovery Manager



2017 Legislative Priorities for Puget Sound Watershed Health and Salmon Habitat Recovery

*Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed
(WRIA 8) Partners*
Updated: January 2017

State Priorities

Capital Budget

Support the Puget Sound Partnership's original PSAR funding request of \$80 million for the 2017 – 2019 biennium (contained in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget). PSAR funds support implementation of the highest priority habitat protection and restoration projects throughout Puget Sound. The program includes: 1) base funding allocated among Puget Sound watersheds for a list of grant round habitat projects, and 2) funding for a prioritized list of specific, large-scale, high-priority capital projects submitted by Puget Sound watersheds. Funds are derived from State general obligation bonds (RCW 77.85). A small portion of this funding also supports local watershed development of priority projects.

- **Support the Recreation and Conservation Office's (RCO) original state capital funding request for the Salmon Recovery Funding Board of \$55.3 million for the 2017 – 2019 biennium.** SRFB funds consist of federal PCSRF dollars and state capital funds that serve as the required match to federal funds. Together, these dollars support annual grant rounds for salmon habitat protection and restoration projects in watersheds around the state. This funding

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THESE PRIORITIES PLEASE CONTACT:

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is a cornerstone of WRIA 8's annual grant round, yet the funding from the state has been in decline for several years. For 2017 – 2019, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board intends to use a portion of the state funding to support Lead Entities' cultivation and development of priority projects, which is intended to increase Washington's competitiveness for federal PCSRF funds.

➤ **Support the Washington Department of Ecology's (Ecology) original Floodplains by Design agency funding request of \$70 million for the 2017 – 2019 biennium.**

In the past two biennial legislative sessions, the legislature allocated funding to Ecology to support a list of multiple benefit floodplain restoration and management projects, including the following WRIA 8 priorities:

- In the 2013-2015 biennium, King County received a \$4.1 million grant to support completion of the Cedar River Rainbow Bend floodplain restoration project and assist with relocating residents of a mobile home park as part of the Riverbend floodplain restoration project.
- In the 2015-2017 biennium, King County and Seattle Public Utilities received a grant to acquire floodplain properties in priority reaches of the Cedar River and develop final design of the Riverbend floodplain restoration project.
- For the 2017 – 2019 biennium, King County applied for funding to construct the Riverbend Floodplain Reconnection Project on the Cedar River.

➤ **Support Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) Washington's Wild Future funding request of \$2.72 million to increase fishing opportunities for the 2017 – 2019 biennium.**

Washington's Wild Futures is an initiative designed to address the most important challenges affecting fish and wildlife conservation in the state, based largely on feedback the public provided to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). The specific request for \$2.72 million to increase fishing opportunities includes

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\$290,700 for Lake Washington Sockeye and Chinook Conservation and would fund monitoring and assessment of predation and other factors limiting salmon survival in Lake Washington in the 2017-19 biennium, as well as support implementation of management actions resulting from a current WRIA 8-supported predation study.

➤ **Support the Puget Sound Partnership’s (PSP) legislative funding strategy for capital actions supporting implementation of the Action Agenda for Puget Sound.**

The overall intent of PSP’s funding strategy is to protect Puget Sound, and funding will support the Partnership’s ability to implement the Action Agenda for Puget Sound, which directly and indirectly benefits salmon recovery. PSP’s salmon recovery habitat restoration priorities may fall more directly under the PSAR program, but the strategic initiatives are an avenue to support stormwater reduction priorities; multi-objective habitat enhancement projects; and integrated water infrastructure projects that address a mix of stormwater, habitat, water supply, and flood protection.

Operating Budget

➤ **Support the Recreation and Conservation Office’s (RCO’s) request of \$907,000 in state general funds to support Lead Entity project development.**

RCO requests state general funds to support the ability of Lead Entities to cultivate and develop projects, and these funds combine with federal PCSRF dollars to support annual Lead Entity grants for project development, grant round coordination, and project tracking. This is the same amount requested in the 2015 – 2017 biennium. For over 10 years, the grant award to WRIA 8 was \$60,000, but for the 2016 – 2017 state fiscal year, the award will be \$45,658 due to declining state contributions and a commensurate decline in Washington’s PCSRF award. The decline in federal PCSRF funds has been linked directly to the amount of project development funds

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included in Washington's PCSRF application relative to the other four west coast states, which has increased due to the decline in state appropriations. As a result, the state contribution is necessary to improve Washington's competitiveness for PCSRF, which affects capital and non-capital funding.

Policy Legislation

- **Track and participate in continued efforts to explore new watershed-based funding authorities to support multiple-benefit projects that address salmon habitat protection and restoration, water quality, stormwater management, and flood management.**

Since 2011, recognizing the limited funding available to implement salmon recovery, WRIA 8 supported and participated in cross-watershed discussions to identify alternative funding mechanisms to implement multiple-benefit watershed priorities, including but not limited to salmon recovery habitat restoration, stormwater management, and flood management. These efforts and discussions are on-going and may result in future legislation.

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