



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA

March 15, 2023

The Hon. Patty Murray, Senator
The Hon. Suzan DelBene, Representative
The Hon. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez, Representative
The Hon. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Representative
The Hon. Pramila Jayapal, Representative
The Hon. Adam Smith, Representative
United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Hon. Maria Cantwell, Senator
The Hon. Rick Larsen, Representative
The Hon. Dan Newhouse, Representative
The Hon. Derek Kilmer, Representative
The Hon. Kim Schrier, Representative
The Hon. Marilyn Strickland, Representative
United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Members of the Washington State Congressional Delegation:

We are writing to you to respectfully request substantial federal investments to help our state battle a rapidly increasing invasion of non-native European green crab. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

The European green crab is a globally damaging invasive species that is able to survive in a wide range of water temperatures and salinities and has become established in many temperate coastal zones in areas around the world. If they become permanently established in the coastal waters of Washington State, it is likely that European green crabs will harm endangered species and impact resources that are part of the cultural identity of the tribes and native peoples and affect small businesses and low-income communities. They will become predators to shellfish and juvenile Dungeness crab, destroy critical habitat such as eelgrass beds and estuarine marshes, disrupt natural food webs, harm overall crab populations, hinder salmon and Southern Resident killer whale recovery efforts, reduce shorebird food supplies, and ultimately affect the overall health and resiliency of the Salish Sea.

In recognition of the threats posed by the European green crab, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee on January 19, 2022, issued Emergency Proclamation 22-02 citing that the European green crab infestation poses an imminent danger to Washington State's marine environment, marine-based economy, and the cultural well-being of both tribes and non-tribal residents. The state legislature further acknowledged their threat by committing ongoing funding to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to help implement eradication and control measures on European green crabs through coordination and grants with partner organizations.

We greatly appreciate the technical and funding support of regional National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency staff. However, we recognize that federal funding levels are insufficient to address the scope of this emergency

as evidenced by the state providing state funding to support tribes, Washington Sea Grant, and federal agencies to conduct research and protect national wildlife refuges.

Therefore, we respectfully request that Congress recognize the emergency nature and destructive potential of European green crab and act to minimize this destruction by implementing the following requests:

- Fund the reestablishment of the Office of Aquatic Invasive Species at NOAA headquarters to support state, tribal, and federal European green crab management programs.
- Appropriate \$5 million in fiscal year 2024 and future years to the Coastal Aquatic Invasive Species Mitigation Grant Program as authorized under the Frank LoBiondo Vessel Incidental Discharge Act of 2018.
- Provide robust funding for European green crab prevention, management, and data stewardship to:
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Willapa National Wildlife Refuge and Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge/Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex
 - U.S. Geological Survey's Biological Threats and Invasive Species Research Program for its Western and Alaska Science Centers
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs' Invasive Species Program for its Northwest Region
 - U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service for Washington's coastal shellfish growers

Again, thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Kelly Susewind
Director



Senator Kevin Van De Wage
Chair of the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks Committee
24th District of Washington State



Representative Mike Chapman
Chair of the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee
24th District of Washington State



Eric White
Chairman Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians



Leonard Forsman
Chairman of Suquamish Tribe



Megan Duffy
Director
Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office



W. Ron Allen, Tribal Council Chairman
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe



Guy Capoeman, President
Quinault Indian Nation



Laura Blackmore, Executive Director
Puget Sound Partnership



Laura Watson, Director
Washington State Department of Ecology



Derek I. Sandison, Director
Washington State Department of Agriculture



Thomas D. Wooten Tribal
Chairman Samish Indian Nation



Timothy J. Greene, Sr.
Chairman, Makah Tribal Council



March 2, 2023

Senator Patty Murray
Senator Maria Cantwell
Richard Spinrad, NOAA

RE: Support for WDFW request for enhanced federal European Green Crab funding

The Lummi Nation is writing in support of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's request for federal funding to maintain and expand the states and Tribe's battle with the highly invasive European green crab (EGC). The region wide effort supports our goal of protecting and preserving "Our Schelangen", the Lummi Nations traditional way of life, the tidelands, and fisheries. It further ensures efforts to enhance the habitats within our treaty protected Usually and Accustomed (UA) fishing territory. The funding is essential to improving statewide trapping efficiencies, coordination development, and education in local communities.

The Lummi Nation works diligently and effectively with WDFW, in a large-scale response, to contain and capture a high number of EGC. Together more than 2,490 EGC were captured and removed from Lummi Bay, primarily from the Lummi Sea Pond (LSP) between April and November 2020. In 2021, during the same time frame, Lummi Natural Resource staff in collaboration with WDFW, captured and removed more than 70,000 EGC from the LSP, including several mating pairs and gravid females. The number of EGC captured in the LSP in 2021 far exceeded the all-time number of EGC captured in all other areas of Washington State. The exponential growth of EGC captured in the LSP, and the presence of mating pairs, indicated a significant and immediate threat to the nearshore habitats of Lummi Bay, the Lummi Reservation and the greater Salish Sea, and to the treaty-reserved right to harvest fish and shellfish. In response, on November 23, 2021, the Lummi Indian Business Council Declared an EGC Environmental Disaster.

The invasive EGC is an aggressive predator and a highly adaptable shore crab, it has been implicated in the rapid decline of the east coast's shellfish industry within the past decade and now is a direct threat to Lummi tidelands and UA. The voracious EGC consumes 40 juvenile shellfish a day before they ever have a chance to reach harvestable age. The invasive species is also known to wreak havoc in nearshore marine and estuarine ecosystems, critically important nursery habitat for juvenile salmon, Dungeness crab, and other species essential to Lummi

fishers by burrowing into marsh banks and uprooting eelgrass beds, in nearshore areas where the species co-exist.

Lummi Natural Resources Aquatic Invasive Species division (AIS) is working closely with the Lummi Fisheries and Natural Resources Commission, the Lummi Indian Business Council, WDFW, and WSG to explore additional ways to rapidly reduce and contain EGC in the LSP. In 2022 the Lummi Reservation was the only place in Washington to achieve holding the EGC to a similar number caught the year prior. Engineers are performing a multi-step hydrologic assessment to assess physical hydrodynamics and water quality within the LSP for green crab mitigation potential. Additionally, AIS is preparing multiple studies to answer questions leading to the long-term management of EGC to be fully prepared for this year's trapping season.

The aggressive approach we are taking with WDFW and other agencies, in removing EGC will keep the level of population from rising, in our traditional fishing U/A and surrounding areas. Lummi Nation supports all agencies and tribes' efforts towards capturing EGC Invasive species to keep them out of all waters. Maintaining financial support for this work is vital. So, we will be requesting the funding allocation in the equitable amount that Lummi has received in the prior years.

Sincerely,



Anthony Hillaire, Chair
Lummi Indian Business Council