



West

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

November 26, 2018

Northwest Power and Conservation Council
851 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97204-1348

RE: Recommendation to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program Amendment Process

Dear Northwest Power and Conservation Council,

On behalf of the members of the Legislative Council on River Governance (LCRG), I write to urge the Northwest Power and Conservation Council to expand its strategy to prevent the introduction non-native and invasive species as part of its Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program. LCRG, which is administered by The Council of State Governments West (CSG West), provides a forum for lawmakers from the states of Washington, Oregon, Montana and Idaho to discuss and identify solutions to common concerns affecting the Columbia and Snake River Basins.

The members of the LCRG are very concerned about the threat of aquatic invasive species in the Columbia River system, especially quagga and zebra mussels. If these mussels gain a foothold in the basin, the results could be catastrophic for many native species, and the economic damage to communities throughout the basin could be immense. As you know, efforts to combat these mussels are being made within each of the four LCRG member states and across the region.

We recommend that the Council maintain and expand its objectives, and seek adequate funding to support data collection, early detection, monitoring, education, and enhance regional planning and coordination to prevent the spread of non-native and invasive species. As acknowledged in the Council's 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program, "invasive and non-native species pose direct threats to the program's fish and wildlife restoration efforts through competition, predation and habitat modification." Moreover, "aquatic non-native species can invade and significantly threaten infrastructure at hydroelectric dams and fish passage facilities in the Columbia River Basin."

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Sen. Stuart Adams, UT | *Chair, CSG West*
Rep. Kimberly Dudik, MT | *Chair-Elect, CSG West*

Sen. Michael Von Flatern, WY | *Vice Chair, CSG West*
Sen. Sam Hunt, WA | *Immediate Past Chair, CSG West*

Edgar Ruiz | *Director, CSG West*

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As a planning, policy-making and reviewing body, the Council plays a pivotal role in the formulation of regional power and fish and wildlife policies, and monitoring the implementation of these policies by the Bonneville Power Administration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, among others. As such, we encourage the Council to take a proactive approach in coordinating invasive species prevention efforts in the Columbia River Basin, as well as communicating with legislators and relevant legislative committees in the states of Washington, Oregon, Montana and Idaho to further coordination, prioritization and support of these efforts.

The members of LCRG and staff of CSG West stand ready to serve as key partners to meet this important challenge. If you or your staff have any questions, please feel free to contact CSG West director, Edgar Ruiz, at (916) 553-4423. If I can be of any assistance, please contact me at (360) 786-7960.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Chandler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Representative Bruce Chandler
Washington House of Representatives
Chair, CSG West's Legislative Council on River Governance

CC:
LCRG Members