

## **H.R. 2083 – “Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act”**

- Sea lion populations have decimated populations of endangered salmon and steelhead in the Pacific Northwest for years and certain federal statutes have prevented regional wildlife managers from containing this crisis.
- **Although sea lion populations on the West coast have exploded, salmon runs have continued to decline.** Federal law provides conflicting mandates to protect each species, but does not provide the flexibility to account for broader ecological interactions. NOAA estimates that pinnipeds may be consuming up to 45% of all spring Chinook from the Columbia River’s estuary to Bonneville Dam, and that these species consumed over 5,000 salmonids in 2017.
- This problem has expanded beyond Bonneville Dam into Willamette Falls where the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife estimates sea lions account for a predation rate of 25% on wild winter Willamette steelhead. Experts estimate a 90% probability of extinction as a direct result of sea lion predation.
- H.R. 2083 is a bipartisan bill that will authorize the Secretary of Commerce to provide to states and local tribes the tools necessarily to humanely manage sea lions that have migrated outside their historic range and pose an imminent threat to fish species listed under the Endangered Species Act.
- The bill establishes scientific management limits so that the authorities in this bill shall not result in sea lion mortality exceeding 10% of the biologically acceptable limit.
- Federal permits authorized under H.R. 2083 would be limited to State and tribal fishery managers who have a direct stake in a healthy regional ecosystem.
- There is broad bipartisan support for this bill and regional supporters include the States of Washington, Oregon and Idaho, the Columbia Intertribal Fish Commission, the Coastal Conservation Associations of Washington and Oregon, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, the American Sportfishing Association, Northwest RiverPartners, the Chelan, Douglas, and Grant Public Utility Districts, and over 100 local and recreational fishing businesses.

*Staff Contact: Richie O’Connell, or Bill Ball, Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans*