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Jeff Breckel
Executive Director

November 13, 2012

Phil Anderson, Director
WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, WA 98501-1091

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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Dear Mr. Anderson:

The Washington Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board supports proposed change number 9 to the 2012-2013 Washington sport fishing regulations. The change would remove or modify size and daily limits for bass, walleye, and channel catfish in the Columbia River, Snake River and their tributaries. The Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board (LCFRB) asks that consideration be given to extending the area covered by the rule or similar controls to the Lower Columbia River and its tributaries.

The Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board was established by state law to oversee and coordinate salmon recovery efforts in the Lower Columbia region of Washington. Board members include local elected officials, citizens, and representatives of the legislature, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, hydro-electric utilities, and the environmental community. The Board led a collaborative effort involving federal, state, and local interests that produced the NOAA-approved Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery and Fish & Wildlife Subbasin Plan (LCFRB 2004, 2010).

Predation on juvenile salmon and steelhead by walleye, smallmouth bass, and channel catfish is recognized as a limiting factor in the Recovery Plan. The plan specifically calls for management of these warm-water species in order to reduce predation and competition risks to salmon. In addition to furthering recovery efforts for Lower Columbia ESA-listed Chinook, Coho, Chum, and steelhead, extending the proposed rule change to the lower river would also help to reduce predation by these warm-water species on migrating juvenile fish from the other 8 upriver ESA-listed salmon and steelhead Evolutionarily Significant Units (ESUs).

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Tom Linde, Chairman