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COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1602

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U.S. JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

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April 28, 2021

The Honorable Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger,

I am requesting funding for the equipment and capital needs to implement the Marine Mammal Protection Act Section 120(f) permit authorizing the intentional taking on the waters of the Columbia River and its tributaries of California Sea Lions and Steller Sea Lions in fiscal year 2022. The entity to receive funding for this project is the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife located at Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA.

Since 2002, sea lions in the Columbia River have significantly impacted endangered and threatened stocks of salmon and steelhead. Sea lions also prey on mature sturgeon below Bonneville Dam, and on listed salmon and steelhead runs in the Willamette River and other tributaries to the Columbia River. Thirty-two wild salmon populations bound for the upper Columbia and Snake Rivers are vulnerable to predation by sea lions immediately below Bonneville Dam. Despite non-lethal and limited lethal-take measures, the number of salmon and steelhead consumed by sea lions below Bonneville Dam more than doubled between 2006 and 2015, as larger Steller sea lions increased in numbers and began to take a higher toll; management and federal authorization was initially focused on California sea lions and not Steller sea lions.

As members who represent both sides of the Columbia River, we worked together to build consensus in the Pacific Northwest among our colleagues and local stakeholders on an effort to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Our bipartisan bill, which was passed overwhelmingly with the support of every House and Senate Democrat and Republican in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, was enacted into law in December 2018. This law provides state and tribal resource managers greater flexibility to manage sea lions in future years.

Funding would be used for the equipment and capital needs to assist in predation control on the Columbia River and its tributaries. I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Sincerely,

Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress