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Cedar River Council
 Forterra
 Friends of the Issaquah
 Salmon Hatchery
 Greater Seattle Chamber
 of Commerce
 Mid-Sound Fisheries
 Enhancement Group
 Mountains to Sound
 Greenway Trust
 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 10, 2020

The Honorable Jay Inslee
 Office of the Governor
 PO Box 40002
 Olympia, WA 98504-0002



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

Dear Governor Inslee:

On behalf of the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Salmon Recovery Council, we wish to share our enclosed priorities for the upcoming state fiscal biennium. Your leadership is critical to ensuring we can continue our efforts—and Washington State’s commitment—to protect and restore habitat for salmon listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Additionally, salmon habitat restoration is essential to ensuring the long-term availability of Chinook salmon as the primary prey resource for critically endangered Southern Resident Orcas. Our priority restoration work also benefits streamflows, supports tribal treaty fishing rights, and makes our watersheds and communities resilient to a changing climate.

During these unprecedented and challenging times, the state’s investment in salmon recovery and Puget Sound ecosystem restoration is even more important. Construction of habitat restoration projects is providing jobs, supporting local economies, and helping achieve multiple objectives, including flood risk reduction, water quality improvement, and open space conservation. Economic studies document that every \$1 million invested in watershed restoration results in between 15.7 and 23.8 new or sustained jobs and \$2.5 million in total economic activity, of which 80 percent stays in the local community where the project is constructed.

State funding in the current 2019-2021 biennium is enabling watersheds and the region to make significant progress on our highest priorities. Your support for the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration and Salmon Recovery Funding Board programs helps watersheds advance science-based recovery strategies and implement priority habitat restoration and protection projects. Funding for the Floodplains by Design program is advancing implementation of multiple benefit projects that restore critical salmon habitat and reduce flood hazards. Thank you for supporting these programs, the results of which are in progress.

Attached are the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council's priorities for the 2021-2023 biennium. We encourage you to continue the progress and momentum for salmon recovery and watershed health in Puget Sound and statewide. Specifically, we ask your support for the following:

- \$80 million for the **Salmon Recovery Funding Board** capital request in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which funds habitat protection and restoration projects statewide, as well as half of the salmon recovery Lead Entity program to coordinate implementation of salmon recovery in local watersheds throughout the state.
- \$69.9 million for **Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration** capital request in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which will fund a prioritized list of large salmon recovery projects around Puget Sound and provide funding to each Puget Sound watershed for smaller-scale – but critically important – habitat projects
- \$70 million for **Floodplains by Design** capital request in the Department of Ecology's budget, which will implement a prioritized list of multi-benefit floodplain projects around the state that enhance salmon habitat while also protecting public health and safety.
- \$228,000 million for salmon recovery **Lead Entity program** operating request in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which continues base funding for Lead Entities to maintain locally-supported, watershed-based salmon recovery by prioritizing projects to maximize the public's investment.
- \$20 million for **Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program** in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which supports nearshore protection and restoration.
- \$140 million for **Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program** in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which supports priority habitat protection.
- \$9.1 million for **Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account** in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which supports aquatic lands protection and restoration and improved public access.
- \$65.6 million for **Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board** in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which supports removal of barriers to fish passage.
- \$56.6 million for Fiscal Year 2022 **Water Quality Combined Program** capital request in Department of Ecology's budget to support local water quality improvements and stormwater pollution prevention.

In these unprecedented economic and social times, WRIA 8 appreciates the challenges involved in making state budget decisions and applauds your leadership. Thank you again for your work to continue Washington State's commitment to salmon and orca recovery, restoring the health of Puget Sound, and working to address effects of climate change.

If you have any questions about how these priorities advance our salmon recovery objectives, please feel free to contact Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Manager, at 206-477-4780 or jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov. Thank you for your consideration.

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

Enclosure

cc: Jim Cahill, Office of Financial Management
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Erik Neatherlin, Executive Coordinator, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office
Tricia Snyder, Chair, Washington Salmon Coalition
Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed Salmon Recovery Council members
Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Salmon Recovery Manager