

COLUMBIA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

COMMISSIONER RYAN R. RUNDALL | COMMISSIONER MICHAEL A. TALBOTT | COMMISSIONER CHARLES L. AMEREIN

September 4, 2019

Larry Carpenter, Chair
Washington Fish & Wildlife Commission
PO Box 43200
Olympia, WA 98504-3200

Kelly Susewind, Director
Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
PO Box 43200
Olympia, WA 98504-3200

Dear Chair Carpenter and Director Smith:

We are writing you to in regards to the press release issued by WDFW on August 9, 2019. This covered the three public meetings to be held by the Washington and Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commissions to discuss the next steps on salmon management in the Columbia River basin. The meetings announced were as follows:

- Aug. 29 at the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) regional office at 5525 S. 11th St. in Ridgefield, Wash.
- Oct. 1 at the main office of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife at 4034 Fairview Industrial Dr. S.E. in Salem, Ore.
- Nov. 18 at WDFW's regional office at 5525 S. 11th St. in Ridgefield, Wash.

The first line of the press release stated as follows, *"The public is invited to attend a series of committee meetings comprised of members of the Washington and Oregon fish and wildlife commissions to discuss next steps in the review of salmon management on the Columbia River."*

We would like to point out to you that all three of these meetings are slated to be held on the Westside. This will largely limit participation to members of the public who live on the Westside. Once again, whether this was a conscious decision or not, staff and the commission have shown a bias in favor of downriver interests on Columbia Basin salmon management over upper basin interests. It is hard for any Eastside members of the public to attend these meetings, while the locations make it relatively easy for any Westside members.

We would point out to you that this has been a consistent, repetitive theme in regards to salmon management for the Columbia Basin by both Washington and Oregon, **for years**. Most/all meetings on this subject are held on the Westside, salmon harvest is structured to disproportionately

311 E Main Street | Dayton, WA 99328 | T: (509) 382-4542

benefit downriver fisheries, and staff based on the Westside make nearly all management decisions. These are just three examples, of which we could list many, many more. It is as if the river begins and ends at Bonneville Dam.

We would request that one additional meeting be held in the Hermiston, Oregon/Tri-Cities, Washington area that could cover both Eastern Washington and Oregon members of the public.

We look forward to your response on this request. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Talbott
Chairman

Cc: Senator Maureen Walsh, Washington Legislature
Representative Bill Jenkin, Washington Legislature
Representative Skyler Rude, Washington Legislature
Michael Finley, Chair, Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE Salem, OR 97302
Curt Melcher, Director, Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE Salem, OR 97302
Steve Pozzanghera, Eastern Region Director, WDFW Spokane
2315 North Discovery Place Spokane Valley, WA 99216-1566

311 E Main Street | Dayton, WA 99328 | T: (509) 382-4542



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504-3200 • (360) 902-2200 • TDD (360) 902-2207
Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA

October 14, 2019

The Honorable Michael Talbott
Chairman, Columbia County Board of Commissioners
311 East Main Street
Dayton, WA 99328

Dear Chairman Talbott:

My name is Kelly Cunningham. I am the Fish Program Director here at the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). I have been asked by the Director to respond to your letter dated September 4, 2019.

Let me begin by thanking you for your engagement in the ongoing Joint-State Columbia River Fishery Policy Review Committee (PRC) process occurring between the states of Washington and Oregon. I fully understand the concerns expressed in your letter and will attempt to address them with this response. I also want you to know that we are committed to hearing from the public and making decisions in as transparent a process as possible.

As you are aware, the PRC is charged with assessing the respective state's policies and making recommendations to the full Fish and Wildlife Commissions of the respective states with a goal of achieving regulatory concurrency for Columbia River salmon fisheries management.

Consistent with all Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission committee meetings, public participation and testimony at PRC meetings is allowed to the extent time permits and so long as the committee is able to complete the business outlined on the agenda. Understanding that the ability for members of the public to attend these meetings could be challenging, we have live streamed the PRC meetings and made those streams available for the public to view via our website. Additionally, we have created a web-based portal where people can submit their comments. Public comment associated with PRC process is ongoing. Any comments for consideration at the November 18, 2019, PRC meeting in Ridgefield would need to be submitted by November 14, 2019.

Although public testimony at Commission committee meetings such as the Joint PRC meetings may be helpful to committee members, the real value of public input resides at meetings where the entire commission is present during times when options are being considered. The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission accepts comments via email, during open public

Michael Talbot
October 14, 2019
Page 2

comment periods at Commission meetings, and for Commission meeting agenda items when decisions are being made.

Finally, in the event that the next PRC meeting does not result in a final recommendation to both states full commissions, the Washington members of the PRC have expressed a commitment to consider an upriver location for a future meeting.

In closing, I want to re-iterate my appreciation for your letter and concerns and invite your comments at any Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kelly Cunningham', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kelly Cunningham
Fish Program Director

cc: Office of the Governor
Maureen Walsh, Washington State Senator
Bill Jenkin, Washington State Representative
Skyler Rude, Washington State Representative
Michael Finley, Chair, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
Curt Melcher, Director, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Steve Pozzanghera, Region 1 Director, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife