



STATE OF WASHINGTON
Office of the Governor

December 5, 2017

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Doug Lamborn
Chairman, Subcommittee on Water, Power
and Oceans
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Water, Power
and Oceans
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Bishop and Lamborn and Ranking Members Grijalva and Huffman:

As Governor of the State of Washington, I write to express my deep concerns with HR 3144, legislation which would freeze in place a 2014 biological opinion (BiOp), or salmon management plan, for the dams composing the Federal Columbia River Power System. While the State of Washington believes the 2014 BiOp represented a step forward for efforts to protect and recover 13 stocks of threatened or endangered Columbia and Snake river salmon and steelhead, HR 3144 would thwart constructive ongoing efforts to improve future salmon and dam management. This would not only hurt salmon but also the recreational and commercial fisheries, tribes, and other species (such as Puget Sound's southern resident killer whales) that benefit from healthy salmon runs.

I am committed to preserving the benefits of our hydropower dams in a manner that is in balance with protecting and restoring salmon. While our dams and dam operations have been modified to reduce their impact to salmon and steelhead over the last 20 years, there is evidence that salmon may further benefit from additional modifications to dam operations that would help restore salmon populations. The State of Washington is participating in productive regional discussions about the best way to test the potential benefits of additional "spill," in 2018 and potentially beyond. This discussion and learning opportunity would be blocked by HR 3144's prohibition on any studies or actions that restrict electricity generation at any dams in the Federal Columbia River Power System, even by a small amount.

Similarly, several Washington State agencies are engaged as cooperating agencies in the Columbia Snake River Operations study process currently being conducted, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This process promises to provide valuable information on a range of potential future dam operations and salmon management strategies. As with the discussion



Reps. Bob Bishop, Raul Grijalva, Doug Lamborn and Jared Huffman

December 5, 2017

Page 2

regarding increased spill over the dams, HR 3144 would halt this learning process in its tracks, preventing a constructive dialog among federal and state agencies, tribes, and the public about how best to manage Columbia and Snake river dams in a region that must continually adapt to ongoing changes to its climate, salmon habitat, and energy system.

For these reasons, I encourage the Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans, the full Natural Resources Committee, and the full House of Representatives to oppose HR 3144.

Thank you for your consideration of my input regarding federal legislation that could have significant impacts on my state.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Inslee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "I".

Jay Inslee
Governor

cc: Members of the Washington State Congressional Delegation