

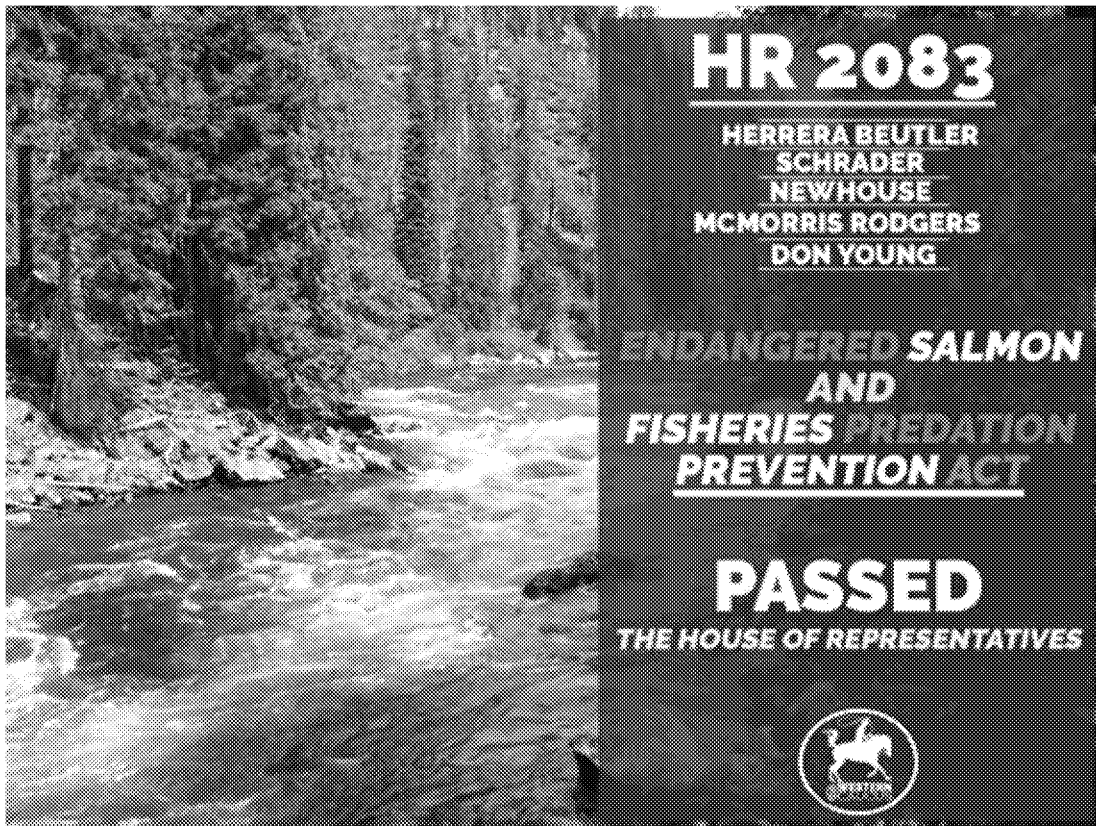
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Subject: House Passes Bill to Protect Northwest Fisheries



For Immediate Release
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House Passes Bill to Protect Pacific Northwest Fisheries



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Members of the Congressional Western Caucus including

Chairman **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)**, Chief Rules Officer **Dan Newhouse (WA-04)**, House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, Vice-Chairman for Indian Affairs and Oceans **Don Young (AK-At Large)**, Western Caucus Members **Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA-03)** and **Kurt Schrader (OR-05)** along with numerous local and national stakeholders issued statements after the House passed H.R. 2083, the Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act, by a bipartisan vote of 288-116:

"With today's passage of my bipartisan bill to improve the survival of endangered salmon and steelhead, we're taking a giant step forward in restoring an ecosystem sorely out of balance. The sea lion predation problem on the Columbia River will not go away without intervention from local and tribal managers, and I'm pleased that we're now able to give these officials the tools they need to remove the most problematic sea lions and protect our native fish runs for generations to come," stated **Congresswoman Herrera Beutler**.

"Salmon are an important part of the culture, identity, and the economy of the people and tribes of the Pacific Northwest. It is one of the reasons why we've, as a region, put so much time, energy, and resources into protecting and recovering these iconic fish," said **Congressman Schrader**. "Our bill will provide the states and tribal members the flexibility they need to protect these endangered fish and manage the threat posed by sea lion predation. I'm very pleased to have the support of so many of my colleagues in the House in tackling this issue in a bipartisan, thoughtful way. I want to thank Rep. Herrera Beutler and our states, tribes, and local communities for all of the hard work everyone has put in over several years now on this legislation and on working towards solutions to save our salmon."

"Billions of taxpayer dollars have been spent to improve salmon survival rates on the Columbia River, only to see rising predation from sea lions," stated **Congressman Newhouse**. "This legislation demonstrates a targeted approach and a bipartisan, concerted effort over many years to come to a consensus on how to stop the severe problem of sea lion predation. I was pleased to work with my colleagues on this commonsense, bipartisan effort to mitigate this threat to salmon and steelhead populations. I will continue to advocate for sound-science decision-making for our river system."

"The habitual Washington D.C. knee-jerk defense of the status quo is harming endangered species instead of protecting them. The fact of the matter is that the existing regulations are leading to the decline in endangered salmon in the Pacific Northwest, a key source of ecological vibrancy in the region. This bipartisan bill corrects the problem by giving states and tribes the tools to humanely manage sea lions and prevent further destruction of endangered fish and the region's economy. I appreciate Rep. Beutler's hard work on this legislation. It is surprising that certain Democrats, including the Ranking Member of the Committee, voted against saving endangered species and empowering tribes to exercise their treaty rights," **Congressman Rob Bishop** stated.

"I was happy to cosponsor this important legislation and I'm pleased to see it pass the House," said **Congressman Don Young**. "Something needs to be done to give endangered salmon a chance at recovery. When sea lions are positioning themselves just outside of a hatchery to eat the fish, we need a way to manage them. This legislation gives states and tribes an important tool to protect these endangered fish and support healthy salmon."

Congressman Gosar stated, "Allowing states and local governments to manage sea lion predation in the Northwest is just common sense. Taxpayers have doled out billions of dollars to increase these salmon populations and we shouldn't allow exploding sea lion populations to decimate these fisheries and undermine that progress. I am grateful for the efforts of Western

Caucus Members Herrera Beutler, Schrader, Newhouse, McMorris Rodgers and Don Young. Today's strong bipartisan vote is a result of their strong leadership.”

The Governors of Washington, Oregon and Idaho supported this bill stating, “Over the last decade, predation by sea lions on salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, and lamprey in the Columbia River has increased dramatically. State researchers have estimated that sea lions consume about 20 percent of the entire spring Chinook run. More recent year research by NOAA Fisheries has found that up to 45 percent of spring Chinook adult salmon disappear between the estuary and Bonneville Dam. Much of that loss can be attributed to sea lions...H.R. 2083, the Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Protection Act, augments existing state, federal, and tribal authorities and allows quicker and more efficient intervention but still limits lethal removal.”

More than 100 Pacific Northwest businesses supported H.R. 2083 stating, "Only Congress can amend this process to ensure salmon, steelhead and sturgeon populations have a chance to recover and are not further weakened by unmanaged healthy pinnipeds. We must protect our iconic salmon and steelhead and we would be deeply grateful for your acknowledgement that the issue of pinniped predation in the Columbia river must be addressed legislatively. We cannot thank you enough for your support on this issue."

The Public Power Council & Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission supported this legislation stating, “This situation continues to expand supporters of this legislation among diverse interests in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Our joint support represents that healthy salmon and steelhead runs are critical to the future of the Columbia River treaty tribes and utilities. This bill would give fisheries managers greater tools to appropriately reduce predation of these endangered fish.”

Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman’s Associations supported H.R. 2083 stating, “This bill provides an immediate, surgical solution to a significant problem in a highly impacted western river, the Columbia. Impediments to fish passage and severe flow curtailment from hydropower dams have resulted in severe depletion of the Pacific Northwest’s most productive salmon river. These impacts have cost commercial fishing families billions of dollars in lost opportunity.”

Directors of Co-Managing Fish and Wildlife Agencies in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho supported this bill stating, “HR 2083 provides managers flexibility to proactively remove sea lions that are foraging on ESA-listed salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon over 100+ miles from the ocean. These locations are where sea lions did not historically forage. Over a decade of scientific research has shown that 1) the diet of sea lions at these locations is almost exclusively salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon and 2) once sea lions locate these areas, they return year after year. It only makes sense to recognize the body of science that has accumulated on this issue and adjust our management accordingly to prevent sea lions habituating these areas.”

Trout Unlimited supported this legislation stating, “This legislation will help to provide resource managers with the necessary tools to help reduce predation by pinnipeds, a problem which has become increasingly significant over the last decade, and is particularly impactful at key locations, such as Willamette Falls. Pinniped predation rates in the basin are significant. NMFS marine mammal biologists believe that sea lion predation accounts for 20% of Spring Chinook Salmon losses in the Columbia. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has completed a risk analysis that place the likelihood of extinction for wild winter steelhead in the Willamette river at 90% due in part to pinniped predation at the falls in Oregon City.”

Background:

Today, June 26, 2018, the House passed H.R. 2083, the Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act, a bill introduced by Western Caucus Members **Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA-03)** and **Kurt Schrader (OR-05)** by a bipartisan vote of 288-116.

This important legislation aims to protect the further degradation of the salmon, steelhead and sturgeon populations in the Northwest by allowing for the humane management of sea lions, a natural predator of salmon in the Columbia River watershed.

H.R. 2083 clarifies and streamlines the authorities authorized under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (MMPA).

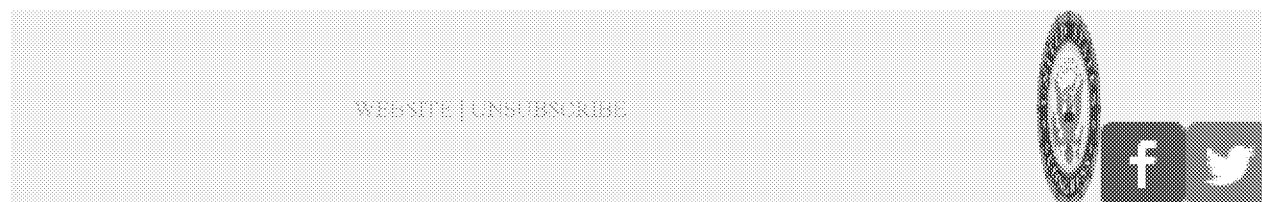
The MMPA prohibits, with specified exceptions, the killing of marine mammals in United States waters or by United States citizens at sea. This federal law provides a conflicting mandate and limited flexibility to address broader ecological interactions, such as the one observed in the Pacific Northwest with sea lions and salmon species.

Section 120 of the MMPA does allow for states to apply to the Secretary of Commerce for the lethal taking of specified predator seals or sea lions that negatively impact endangered salmon. As a result, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) authorized the States of Oregon, Idaho, and Washington to remove sea lions in 2008 and reauthorized this authority again in 2016.

Frivolous litigation challenging these permits and their requirements is the primary reasons H.R. 2083 is necessary. Under certain conditions, the bill clarifies that one-year permits can be issued to states and tribes for lethal take of sea lion populations that are decimating endangered salmon, steelhead and sturgeon in the Lower Columbia River and other specified tributaries. The bill includes an important provision that ensures sea lion mortality will not exceed 10% of the biologically acceptable limit.

A full list of endorsements can be found [HERE](#). A one-pager can be found [HERE](#).
A full list of cosponsors can be found [HERE](#). Bill text can be found [HERE](#).

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