



Nor'wester newsletter

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Gov. Inslee recommends funding for dam breaching stakeholder group

Last week, Governor Inslee outlined his budget priorities. Included in his package was a \$750K [proposal to fund a stakeholder process](#) on the associated economic and social impacts as well as mitigation costs of Snake River dam removal. This dam breaching stakeholder process was one of the more controversial [recommendations](#) from the Southern Resident Killer Whale Task Force, and was one which did not have unanimous support from the group due to reasons highlighted in a [minority report](#).

This recommendation envisions Washington's orca task force working with the states of Idaho and Oregon to hire a neutral third party to establish a process for local, state, tribal and federal leaders to address issues associated with the possible breaching or removal of the four lower Snake River dams. Essentially, the task force would attempt to duplicate the same information-gathering effort that is already several years underway by the federal agencies in the [CRSO EIS](#). The CRSO EIS is a regional, comprehensive effort to evaluate a range of operations alternatives for the 14 federal hydropower facilities that exist along the Columbia and Snake Rivers. The EIS process includes multiple opportunities for public engagement. All Northwest [states and tribes are already](#)

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[cooperating in this EIS process](#), which includes an evaluation of the Snake River dams, including an economic impact analysis with stakeholder input.

The result of this Washington state effort will not be as comprehensive as the current federal effort, will not comport with NEPA, and thus will not result in a product that can be relied upon by decision-makers or inform the CRSO EIS process or other science-based species recovery activities in the Northwest. A dam breaching evaluation funded by Washington taxpayers will simply serve the purpose of providing another venue for rallies, costumes, and the opportunity to garner more column inches. [Some in the region](#) are beginning to question whether these recommendations will result in real help for the orcas. Additionally, NOAA - the agency responsible for the recovery of these pods - has increased efforts to inform the region about fish, orcas, and dams. NOAA released a fact sheet specifically on the [Snake River dams and these orca pods](#), as well as a document on [Chinook stocks](#).

PNWA will continue to provide information and support to our members who are engaged with issues surrounding Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) and Snake River dams.

Upcoming Events

Sea lion legislation passes Congress

On December 11th, the [Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act](#) passed out of Congress. The bipartisan bill was led by Senators Maria Cantwell (WA) and Jim Risch (ID) and Representatives Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA) and Kurt Schrader (OR), and provides tribal members and government fish managers the authority to remove sea lions from specific areas of the Columbia River system where they pose a threat to endangered salmon and steelhead.

Increasing predation from sea lions has significantly impacted the availability of adult Chinook salmon in the Pacific Northwest. A recent [study by Oregon State University](#) found that if sea lions continue their current consumption, there is an 89 percent chance that a

population of wild steelhead could go extinct. In addition, NOAA has also reported that California sea lions have killed the largest proportion of spring Chinook salmon and steelhead this year than any year since 2011. Northwest Members of Congress have been working for a number of years to address the issue of sea lion predation in our region and this bill, which was unanimously supported by the Northwest Congressional delegation, is a huge step forward. PNWA thanks Sen. Cantwell, Sen. Risch, Rep. Herrera Beutler, and Rep. Schrader for their leadership on this issue, and thanks the entire Northwest delegation for their support.

PNWA members win big in BUILD grants announcement

Several PNWA members came out big winners as the Department of Transportation announced \$1.5 billion in grant funding for new infrastructure projects. The Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program provides federal investments in road, rail, transit and port projects. Congress distributed over \$5 billion to fund projects that have a significant regional impact, with over \$1 billion of the funding for road projects, \$165 million to rail and \$146 million for port projects.

PNWA members [Port of Morrow](#) and Port of Coos Bay each received \$20 million for their projects. The Port of Morrow landed \$20 million for the Columbia River Barge Terminal Rail Access project to establish rail-to-barge transloading capability within the port's barge terminals located on the Columbia River. Port of Morrow's outgoing manager Gary Neal thanked DOT Secretary Elaine Chao and Congressman Greg Walden (R-OR), noting "this grant is a huge boost to the Port of Morrow and the economic development of the region."

The Port of Coos Bay will receive \$20 million for the [Coos Bay Rail Line](#), which includes repair or replacement of 15 bridges to enhance capacity, meet safety requirements, and extend useful life. The Coos Bay Rail Line has been in operation for over 100 years, continuing freight connectivity for businesses between Coquille, Oregon and

the National Railway network with the Union Pacific interchange yard in Eugene, Oregon. The shippers on the line directly employ close to 1000 people throughout southwest Oregon with family wage jobs.

Port of Newport seeking candidates for a General Manager

The Port of Newport is recruiting qualified applicants to fill the General Manager position. The General Manager is responsible for the success of the Port in achieving its mission and is expected to be an effective, professional leader who gets results; supervises employees for peak performance; and demonstrates positive, effective, interpersonal and communication skills. The General Manager is appointed by the Port Commission. For a detailed position description and application instructions, please [click here](#). **Applications are due by February 11, 2019.**

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