



June 26, 2018

U.S. House of Representatives

Re: Trout Unlimited Support for H.R.2083, *Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act*.

Dear Representative:

We, the undersigned represent the nearly 10,000 members of Trout Unlimited in the states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho. Trout Unlimited is the country's largest and oldest, coldwater conservation organization with over 300,000 members and supporters nationwide.

TU has been deeply engaged in wild salmon and steelhead recovery efforts in the Columbia Basin for several decades, and it is our goal to restore healthy, fishable, naturally reproducing salmon and steelhead populations.

Many issues impact salmon and steelhead recovery efforts in the Columbia Basin. Habitat degradation, hydropower operations, harvest and hatchery management issues are all significant factors. This legislation will help to provide resource managers with the necessary tools to help reduce predation by pinnipeds, a problem which has become increasingly significant over the last decade, and is particularly impactful at key locations, such as Willamette Falls.

Pinniped predation rates in the basin are significant. NMFS marine mammal biologists believe that sea lion predation accounts for 20% of Spring Chinook Salmon losses in the Columbia. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has completed a risk analysis that place the likelihood of extinction for wild winter steelhead in the Willamette river at 90% due in part to pinniped predation at the falls in Oregon City.

H.R. 2083 would amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act to allow NOAA to issue permits allowing state agency representatives in Washington, Oregon and Idaho, as well as several area tribes to use lethal take of sea lions in a portion of the Columbia river or certain tributaries in order to protect fish from sea lion predation.

While we support a targeted approach to culling individual sea lions in specific areas to help reduce the impact to wild salmon and steelhead populations, we recognize that this action is necessary, but not at all sufficient, to help recover salmon and steelhead populations. To rebuild wild salmon and steelhead we need to take a comprehensive, science-based approach that addresses other major

factors in their decline. Restoring their habitat, improving hatchery operations and fine-tuning angling regulations must be part of the long-term solution. Many of these actions are underway, and we need to redouble these efforts.

We urge you to vote yes on H.R. 2083.

Sincerely,

Terry Turner, Oregon Council Chair

Ed Northern, Idaho Council Chair

Brad Throssel, Washington Council Chair

---

For questions, please contact:

Steve Moyer, V.P. for Government Affairs, (703) 284-9406

Kate Miller, Director of Government Affairs, (703) 284-9426