



STATE OF WASHINGTON

May 6, 2025

The Hon. Patty Murray, Senator
The Hon. Suzan DelBene, Representative
The Hon. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez, Representative
The Hon. Michael Baumgartner, 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. Emily Randall, 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:

As Congress continues to work toward Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026 appropriations, we are writing to express strong support for inclusion of invasive mussel, including quagga, zebra, and golden mussels, funding in the final funding package. This funding will prevent and build response readiness, protecting our human health, culture, economy and environment.

In response to the 2023 and 2024 detections of quagga mussels in Idaho, the State of Washington, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), tribal nations, and others are increasing existing efforts to prevent the spread of invasive mussels. To address the imminent threat, WDFW received additional state funds to increase prevention and readiness in cooperation with tribal, federal, regional, state, and local entities in the 2024 State Legislative Session. These funds enable WDFW, other Columbia River Basin (CRB) states, and tribal nations to leverage federal funding through USACE's Aquatic Plant Control and Water Inspection and Decontamination (APC-WID) cost-share program. This brings millions of dollars to the CRB to prevent the spread of quagga and zebra mussels, as well as the newly detected golden mussel (a quagga and zebra mussel-like aquatic invasive species). The program supports our state in preparing for rapid response and long-term mitigation in the event of establishment of these invasive mussels. In 2024, Idaho announced quagga mussel larvae were detected again in the Snake River. The Washington state legislature just included the same level of investment for prevention and preparedness for the next two years.

The APC-WID program has proven to be successful and eligibility for the program has increased, but the FFY 2024 APC-WID appropriation was 50% of the past years. To maintain program success,

funding should be restored to historic levels. Originally established to protect the CRB states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana from quagga and zebra mussels in 2014, it expanded to include the Upper Colorado and Upper Missouri Basin states in 2024. In the next two years the South Platte, Arkansas, and Russian River Basin watersheds will be added in addition to watersheds that adjoin the border between the United States and Canada.

As the program has proven successful, the scope has increased. However, funding has not kept pace. WDFW requests \$31 million for the APC-WID program, with \$15 million specifically for watercraft inspections and \$3 million for monitoring.

Additionally, there are other key opportunities to protect our waters through funding provided to the U.S. Department of the Interior. We request that Congress provide funding for invasive mussel prevention, monitoring, and management to two bureaus:

- \$8 million to U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs' Invasive Species Program for the Northwest Region as supported as supported in the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians' [Resolution# 2025 – 08 “Invasive Species Funding in the Pacific Northwest”](#);
- \$4.8 million to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Quagga - Zebra Action Plan for Western U.S. Waters; and
- \$4.4 million to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's State and Interstate Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan Grant Program.

For more than 20 years, collective effort to protect Washington, the CRB, Western States and Provinces has successfully prevented establishment of invasive mussels. The establishment of quagga mussels in the free-flowing Snake River in Idaho is the single-most important invasive species development in this generation – putting trillions in economic value and consequences at risk in Washington and beyond. Washington's sense of place and health faces an imminent threat.

Invasive mussels bioaccumulate pollutants making fish and wildlife unsafe for human consumption, decrease water quality, cause harmful algal blooms that contaminate drinking water supplies and harm aquatic life, and are linked to outbreaks of botulism caused by water quality changes and increased toxins. Washington's hydroelectric production faces an estimated maintenance and mitigation cost of \$100 million annually, which will increase the cost of power and further impact vulnerable ratepayers. Similar levels of infrastructure impacts and costs are anticipated for hydroelectric, agricultural irrigation systems, shipping, and both drinking water and sewer systems. Of particular concern is the potential impact on the numerous listed salmon and steelhead species in the region, and risk to threatened and endangered species that rely on those species for sustenance, such as the Southern Resident killer whale.

Decreasing populations of fish also impact recreation with more than a quarter of outdoor recreation taking place on Washington's public waters generating \$5 billion annually. Recreational fishing activities alone generate more than \$1.5 billion in economic activity annually in Washington state. Domestic commercial fisheries create nearly 23,000 jobs in Washington and salmon harvest is worth nearly \$14 million annually. Importantly, the spread of invasive mussels will harm endangered species, impacting resources that are part of the cultural identity of the tribes and their well-being.

groundwater withdrawals supply irrigation water to many areas, the majority of water used for irrigated agriculture is diverted from streams and rivers. This critical infrastructure relies on water intake pipes that are at risk of becoming clogged by quagga and zebra mussels. The agricultural industry in Washington is worth \$9.6 billion to our economy, and disruptions to irrigated agriculture will increase food production costs, resulting in higher prices and greater food insecurity. In 2022, the Columbia Snake River System, a key U.S. trade gateway, handled \$31.2 billion in national and global trade. As the leading wheat export gateway, second for soy and corn, additional costs for managing and mitigating the impacts of quagga and zebra mussels along trade routes may also cause significant disruptions to the agricultural industry.

Three-quarters of Washington's agriculture is irrigated, relying on a variety of water sources. While groundwater withdrawals supply irrigation water to many areas, the majority of water used for irrigated agriculture is diverted from streams and rivers. This critical infrastructure relies on water intake pipes that are at risk of becoming clogged by quagga and zebra mussels. The agricultural industry in Washington is worth \$9.6 billion to our economy, and disruptions to irrigated agriculture will increase food production costs, resulting in higher prices and greater food insecurity. In 2022, the Columbia Snake River System, a key U.S. trade gateway, handled \$31.2 billion in national and global trade. As the leading wheat export gateway, second for soy and corn, additional costs for managing and mitigating the impacts of quagga and zebra mussels along trade routes may also cause significant disruptions to the agricultural industry.

If unchecked, invasive mussels will lead to catastrophic consequences for Washington's environment, economy, and human health — to our way of life. Adequate and sustained federal funding for invasive mussel prevention and readiness will provide significant assistance to partners across Washington state to address this threat to our freshwater ecosystems. As Congress works through the FFY 2026 appropriations process, we urge you to include funding to monitor and prevent the spread of invasive mussels. Thank you again for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Kelly Susewind, Director
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



John Stuhlmiller, Executive Director
Washington State Water Resources Association



Matt Morrison, Executive Director
Pacific NorthWest Economic Region



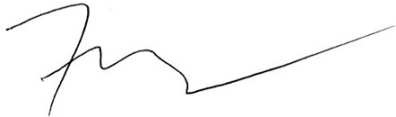
Neil Maunu, Executive Director
Pacific Northwest Waterways Association



Michelle Hennings, Executive Director
Washington Association of Wheat Growers



Matthew Harris, Assistant Executive Director
Washington State Potato Commission



Todd Murray, Chair
Washington Invasive Species Council



George Harris, President and CEO
Northwest Marine Trade Association



Liz Anderson, Executive Director
Washington Public Utility Districts Association



Barry A. Thom, Executive Director
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission



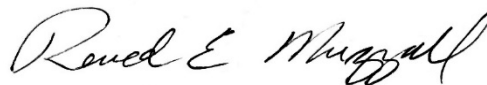
Katie Rose Allen
Acting Deputy Supervisor, Forest Resilience,
Regulation and Aquatic Resources, Washington
Department of Natural Resources



Senator Mike Chapman
24th Legislative District
Washington State Senate



Megan Duffy, Director
Washington Recreation and Conservation Office



Senator Ron Muzzall
10th legislative district
Washington State Senate



Wyoming State Representative Mike Yin, Chair
Council of State Governments West (CSG West)



Jillian H. Caires
Director of Environmental Affairs
Avista Corporation

A blue ink signature, appearing to read 'AS', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Andrew Strong, Environmental, Engineering
& Project Delivery Officer
Seattle City Light

A brown ink signature, appearing to read 'EF', written in a stylized, cursive script.

Eric Ffitch, Executive Director
Washington Public Ports Association

A blue ink signature, appearing to read 'GAJ', written in a cursive script.

Gary Aitken, Jr.
Chair, Upper Columbia United Tribes Chair, Upper
Columbia United Tribes Vice Chairman, Kootenai
Tribe of Idaho

A blue ink signature, appearing to read 'D. Sandison', written in a cursive script.

Derek I. Sandison
Director
Washington Department of Agriculture

Working to support stakeholders in the restoration of viable salmonid populations and other at-risk species through collaborative processes that honor regional, cultural, economic and community values.



April 24, 2025

The Hon. Patty Murray, Senator

The Hon. Suzan DelBene, Representative

The Hon. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez, Representative

The Hon. Michael Baumgartner, Representative

The Hon. Pramila Jayapal, Representative

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The Hon. Marilyn Strickland, Representative

United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Joint WA Invasive Mussel Federal Appropriations

Dear Members of the Washington State Congressional Delegation:

The Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (the UCSRB) is writing to support the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) Federal Fiscal Year (FFY 2026) federal quagga and zebra mussel appropriations request. The UCSRB Board of Directors represents the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan Counties. The UCSRB developed and coordinates the implementation of the *Upper Columbia Spring Chinook Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Plan (Recovery Plan)*, adopted by NOAA Fisheries in 2007.

The UCSRB strongly supports the inclusion of funding for invasive mussels, including quagga, zebra, and golden mussels, in the WDFW final request package. This funding will build response readiness and protect Washington State's economy, human health, culture, and environment, valued at trillions annually.

In response to the 2023 and 2024 detections of quagga mussels in Idaho, the State of Washington, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), tribal nations, and others are increasing existing efforts to prevent the spread of invasive mussels. To address the imminent threat, WDFW received additional state funds to increase prevention and readiness in cooperation with tribal, federal, regional, state, and local entities in the 2024 State Legislative Session. These funds enable WDFW, other Columbia River Basin (CRB) states, and tribal nations to leverage federal funding through USACE's Aquatic Plant Control and Water Inspection and Decontamination (APC-WID) cost-share program. This funding is crucial to prevent the spread of quagga and zebra mussels, as well as the newly detected golden mussel (a quagga and zebra

mussel-like aquatic invasive species), and to prepare for rapid response and long-term mitigation in the event of establishment.

The APC-WID program has proven to be successful and eligibility for the program has increased, but the FFY 2024 APC-WID appropriation was 50% of the past years. To maintain program success, funding should be restored to historic levels. Originally established to protect the CRB states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana from quagga and zebra mussels in 2014, it expanded to include the Upper Colorado and Upper Missouri Basin states in 2024. In the next two years the South Platte, Arkansas, and Russian River Basin watersheds will be added in addition to watersheds that adjoin the border between the United States and Canada.

As the program has proven successful, the scope has increased. However, funding has not kept pace. FFY2-026, WDFW is requesting \$31 million for the APC-WID program, with \$15 million specifically for watercraft inspections and \$3 million for monitoring.

Additionally, there are other key opportunities to protect our waters through funding provided to the U.S. Department of the Interior. We request that Congress provide funding for invasive mussel prevention, monitoring, and management to two bureaus:

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Invasive mussels bioaccumulate pollutants making fish and wildlife unsafe for human consumption, decrease water quality, cause harmful algal blooms that contaminate drinking water supplies and harm aquatic life, and are linked to outbreaks of botulism caused by water quality changes and increased toxins. Washington's hydroelectric production faces an estimated maintenance and mitigation cost of \$100 million annually, which will increase the cost of power and further impact vulnerable ratepayers. Similar levels of infrastructure impacts and costs are anticipated for hydroelectric, agricultural irrigation systems, shipping, and both drinking water and sewer systems. Of particular concern is the potential impact on the numerous listed salmon and steelhead species in the region, and risk to threatened and endangered species that rely on those species for sustenance, such as the Southern Resident killer whale.

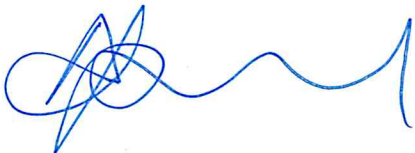
Decreasing populations of fish also impact recreation with more than a quarter of outdoor recreation taking place on Washington's public waters generating \$5 billion annually. Recreational fishing activities alone generate more than \$1.5 billion in economic activity annually in Washington state. Domestic commercial fisheries create nearly 23,000 jobs in Washington and salmon harvest is worth nearly \$14

million annually. Importantly, the spread of invasive mussels will harm endangered species, impacting resources that are part of the cultural identity of the tribes and their well-being.

Three-quarters of Washington's agriculture is irrigated, relying on a variety of water sources. While groundwater withdrawals supply irrigation water to many areas, most of the water used for irrigated agriculture is diverted from streams and rivers, relying on water intake pipes and infrastructure at risk of becoming clogged by quagga and zebra mussels. An industry worth \$9.6 billion to our economy, disruptions to irrigated agriculture will increase food production costs, resulting in higher prices and greater food insecurity statewide. In 2022, the Columbia Snake River System, a key U.S. trade gateway, handled \$31.2 billion in national and global trade. As the leading wheat export gateway, second for soy and corn, additional costs for managing and mitigating the impacts of quagga and zebra mussels along trade routes may also contribute to higher food prices and food insecurity.

If unchecked, invasive mussels will lead to catastrophic consequences for Washington's environment, economy, and human health — to our way of life. Adequate and sustained federal funding for invasive mussel prevention and readiness will provide significant assistance to partners across Washington state to address this threat to our freshwater ecosystems. As Congress works through the FFY 2026 appropriations process, we urge you to include funding to monitor and prevent the spread of invasive mussels. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Amanda Ward
UCSRB Executive Director.