

December 15, 2025

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Murray, Cantwell, Merkley, and Wyden:

The 41 undersigned organizations and businesses are writing to express our solidarity with the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation and deep concern regarding the Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA) recent decision to unilaterally cancel the Tribe's Columbia Basin Fish Accord and withhold more than \$50 million in unspent "carryforward" funds for fish and wildlife projects. We ask that you urge BPA to honor its Fish Accord commitments and immediately restore the withheld funding.

As described in a November 18, 2025, letter from Yakama National Tribal Council Chairman Gerald Lewis to members of Congress, BPA's action threatens to undermine priority salmon restoration projects, decrease the Tribe's staffing and operational capacity, and break yet another promise to a Native Nation. Projects that are now in jeopardy include efforts to restore degraded habitat, multi-agency support for lamprey populations, and highway infrastructure improvements that benefit both road users and fish. These include projects where Yakama Nation's Fish Accord funding is being used as a match to secure millions in additional federal, state, and private investments, as well as projects where multi-year investments are now at risk of being stranded because they lack funding for completion.

After unilaterally deciding not to renew Yakama Nation's Fish Accord earlier this year, BPA Administrator Hairston assured the Tribe that Yakama Nation's unspent Accord 'carryforward' funds would remain available through FY30 for capital projects, and through FY28 for non-capital projects. BPA must fulfill that promise. Restoring healthy and abundant Columbia River Basin salmon and steelhead requires more federal investment, not less, and truly honoring federal commitments to Tribes.

BPA's rationale for withholding these funds is baseless and fundamentally unjust. BPA claims that the Tribe violated the Fish Accord's prohibition against "adverse legal action" by supporting a procedural motion to lift the stay of litigation in the long-running NWF v. NMFS case over the operation of federal dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers that are pushing salmon populations towards extinction. However, this motion was unopposed by all parties to the litigation, including the federal defendants (the National Marine Fisheries Service, Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) themselves. In reality, it was the Trump administration's decision to singlehandedly withdraw the federal government from the Resilient Columbia Basin Agreement – which was the sole basis for the stay in NWF v. NMFS – that led to the resumption of that litigation, not Yakama Nation's decision to support an unopposed procedural motion. BPA should not inflict more pain on Yakama Nation for President Trump's own harmful actions.

At a time when Tribal Nations are already facing significant pressures from other parts of this administration, BPA should be deepening its partnerships with Columbia Basin Tribes, rather than using thin excuses to pile on additional burdens. BPA cannot be allowed to further shirk its obligations to Native

Nations, salmon recovery, and the region's energy future. We urge you to demand BPA honor its commitments and restore the \$50 million in Fish Accord funds being withheld from the Yakama Nation.

Sincerely,

American Rivers Action Fund
American Whitewater
Association of Northwest Steelheaders
Backbone Campaign
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Environmental Law and Policy
Columbia Riverkeeper
Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN)
Duna Fisheries, LLC
Earthjustice
EcoFlight
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Endangered Species Coalition
Fly Fishers International
Greater Hells Canyon Council
Idaho Conservation League
Idaho Rivers United
Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
Nimipuu Protecting the Environment
Northwest Environmental Defense Center
Northwest Guides and Anglers Association
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association
NW Energy Coalition
Orca Conservancy
Oregon Shores
Puget Soundkeeper Alliance
Save Our wild Salmon Coalition
Seattle Aquarium
Sierra Club
Snake River Savers
Snohomish County Indivisible
Solutionary Rail
Southern Oregon Climate Action Now
Spokane Riverkeeper
Students for Climate Action WWU
The Water Foundation
Washington Conservation Action
Washington Wild
Western Watersheds Project

CC: Governor Bob Ferguson, State of Washington
Governor Tina Kotek, State of Oregon
Northwest Power & Conservation Council Members

December 15, 2025

The Honorable Susan DelBene
U.S. House of Representatives
2311 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
U.S. House of Representatives
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Dan Newhouse
U.S. House of Representatives
460 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Marie Gluesenkamp Perez
U.S. House of Representatives
1431 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Baumgartner
U.S. House of Representatives
124 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Emily Randall
U.S. House of Representatives
1531 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pramila Jayapal
U.S. House of Representatives
2346 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kim Schrier
U.S. House of Representatives
1110 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
2264 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Marilyn Strickland
U.S. House of Representatives
1724 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici
U.S. House of Representatives
2231 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maxine Dexter
U.S. House of Representatives
1207 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Val Hoyle
U.S. House of Representatives
1620 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Janelle Bynum
U.S. House of Representatives
1508 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Andrea Salinas
U.S. House of Representatives
403 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson
U.S. House of Representatives
2084 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

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Endangered Species Coalition
Fly Fishers International
Greater Hells Canyon Council
Idaho Conservation League

Idaho Rivers United
Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment
Northwest Environmental Defense Center
Northwest Guides and Anglers Association
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association
NW Energy Coalition
Orca Conservancy
Oregon Shores
Puget Soundkeeper Alliance
Save Our wild Salmon Coalition
Seattle Aquarium
Sierra Club
Snake River Savers
Snohomish County Indivisible
Solutionary Rail
Southern Oregon Climate Action Now
Spokane Riverkeeper
Students for Climate Action WWU
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CC: Governor Bob Ferguson, State of Washington
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