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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

May 17, 2019

The Honorable Christine Rolfe
 303 John A. Cherberg Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Mark Mullet
 415 Legislative Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Jim Honeyford
 112 Irv Newhouse Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Steve Tharinger
 314 John L. O'Brien Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Strom Peterson
 324 John L. O'Brien Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Richard DeBolt
 425A Legislative Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Steve Bergquist
 322 John L. O'Brien Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable David Frockt
 227 John A. Cherberg Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable John Braun
 403A Legislative Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Bob Hasegawa
 223 John A. Cherberg Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Beth Doglio
 317 John L. O'Brien Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Norma Smith
 435 John L. O'Brien Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Gael Tarleton
 429A Legislative Building
 Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Zack Hudgins
 438A Legislative Building
 Olympia, WA 98504



RE: Capital budget funding for Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration program and support for Riverbend Floodplain Restoration Project on the Cedar River

Dear Honorable Senators and Representatives:

As Chair and Vice Chair of the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Salmon Recovery Council, we want to follow-up on our April 5 letter encouraging the legislature to increase funding for the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) program in the capital budget. To that end, we want to thank you for increasing PSAR funding in the state capital budget, which funded the top three projects on the regionally-ranked project list, including the Riverbend Floodplain Restoration project on the Cedar River. The science-based projects on the PSAR large-capital project list are key to addressing issues that limit salmon recovery in Puget Sound, and these projects will increase the abundance of salmon as prey for the endangered Southern Resident Orca.

The Riverbend project will restore 52 acres of river floodplain – achieving 40% of WRIA 8's 10-year floodplain habitat restoration goal once completed. Restoring river floodplains is the most important action to improve habitat for young salmon

Honorable Senators and Representatives

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and increase salmon survival in the Cedar River. More of this work is needed to successfully achieve our salmon recovery goals. This multiple benefit project also significantly reduces flood risk to major infrastructure, such as State Route 169 and the Cedar River Trail, as well as neighboring property owners.

We applaud the legislature's leadership in providing valuable funding through PSAR to implement projects that restore river floodplains, remove barriers that block fish passage, improve riparian conditions and stream flows, and restore marine nearshore processes. The PSAR large capital project list reflects the results of a robust, scientifically-based review and ranking process to prioritize projects that contribute the greatest benefits to recovering Puget Sound Chinook salmon.

Over the past 20 years, since salmon were listed under the Endangered Species Act, salmon recovery efforts in Washington state have received just 14% of the estimated funding need. Increasing future investments in PSAR and other important funding programs, such as the State Salmon Recovery fund and Floodplains by Design, is critical to making meaningful progress on recovery goals and to increasing salmon abundance and productivity to support the endangered Southern Resident Orca.

We recognize budget decisions are not easy, and we thank you again for increasing PSAR funding to implement the top three ranked large capital projects, including the Riverbend project. Salmon recovery is a long-term commitment, and continued state support and investment is essential to the success of our commitment to salmon recovery and to restoring the health of Puget Sound.

Sincerely,



John Stokes
Chair, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council
Councilmember, City of Bellevue



Mark Phillips
Vice-Chair, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council
Councilmember, City of Lake Forest Park

cc: WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council members
Jay Manning, Chair, Puget Sound Leadership Council
David Troutt, Chair, Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council
Laura Blackmore, Executive Director, Puget Sound Partnership
Kaleen Cottingham, Director, Recreation and Conservation Office