

*American Rivers ♦ American Whitewater
Association of Northwest Steelheaders ♦ Audubon Society of Portland
Center for Biological Diversity ♦ Center for Environmental Law and Policy
Clearwater-Snake Rivers Trout Unlimited ♦ Columbia Riverkeeper
Coastal Trollers Association ♦ Defenders of Wildlife ♦ Endangered Species Coalition
Friends of the Clearwater ♦ Greater Hells Canyon Council ♦ Idaho Conservation League
Idaho Rivers United ♦ Idaho Wildlife Federation ♦ National Resources Defense Council
National Wildlife Federation ♦ Nimipuu Protecting the Environment
NW Energy Coalition ♦ Northwest Guides and Anglers Association
Northwest Resource Information Center ♦ Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association
Oceana ♦ Orca Network ♦ Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
Pacific Rivers ♦ Puget Soundkeeper Alliance ♦ Save Our wild Salmon Coalition
Sierra Club ♦ Snake River Salmon Solutions ♦ The Lands Council
WaterWatch of Oregon ♦ Whale and Dolphin Conservation ♦ Whale Scout
Wild Steelhead Coalition ♦ Wild Washington Rivers*

August 23, 2017

The Honorable Raul Labrador
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Labrador,

The undersigned conservation, salmon, orca, and clean energy advocacy organizations and business associations extend our deep gratitude for your decision *not* to co-sponsor H.R. 3144 – recently introduced by several Northwest representatives. In contrast to sponsor claims, this bill, if passed, would thwart efforts to deliver critical near-term protections for endangered wild salmon, derail the court-ordered NEPA environmental review and increase uncertainty for Northwest citizens and businesses. We ask you to actively oppose this harmful legislation to ensure that it does not become law.

Wild salmon and steelhead are a Northwest birthright. They are essential to the culture and economy of our region's Native American Tribes and support tens of thousands of non-tribal fishing jobs in urban and rural communities on the West Coast and in Idaho. Salmon also play an irreplaceable ecological role as an indicator species reflecting the health of our rivers and watersheds. Their presence benefits more than 130 other species, including critically-endangered, prey-deficient Southern Resident Orcas.

H.R. 3144 is based on misinformation, fails to recognize the important role wild salmon and steelhead play for Northwest communities and ecosystems, and would severely undermine ongoing and much-needed protection efforts. If passed into law, H.R. 3144 would reverse the May 2016 U.S. District court decision that found the

federal agencies' most recent plan for managing federal dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers violated the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act and would not protect wild salmon and steelhead from extinction. Three different federal judges have now rejected five consecutive Columbia Basin salmon plans over the past two decades. This failure has cost regional energy consumers and federal taxpayers more than \$10 billion without recovering a single endangered salmon population.

H.R. 3144 would lock in the inadequate and illegal 2014 Columbia Basin Biological Opinion, fatally stifle the court order to complete a full, fair NEPA environmental review, and prevent an increase in spring "spill" (water releases over the tops of dams to improve survival of out-migrating juvenile salmon) beginning in 2018. Ordered by the court earlier this year and being collaboratively planned by the parties to the litigation this summer, spill is widely recognized by experts as our most effective immediate tool to help endangered salmon while our region develops a new, legally valid, scientifically-credible plan.

Salmon and fishing advocates share the frustration of many stakeholders with this history of costly and ineffective plans to revive culturally and economically important salmon populations in the Columbia-Snake Basin. We are ready to work with others in the region to develop a plan that protects and recovers endangered salmon and steelhead while also meeting the needs of affected interests. H.R. 3144, however, will not move our region in that direction; rather it will move us away from a real opportunity to craft a durable, responsible solution.

Thank you again for your decision not to sponsor H.R. 3144. We hope that you will actively oppose it and do everything you can to prevent this bill from becoming law. If you have questions or we can be of assistance, please contact Joseph Bogaard, joseph@wildsalmon.org, 206-300-1003.

Sincerely,

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CC:
Northwest Governors
Northwest United States Senators