

Columbia River Restoration Act



The CRRA will provide funding for toxics reduction and clean up throughout the Columbia Basin



PNWA supports the Columbia River Restoration Act (CRRA)

In the 111th Congress, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved the Columbia River Restoration Act. The Senate bill would direct the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a collaborative stakeholder-based program to reduce toxic contamination throughout the Columbia River Basin. It would authorize \$33M per year for six years to fund toxics reduction and clean up in the Basin. The bill was introduced by Senator Merkley, with Senators Baucus, Crapo, Tester and Wyden as original co-sponsors.

Rep Blumenauer of Oregon introduced the legislation in the House. A hearing was held on it in the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Rep. Blumenauer has indicated he will reintroduce the bill in the 112th Congress. We anticipate that the bill will be modified prior to introduction to reconcile differences between the House and Senate bills.

PNWA has long supported federal funding to remove toxic contaminants from the Columbia and Snake Rivers and their tributaries.

CRRA would fund toxics reduction and clean-up in the Columbia Basin

Here are some key provisions of bill as passed by the Senate EPW in the last Congress.

Stakeholder-driven process. The program would be driven by a stakeholder working group with representatives from state, local and tribal agencies, industry, utilities, environmental groups, soil and water conservation districts and the general public drawn from throughout the Basin. The Working Group will prioritize projects for EPA's consideration, including monitoring, assessment, and toxic contamination reduction projects that would implement the Columbia River Basin Toxics Reduction Action Plan or, in the Lower Columbia River Estuary, the Estuary Plan.

Funding. The Senate bill would authorize \$33M per year for the federal fiscal years 2012-2017. The federal funds may be used to fund up to 75% of project costs in the form of grants to state and local government entities, Indian tribes, nonprofit private agencies, institutions, organizations, and individuals. A minimum of one-third of the funding would be directed to the portion of the Basin above Bonneville Dam and a minimum of one-third would be directed to the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership for use in the estuary.

Columbia River Basin Toxics Reduction Action Plan

EPA, with input from a stakeholder working group, developed a draft Toxics Reduction Action Plan for the Basin. The final plan was released September 23, 2010. Actions in the plan include: reduce discharge of toxics through more protective water quality standards, expand pesticide return programs, expand erosion prevention and sediment, storm water and runoff controls, and increase technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to increase best management practices. The Action Plan is available at http://www.epa.gov/region10/pdf/columbia/toxics-action-plan_sept2010.pdf

Lower Columbia River Estuary Management Plan

The Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership has been implementing elements of the estuary Management Plan for ten years. The Management Plan was developed to protect and enhance the lower Columbia River by addressing biological integrity, conventional pollutants, toxic contaminants, habitat restoration and public awareness and education. PNWA staff chaired the committee that developed the Management Plan and currently serves in the Partnership's Board. The Management Plan and recent activities of the Estuary Partnership can be viewed at <http://www.lcrep.org/>.

PNWA appreciates the efforts of the Northwest Senate and House Members to include a stakeholder perspective in the planning and funding for toxics reduction in the Columbia Basin.

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