

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 20, 2005

The Honorable David Hobson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy & Water
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy & Water
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hobson, Ranking Member Visclosky and Conferees:

As members of the Northwest delegation, we urge the conferees to oppose troubling language now attached to the Senate Energy and Water Appropriations bill (S. Rept. 109-84). At issue is the future of a small but important research center - the Fish Passage Center - that provides state, tribe, and local decision makers with scientific information and analysis about Pacific salmon.

Without the Fish Passage Center, the myriad of federal, state and tribal agencies responsible for Pacific salmon recovery efforts would have to make decisions without valuable information provided by the Center on what works, and what does not work, to recover salmon. Elimination could actually increase salmon recovery costs because additional resources and staff will likely be needed at federal, state and tribal agencies to replace the unique services provided by the Center.

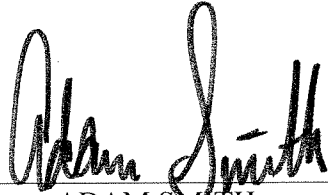
The Fish Passage Center has a small staff of highly qualified scientists and data analysts. It operates efficiently on an annual budget of roughly \$1.3 million, provided largely by the Bonneville Power Administration through the Northwest Power and Conservation Council.

At the request of the Council, an independent panel of scientists reviewed the Center's performance in 2000 and recommended continued financial support. The Northwest Power and Conservation Council chose in 2004 to continue fully funding the Center. The Governor of Oregon, the Umatilla and Nez Perce Tribes, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife among others oppose eliminating the Center because its technical analysis enables them to fulfill their obligations under the 1980 Northwest Power Planning Act.

Federal efforts to recover Columbia and Snake River Basin salmon and steelhead are currently in flux after a recent federal district court ruling overturned the most recent Salmon Plan. With so much uncertainty surrounding salmon recovery presently and in the future, now is simply not the time to curtail agency access to the best available science.

As elected officials, we consult the work of the FPC when making policy decisions. We respectfully request that the conferees raise our objections, and work to eliminate, the Fish Passage Center language now on the Senate Energy and Water Appropriations bill.

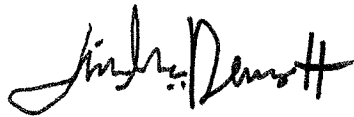
Sincerely,



ADAM SMITH
Member of Congress



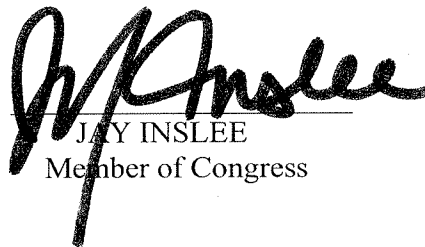
EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress



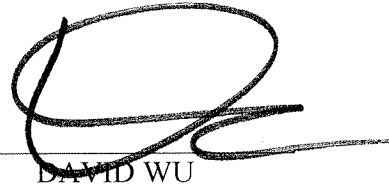
JIM MCDERMOTT
Member of Congress



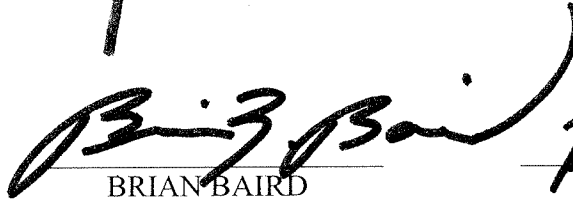
DARLENE HOOLEY
Member of Congress



JAY INSLEE
Member of Congress



DAVID WU
Member of Congress



BRIAN BAIRD
Member of Congress



RICK LARSEN
Member of Congress