

**PRESS RELEASE  
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**Members of Congress urge President Obama to base  
salmon policy on sound science and economics**

WASHINGTON, DC — In a letter sent this week, 72 Members of Congress called on President Obama for leadership on one of the nation's greatest endangered species challenges: the protection and restoration of wild salmon and steelhead in the Pacific Northwest's Columbia-Snake River Basin.

With significant bi-partisan support from lawmakers representing 27 states and territories, Congressmen Jim McDermott (D-WA), Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), and Tom Petri (R-WI) spearheaded the letter to President Obama, pledging that Congress stands ready to work with the administration to craft federal salmon policies based on sound science and common-sense economics, and to initiate a dialogue with interested parties to identify a durable solution to this important issue.

“Now is the time to address the challenges that face the nation's iconic Pacific salmon and the communities that rely on this resource,” Congressman Jim McDermott said. “By working with the Obama administration, which has leaders who understand the importance of dealing with this issue, and by using the best scientific information, we can restore salmon, create jobs, and provide the infrastructure that is needed by the Pacific Northwest economy.”

Spanning seven western states (Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, and Utah), the Columbia and Snake River Basin was once home to the world's most abundant salmon runs, with as many as 30 million fish returning annually. Unfortunately, the Basin now sustains less than one percent of that historic number. Thirteen stocks of Columbia-Snake River salmon and steelhead, including all four remaining Snake River stocks, are listed under the Endangered Species Act. Populations of wild Snake River salmon have shown little improvement since being listed in the 1990s. In fact, the five-year average for some of these fish still hover around those 1990 levels, and most populations of Snake River salmon and steelhead are well below levels required for recovery. A series of illegal biological opinions from the federal government has not helped the situation.

“It's not just salmon that are adversely impacted by the failed policies and plans of the past several years; real people and real communities are suffering as well,” said Congressman Earl Blumenauer. “We can't afford not to get it right this time, especially with the pending impacts of climate change expected to make salmon recovery even tougher. But with strong leadership from the White House and from Congress, we can have healthy wild salmon, green sustainable jobs, and a clean energy future.”

“Federal agencies have an obligation to American taxpayers to draft a salmon plan that makes fiscal and scientific sense before billions more in federal dollars are spent on failing efforts,” Congressman Tom Petri said.

The most recent salmon plan, released in May 2008 by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Service, was challenged by a coalition of conservation groups and fishermen along with the State of Oregon and the Nez Perce Tribe, and is now under review by a federal court. The government's last two plans, issued in 2000 and 2004, were rejected by the same court.

“Regardless of the outcome of the current litigation, we believe true salmon recovery in the Columbia-Snake River Basin will only come from bringing all stakeholders to the table and crafting a solution that works for fishermen, farmers, and energy consumers,” said Nicole Cordan, Policy and Legal Director for the Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition. “We applaud the Congressional members who have said the same in this letter and have called on the Obama administration to begin this process – a process which can save billions of dollars, provide thousands of jobs, and restore an iconic species to the West.”

“Congress is sending a clear message to the Administration that we must consider all scientifically credible and economically viable salmon recovery options to resolve this longstanding crisis,” said Autumn Hanna, Senior Program Director for Taxpayers for Common Sense. “Even after spending \$8 billion, salmon are still in decline. It's well past time to target our resources in the most cost-effective and scientifically defensible manner.”

The full text of the letter as well as a complete list of signers is available at [www.wildsalmon.org](http://www.wildsalmon.org).

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*Save Our Wild Salmon is a nationwide coalition of conservation organizations, commercial and sportfishing associations, and taxpayer and clean energy advocates working collectively to restore healthy and abundant wild salmon to the rivers and streams of the Pacific Northwest.*

