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U.S. House votes to help Columbia River salmon, steelhead *Columbia River sea lion predation bill now heads to President Trump*

Today, the U.S. House voted to pass bipartisan legislation to protect salmon and steelhead from excessive sea lion predation in the Columbia River basin. The Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Act (S. 3119) was passed by the U.S. Senate last week and now heads to President Trump, who is expected to sign the legislation into law. The bill was adopted by Unanimous Consent and caps a decade-long effort to pass sea lion legislation, a key priority for Reps. Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA) and Kurt Schrader (D-OR). Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Jim Risch (R-ID) shepherded the legislation through the U.S. Senate after the House acted in June to pass nearly identical legislation -- H.R. 2083 – by a strong bipartisan vote, including the support of every House member from Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.

“We greatly appreciate the tireless efforts of Reps. Herrera Beutler and Schrader to pass this critical legislation – it wouldn’t have happened without their leadership,” said Gary Loomis, founder of G-Loomis, Edge Rods, and Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) in the Pacific Northwest. “Current law is failing wild and endangered Columbia River basin salmon and steelhead populations, some of which face an imminent risk of extinction if nothing is done to address the unnatural levels of sea lion predation and restore balance to this unique ecosystem. The legislation also passed with the support of other Senators, U.S. Representatives, and a broad coalition of states, tribes, and organizations from Oregon, Washington, and Idaho - CCA was proud to be part of this coalition effort and is thankful of the years of efforts by our members in support of this legislation.”

S. 3119 amends the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) to provide Northwest states and Columbia River treaty tribes streamlined authorities to effectively address excessive sea lion predation where we know the problem is most acute, including a large stretch of the river below Bonneville Dam, in the Willamette River, and in other tributaries. Previous efforts to pass similar legislation have stalled in the U.S. Senate, but this year Senators from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho came together with Senators Cantwell and Risch to approve these important reforms.

“This legislation represents a necessary step to restoring balance to this ecosystem, and we are very excited to have the bill pass both chambers of Congress,” said Ted Venker, director of conservation for CCA National. “It is not easy to take a leadership role on a difficult issue like this. Representatives Herrera Beutler and Schrader, along with Senators Cantwell and Risch, deserve our thanks for

supporting a science-based approach to save Columbia River basin salmon and steelhead from almost certain extinction. Passage of this legislation allows our federal, state and tribal fishery managers to take immediate action to save these fisheries for future generations.”

For years, CCA chapters in Oregon and Washington have been a leading voice in the sportfishing community in support of federal legislation to reduce excessive sea lion predation in the Columbia River basin – rallying their members to contact their lawmakers, organizing public events, securing state funding for interim measures, and orchestrating state legislative hearings. The legislation has gained broader support as the dire need for action has been confirmed, including by a recent Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) study finding that endangered Willamette River winter steelhead face a 90% chance of extinction if nothing is done to reduce sea lion predation in the Willamette River.

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