2021 Legislative Priorities for Salmon Recovery and Puget Sound Watershed Health

Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Partners

Highest Priority Funding Programs

- Support a $70 million Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations request for the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund in Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. The PCSRF program is the primary federal funding for salmon recovery and supports annual grants for priority salmon habitat protection and restoration projects.

- Support funding in the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Fiscal Year 2021 Work Plan of at least $28,473,000 to advance design and construction of critical prioritized infrastructure repairs to the Hiram M. Chittenden (Ballard) Locks. Advocate for the Corps’ continued engagement in the process to address elevated water temperatures and low dissolved oxygen in the Lake Washington Ship Canal, and to identify important upgrades and improvements to the fish ladder in the list of prioritized facility repair projects.

- Support $26.5 million for the National Estuary Program. Core program funding for Puget Sound Partnership and for competitive grants supporting implementation of near-term actions called for the Action Agenda for Puget Sound recovery. Request represents a $6.6 million increase over 2020 funding level.

- Support $38 million for the Puget Sound Geographic Program in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Provides key funding to support Puget Sound recovery priorities, implementation of voluntary actions, and adaptive management. Funding supports local and regional partner efforts, including ten local integrating organizations and seven Marine Resources Committees. The program supports innovative approaches to addressing stormwater, habitat, shellfish, flooding, water quality and quantity, and endangered species recovery, including Chinook salmon and Southern Resident orcas. Request represents a $5 million increase over 2020 funding level.

Juvenile salmon smolt slides at Ballard Locks
• Support passage of H.R.2 – INVEST in America Act, and retain the “Promoting United Government Efforts to Save Our Sound” (PUGET SOS, Section 22303), which will establish a Puget Sound Recovery National Program Office in the Environmental Protection Agency to coordinate federal Puget Sound recovery efforts with state, local and tribal recovery efforts and enable greater levels of federal funding for Puget Sound recovery. The PUGET SOS enhances the federal government’s role and investment in Puget Sound by amending the Clean Water Act to add a new section dedicated to Puget Sound recovery, providing lasting and structural recognition of the Puget Sound as a waterbody of national significance on par with the Chesapeake Bay and the Great Lakes, and authorizing up to $50 million for the Puget Sound Geographic Program (currently funded at $33 million).

• Support including habitat restoration and water infrastructure improvements in Puget Sound as key elements of federal economic stimulus package(s). For every $1 million spent on watershed restoration, 16.7 new jobs are created or sustained, and 80% of funding invested in restoration projects stays in the county where the project was implemented helping support local economies. A viable Washington State commercial and recreational fishing industry supports more than 60,000 jobs. Key infrastructure like the Ballard Locks is failing, potentially limiting fish passage for salmon and putting at risk millions of dollars of investment in habitat restoration, as well as $1.2 billion in annual Locks-related economic activity.

For more information about these priorities, please contact:
Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, Salmon Recovery Manager
Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8)
jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov • 206-477-4780
www.govlink.org/watersheds/8/