
HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4014

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Representatives Stanford, Blake, Van De Wege, Pettigrew, Ryu, Lytton, and Pollet

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1 TO THE HONORABLE BARACK OBAMA, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
2 AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
4 THE UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE SECRETARY OF THE
5 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, AND TO THE SECRETARY OF THE
6 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, AND TO THE UNITED STATES
7 SECRETARY OF STATE:

8 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
9 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled,
10 respectfully represent and petition as follows:

11 WHEREAS, The Columbia river travels over one thousand two hundred
12 miles from its headwaters at Columbia lake, British Columbia, to its
13 dramatic ending at the Pacific Ocean, approximately one hundred miles
14 downstream from Vancouver, Washington; and

15 WHEREAS, The entire Pacific Northwest region depends on a healthy
16 Columbia river system to provide environmental sustainability,
17 national energy independence, the protection of public safety and
18 infrastructure, and economic well-being; and

19 WHEREAS, The Columbia river is home to six species of Pacific
20 salmon and steelhead that at one time represented the largest
21 salmonid run in the world with an estimated average of ten to sixteen
22 million individual fish returning to the basin annually; and

1 WHEREAS, The entire length of the Columbia river once supported
2 salmonid species, including the spawning of Chinook salmon in the
3 waters near to the town of Canal Flats, British Columbia, located
4 near the river's source and the support of a large Sockeye salmon run
5 in Canada's Arrow lakes; and

6 WHEREAS, Many human activities have contributed to the decline of
7 the Columbia river's native salmon and steelhead runs, including land
8 and water developments that have blocked traditional habitats and
9 dramatically changed natural conditions in the rivers where the fish
10 first evolved; and

11 WHEREAS, These human activities have included the construction of
12 fourteen large, multipurpose dams on the mainstem of the Columbia
13 river designed to provide the important services of hydroelectric
14 power, flood control, commercial navigation, irrigation, and
15 recreation; and

16 WHEREAS, The engineering of the Grand Coulee dam in 1941, and
17 subsequent construction of the Chief Joseph dam, did not include the
18 fish passage capabilities of lower river dams, blocking access to
19 thousands of stream miles and over forty percent of the historical
20 salmon and steelhead habitat, and eliminated the harvest of over four
21 million fish annually; and

22 WHEREAS, New and emerging technologies, including floating
23 surface collectors, fish friendlier turbines, and spillway
24 technologies are available, which make it technically feasible to
25 restore salmon populations to portions of their natural range above
26 the Chief Joseph dam and the Grand Coulee dam, as has been shown with
27 established adult and juvenile passage systems around high-head dams
28 on Washington's Baker, Lewis, and Skokomish rivers, along with
29 Oregon's Deschutes river, and which is currently being studied and
30 proposed at California's six hundred foot tall Shasta dam; and

31 WHEREAS, The ongoing process to revisit the terms of the Columbia
32 River Treaty by the United States and Canada has created an
33 opportunity to expand the current primary purposes of the treaty,
34 which are power production and flood control, to include the
35 integration of ecosystems functions as an equal purpose to the
36 treaty; and

37 WHEREAS, The Regional Recommendations for the Future of the
38 Columbia River Treaty after the year 2024, as developed by the group
39 known as the United States Entity, includes the goal of developing a
40 modernized framework for the treaty that ensures a more resilient and

1 healthy ecosystem-based function throughout the Columbia river basin,
2 which includes the consideration of salmon and steelhead
3 reintroduction and passage above Grand Coulee dam, while maintaining
4 an acceptable level of flood risk and ensuring reliable and economic
5 hydropower benefits; and

6 WHEREAS, A possible plan for the implementation of salmon and
7 steelhead restoration above the Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams
8 was approved by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council in 2014
9 with the adoption of its Columbia River Fish and Wildlife Program;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, The reintroduction plan developed by the Northwest Power
12 and Conservation Council features a science-based, three-phase
13 approach to investigate the possibility and options for reintroducing
14 salmon on the Columbia river above the Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee
15 dams; and

16 WHEREAS, The first phase of the Northwest Power and Conservation
17 Council's reintroduction phase is scheduled to be completed no later
18 than the end of 2016 and includes an evaluation of existing studies
19 related to fish passage and investigation of salmon survival
20 potential in the habitats above the Grand Coulee dam; and

21 WHEREAS, The information gathered from the first phase of the
22 reintroduction plan will inform the second and third phases of the
23 plan and lead to informed decisions regarding how to move forward
24 with implementing and funding reintroduction measures; and

25 WHEREAS, The reintroduction plan envisioned by the Northwest
26 Power and Conservation Council includes cooperation and coordination
27 with the partners necessary to make salmon reintroduction on the
28 upper Columbia river possible, including tribal, state, federal, and
29 Canadian partners; and

30 WHEREAS, In addition to myriad other benefits, the successful
31 implementation of a plan to reintroduce salmon species above the
32 Grand Coulee dam would restore native peoples' cultural harvests and
33 spiritual values, provide an important facet of ecosystem adaptation
34 to climate change, and help restore the economically valuable
35 recreational and commercial fisheries that once extended from Canada
36 to the Pacific Ocean; and

37 WHEREAS, Restoring salmon and steelhead runs above the Grand
38 Coulee dam would result in an exponential expansion of available
39 salmon and steelhead habitat and would have significant international
40 benefits as hydropower operators in Canada are already obligated in

1 their licensing agreements to develop fish passage on mainstem
2 Columbia river and tributary dams in Canada, if the United States
3 provides anadromous fish populations above the Grand Coulee dam; and

4 WHEREAS, While the regional weather in 2015 provided a snapshot
5 of how a future Columbia river will be impacted by climate change
6 with warmer temperatures, less snow pack, and compromised habitats,
7 2015 also highlighted the need for providing cold water refugia for
8 the salmon populations in the Columbia river, and the reintroduction
9 of salmon and steelhead populations above Chief Joseph and Grand
10 Coulee dams can provide the additional cold water refugia the salmon
11 and steelhead of the Columbia river will need to be resilient into
12 the next century;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the
14 federal government and the region pursue the reintroduction of salmon
15 and steelhead above the Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams through a
16 pragmatic and science-based phased approach, such as the plan
17 proposed by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, that can
18 lead to fish passage and reintroduction featuring careful and
19 coordinated planning, research, testing, and construction followed by
20 monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management.

21 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
22 transmitted to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United
23 States, the Secretary of the United States Department of the
24 Interior, the Secretary of the United States Department of Energy,
25 the United States Secretary of State, the President of the United
26 States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each
27 member of Congress from the State of Washington.

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