



COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE AUTHORITY

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www.cbfwa.org

Coordinating and promoting effective protection and restoration of fish, wildlife, and their habitat in the Columbia River Basin.

The Authority includes the following tribes and fish and wildlife agencies:

- Burns Paiute Tribe
 - Coeur d'Alene Tribe
 - Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation
 - Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
 - Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
 - Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation
 - Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
 - Idaho Department of Fish & Game
 - Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
 - Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks
 - National Marine Fisheries Service
 - Nez Perce Tribe
 - Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
 - Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall
 - Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley
 - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
 - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Coordinating Agencies**
- Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
 - Compact of the Upper Snake River Tribes
 - Upper Columbia United Tribes

February 4, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (CBFWA) is an organization whose membership consists of four state and two federal agencies¹ and eleven Native American Tribes with fish and wildlife management responsibilities in the Columbia River Basin (Basin). Our members are legally recognized managers of the fish and wildlife resources through federal and state statutes, treaties, executive order, and court actions. All actions supported by CBFWA are developed through a consensus process. Consensus focuses the agency and tribal actions into a single direction, providing recommendations representing the best available science incorporated into the policy environment of the multiple fish and wildlife co-managers.

Fish and wildlife resources are critically important to Pacific Northwest people (Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and northeast Nevada) and there exists a close connection between fish and wildlife conservation and the high quality of life for Pacific Northwest citizens. Further, for the Native American Tribes who have inhabited this region since time immemorial, fish and wildlife resources are culturally and spiritually essential; vital to their identity as peoples; and are protected by treaty and other legal interests.

The state and federal fish and wildlife managers and Native American Tribes share the goal of abundant, productive, and diverse communities of fish and wildlife, and a Basin that supports the benefits valued by Pacific Northwest people. As such, we take our fish and wildlife conservation responsibilities seriously. To that end, we participate in a variety of new and ongoing conservation initiatives and agreements that provide additional protection for Pacific Northwest fish and wildlife.

A centerpiece of this work involves our efforts to implement the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980 (Northwest Power Act). Through this landmark legislation, Congress sanctioned the Pacific Northwest states to establish the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council) and directed the Council to develop a program to protect, mitigate, and

¹ The Federal agency members of the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service), abstain from this letter.

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enhance Columbia Basin fish and wildlife resources adversely affected by hydroelectric development in the Basin.

The courts have interpreted the Northwest Power Act to afford a high degree of deference to the recommendations of the fish and wildlife agencies and Native American Tribes for measures to include in the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. Over the past several years, the region has established the groundwork for significant improvements in fish and wildlife resources in the near future. But the task is not complete. Our commitments must be turned into actions. We now need to focus on implementing actions and demonstrating results. We must adequately monitor and evaluate our actions, and manage our efforts adaptively, to ensure that taxpayer and ratepayer funds are focused on the highest priority tasks.

We recognize that significant amounts of funding and resources will be targeted at protecting, mitigating, and enhancing fish and wildlife resources over the next several years. We are committed to ensuring transparency of decision-making, increased accountability for expenditures, and better coordination among the state and federal agencies and Native American Tribes. We stand ready to help the new Administration with these important tasks.

Sincerely,



Elmer Ward, Chairman
Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority

cc: The Honorable Jeff Bingaman, Chair, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
The Honorable Nick Rahall, Chair, House Committee on Natural Resources
The Honorable Patty Murray, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Ron Wyden, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Jeff Merkley, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Mike Crapo, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Jim Risch, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Jon Tester, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Max Baucus, U.S. Senate
The Honorable John Ensign, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Harry Reid, U.S. Senate

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The Honorable David Wu, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Greg Walden, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Earl Blumenauer, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Peter DeFazio, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Kurt Schrader, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Jay Inslee, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Rick Larsen, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Brian Baird, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Doc Hastings, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Norman Dicks, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Jim McDermott, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Dave Reichert, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Adam Smith, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Walt Minnick, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Mike Simpson, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Dennis Rehberg, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Shelley Berkley, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Dean Heller, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Dina Titus, U.S. House of Representatives
The Members of Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority