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Woodway
Yarrow Point

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

January 14, 2021

The Honorable [Senator/Representative]

[Name]

[Address]

[Address]

[Address]



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

Dear [Senator/Representative]:

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 16 to 24 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 critical programs.

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 **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 and protect public health and safety.
- \$974,000 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.
- Support stormwater management and water quality improvement in Washington Department of Ecology budget:
 - \$75 million for **Stormwater Financial Assistance Program**.
 - \$80 million for **Centennial Clean Water Program**.
 - \$315 million for **Water Pollution Control Revolving Program** (aka, Clean Water State Revolving Fund).

[Senator/Representative]

January 22, 2021

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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

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 leadership of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, Senate Energy, Environment, and Telecommunications Committee, House Capital Budget Committee, and House Environment Committee.

cc: JT Austin, Natural Resources Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor
Laura Blackmore, Director, Puget Sound Partnership
Kaleen Cottingham, Director, Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
Hillary Franz, Director, Washington Department of Natural Resources
Carol Smith, Director, Washington State Conservation Commission
Kelly Susewind, Director, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Laura Watson, Director, Washington Department of Ecology
Justin Parker, Executive Director, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
Jeff Breckel, Chair, Salmon Recovery Funding Board
David Troutt, Chair, Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council
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