

The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
Chair, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Joyce  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 8, 2021

Honorable Chair and Ranking Member,

We, the undersigned, represent a broad coalition of partners from state agencies, local governments, tribes, ports, and nongovernmental organizations, who are working for a healthy Puget Sound. Normally, we would be visiting you in DC to thank you in person for your support. However, for health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are sending you this letter instead.

We thank you for recognizing the importance of increased funding for Puget Sound recovery in federal fiscal year (FFY) 21 and we respectfully request much needed additional annual appropriations detailed in this letter for FFY22. Specifically, we're grateful for increased funding for two key programs in FFY21: the Puget Sound Geographic Program and the National Estuary Program. We are putting that funding to good use already. However, our journey is not over: increased federal support for Puget Sound recovery programs remains a critical need.

You can act to prevent the loss of these national treasures, increase climate resilience, uphold tribal treaty rights, and promote environmental justice. As Congress contemplates funding for FY22, the undersigned respectfully ask you to ensure that the final appropriations measure includes:

- An increase in funding to **\$50 million for the Puget Sound Geographic Program (EPA)**. This program has been essential to carrying out the large-scale, regional, federally approved recovery plan for Puget Sound. Extensive partner engagement lies at the foundation of the recovery plan, and the actions it includes are technically reviewed, ranked, and tracked for results by the Puget Sound Partnership. It also supports tribal participation in scientific research, resource recovery planning, and implementation and policy discussions on issues that affect tribal treaty rights.
- An increase in funding for EPA's **National Estuary Program to the authorized level of \$50 million**, including \$1,000,000 for each National Estuary Program plus \$7.5 million nationally for competitive grants and programs. This non-regulatory, locally driven program supports ecosystem recovery projects in 28 estuaries of national significance nationwide, including Puget Sound.

Puget Sound is in serious decline. Scientists say that we can still recover Puget Sound, but only if we act boldly now. **We know what we need to do – and the actions we take to recover Puget Sound create jobs in a wide variety of sectors suffering from the economic shutdown**, including food, hospitality, sustainable forestry, international trade, and international oil transportation safety and spill prevention. Every \$1 million spent on watershed restoration results in an average of 16.7 new or sustained jobs, and \$2.2-\$2.5 million in total economic activity. Investing in Puget Sound recovery will put Washingtonians back to work.

Our shared recovery effort of federal, state, local, tribal, and non-governmental partners is an example of broad-based, effective partnership and innovation, and has for many years received bipartisan support. For these collaborative efforts to succeed, we need full and on-going funding for ecosystem and salmon recovery programs.

The undersigned thank you for your past support and respectfully request your support for these requests. Thank you, also, for your continued service and leadership during the pandemic and the challenges of the past year.

*Signatures appear on following pages.*

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