

2017 Legislative Priorities for Hood Canal's Environmental and Community Wellbeing

About the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC):

- **HCCC is a council of governments with a regional focus**, which can advance strategic regional priorities in a way that individual jurisdictions cannot.
- HCCC's members include **Hood Canal's surrounding counties (Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason) and tribal governments (Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, and Skokomish Tribe)**. HCCC's Board of Directors includes county commissioners or tribal council chairs from each member.
- HCCC provides a **forum for its members to work together** to advance a shared regional vision - *Humans benefit from and coexist sustainably with a healthy Hood Canal.*
- HCCC's **Hood Canal Integrated Watershed Plan (IWP)** establishes five-year strategic priorities to guide the implementation of HCCC's and regional partners' actions towards the vision. The IWP advances and leverages our partnerships with organizations' significant investments and broad support around Hood Canal to further the important efforts needed to protect its health and the wellbeing of its communities, and provides the following:
 - Establishes a prioritized framework of strategies to guide project implementation
 - Improves accountability for the strategy implementation of those actions
 - Identifies strategic information gaps and barriers to success
 - Creates a framework for continuous evaluation and adaptive management

The Board of Directors supports the following agency requests that further HCCC's and our partners' work and investments:

Washington State Capital Budget Legislative Priorities

Support the Hood Canal Bridge Ecosystem Impact Assessment funding request

The Hood Canal Bridge is an important transportation corridor, but research indicates that the bridge is a barrier to the migration of Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed salmonids, and blocks the circulation of water in and out of Hood Canal.

- Research has found that 65% of juvenile, ESA-listed steelhead that reach the bridge do not make it beyond it and out to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. This mortality problem may also extend to ESA-listed summer chum and Chinook salmon.

- Scientific modeling has revealed that the bridge’s pontoons, spanning 83% of the Canal and extending 15 feet into the water column, could also be affecting water quality for all of Hood Canal. This is of particular concern because it’s potential to exacerbate Hood Canal’s natural vulnerability to low dissolved oxygen conditions, which can lead to fish kill events and other ecosystem impacts.

HCCC has worked closely with a collaboration of federal, state, tribal, and non-profit partners to develop the Hood Canal Bridge Ecosystem Impact Assessment. This assessment will leverage \$1.3 million in match funding to pinpoint the causes of increased fish mortality at the bridge and determine its water quality impacts.

As the work progresses, technical staff will work with federal, state, and county governments to develop, test, refine, and ultimately implement management actions to address the adverse impacts of the Bridge while assuring the bridge continues to serve the community as a major transportation corridor.

Request: Support the Long Live the Kings state capital funding request of \$750,000 for the 2017 – 2019 biennium.

Support the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) capital funding request

The HCCC Lead Entity engages elected officials, technicians, and local citizens in a robust process resulting in a politically supported ranked list of high-quality projects to effectively move the bar closer to recovery for Hood Canal summer chum and Puget Sound Chinook populations in the Hood Canal region. SRFB funding is a cornerstone of salmon recovery restoration work, yet the funding from the state has declined for several years. For 2017 – 2019, the SRFB intends to use a portion of the state funding to support watershed Lead Entity project development to increase Washington’s competitiveness for federal PCSRF funds. SRFB funds combine NOAA Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) dollars with state capital funds that serve as the required match to the federal funds. Together, these dollars support annual grant rounds for salmon habitat protection and restoration projects in watersheds around the state.

Request: Support the Recreation and Conservation Office’s (RCO) Salmon Recovery Funding Board state capital funding request of \$55.3 million for the 2017 – 2019 biennium.

Support the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Fund capital funding request

Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) funds support implementation of the highest priority habitat protection and restoration projects throughout Puget Sound. The program includes:

- Base funding allocated among Puget Sound watersheds for a list of grant round habitat projects
- Funding for a prioritized list of specific, large-scale, high-priority capital projects submitted by Puget Sound watersheds

PSAR Funds are derived from State general obligation bonds (RCW 77.85). A small portion of this funding supports local watershed Lead Entity project development important for successful implementation.

Request: Support the Puget Sound Partnership’s PSAR funding request of \$80 million for the 2017 – 2019 biennium (contained in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget).

Support the Floodplains by Design capital funding request

Coordinated investments between Floodplains by Design, Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR), and federally authorized Army Corps of Engineers funding serve to leverage millions of dollars of investments in the Skokomish River ecosystem to alleviate flooding in the valley and improve salmon habitat, while improving infrastructure for public safety.

The Department of Ecology's Floodplain by Design program has greatly increased our local partners' ability to develop and implement large-scale win-win floodplain projects that restore habitat for at-risk fish while reducing flood risk to developed areas.

Request: Support Ecology's funding request of \$60 million to improve flood protection, restore salmon habitat, improve water quality, and enhance outdoor recreation.

Support the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife request in support of Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP)

\$20 million will provide important salmon and ecosystem restoration through the funding of a vetted and ranked Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP)'s protection and restoration of Puget Sound nearshore project list. ESRP often leverages funds by providing the mandatory match funding for State and Federal salmon recovery funding grants.

Request: Support the WDFW's ESRP funding request of \$20 million for the 2015 – 2017 biennium (contained in the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Budget Request).

Support the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife request in support of Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Program (PSNERP)

This request will provide the required matching funds in order to leverage \$4.95 million in federal funding to achieve design for three large-scale Puget Sound nearshore restoration projects, including the Duckabush River estuary in Hood Canal.

The Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Program (PSNERP) has federally authorized funding through the Army Corps of Engineers to address ecosystem restoration on failing infrastructure in Puget Sound.

Request: Support the WDFW's PSNERP funding request of \$6.971 million for the 2015 – 2017 biennium (contained in the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Ten Year Capital Plan Project Listing).

Support the Puget Sound Partnership's legislative agenda, which highlights actions that advance PSP's three strategic initiatives—Habitat, Stormwater, and Shellfish

The Puget Sound Partnership (Partnership)'s legislative agenda supports the actions that protect Puget Sound, and the Partnership's ability to implement the Action Agenda for Puget Sound's three strategic initiatives: Habitat, Stormwater, and Shellfish. These initiatives support multi-objective habitat

enhancement projects and integrated water infrastructure projects that address a mix of stormwater, habitat, water supply, and flood protection.

In addition to supporting the above requests for SRFB, PSAR, Floodplains by Design, and ESRP, the HCCC joins the *Puget Sound Partnership's* in supporting the following budget requests:

To protect and restore salmon habitat:

- Enhancements to the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Hydraulic Project Approval program to better protect critical nearshore habitat, especially habitat needed by salmon and steelhead; take pressure off of the General Fund by reauthorizing the collection of fees to support the program; and eliminate loopholes in the program that allow ongoing habitat loss.
- \$51.4 million in the Capital Budget for Fish Barrier Removal Board projects and \$90 million in the Transportation Budget to remove fish passage barriers

To prevent water pollution and protect Puget Sound water quality:

- \$90 million in the Capital Budget for the Stormwater Financial Assistance Program to provide grants to local governments for stormwater pollution prevention projects
- A substantial increase over the current \$2.7 million allocated for stormwater retrofits in the current biennium in the Transportation Budget to prevent stormwater pollution from state roads and highways
- \$78 million in bonds to replace revenue no longer being generated under the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) and fill the gap in funding needed for MTCA toxic site cleanups, pollution prevention, and Public Participation Grants
- Identifying and establishing dedicated sources of revenue for water pollution prevention, such as the Washington Waters Act or other water infrastructure proposals;
- The Public Works Trust Fund request for stormwater retrofits, culvert corrections, and water treatment

To improve the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of Puget Sound recovery actions:

- Allocate funding for Action Agenda priorities in accordance with their rankings
- Increase alignment and integration of state and local programs, policies, permitting, regulations, and enforcement actions with the Action Agenda and salmon recovery plans
- Reduce the frequency of Action Agenda updates and Science Work Plan updates from biennial to once every four years

Request: Support the *Puget Sound Partnership's* Legislative Agenda for capital actions supporting implementation of the Action Agenda for Puget Sound.

Operating Budget

Support the appropriation of state general funds in the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) budget to support watershed Lead Entities.

RCO requests state general funds to support watershed Lead Entities' operational capacity, and these funds combine with federal PCSRF dollars to support annual Lead Entity grants for project development, grant round coordination, and project tracking.

The decline in federal PCSRF funds has been linked directly to the amount of capacity funds included in Washington's PCSRF application, relative to the other four west coast states, which has increased due to the decline in state appropriations. As a result, the state contribution is necessary to improve Washington's competitiveness for PCSRF, which affects capital and capacity funding.

Request: Support RCO's request of \$907,000 in state general funds to support Lead Entity operational capacity. This is the same amount requested in the 2015 – 2017 biennium.

Support the allocation of funds to the Puget Sound Partnership's operating budget to support the coordination of Puget Sound recovery

The Puget Sound Partnership plays a necessary and important role in coordinating and facilitating the recovery of Puget Sound. In its essential role, the Partnership:

- Translates science to inform policy actions and guide project development
- Supports the capacity of Local Integrating Organizations around Puget Sound to engage local decision-makers and highlight local recovery priorities
- Provides the infrastructure for a coordinated and supported approach to ecosystem recovery

Request: Restore the core functions of the Partnership by fulfilling its operating budget request of \$3 million, needed to offset reductions in federal funding and address key responsibilities in statute

Federal Legislative Priorities

Support an appropriation of \$80 million for the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) requested by the governors of Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, and Idaho

Eighty million of PCSRF funding would restore funding to the level appropriated in 2011 and make more resources available to advance implementation of critical habitat protection and restoration projects. These funds allow NOAA to award grants to Washington State, tribes, and local watershed partners to implement salmon recovery priorities through the annual Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant round process.

Habitat protection and restoration projects enabled by PCSRF are consistent with the Action Agenda for Puget Sound recovery and tribal habitat priorities. The President's proposed FY 2017 budget includes \$65 million for PCSRF, which is equal to the FY 2016 appropriation. Federal PCSRF funds are matched by state funds in the RCO budget.

Request: Support an \$80 million appropriation for PCSRF in Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations for FY 2017. in communications with the Congressional delegation and NOAA leadership.

Support the “Promoting United Government Efforts to Save Our Sound Act” (PUGET SOS Act; H.R. 3630)

This bill would establish a Puget Sound Recovery National Program Office in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to provide for the coordination of federal Puget Sound recovery efforts with state, local and tribal recovery efforts.

The bill enhances the federal government’s role and investment in Puget Sound by amending the Clean Water Act to add a new section dedicated to Puget Sound recovery, providing lasting and structural recognition of the Puget Sound as a waterbody of national significance on par with the Chesapeake Bay and the Great Lakes. The bill, which was introduced by Congressmen Denny Heck and Derek Kilmer (co-chairs of the Puget Sound Recovery Caucus), would ultimately result in greater levels of federal funding for Puget Sound recovery.

Request: In communications with the Congressional delegation and EPA leadership, support the Puget SOS Act.