

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2015

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable March Kaptur
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Kaptur:

As members of the Northwest Energy Caucus, we urge you to support funding as authorized by the *Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014* to monitor and prevent the spread of invasive aquatic species, specifically zebra and quagga mussels, in the Pacific Northwest.

From irrigation lines that support our agriculture industry to critical hydropower facilities all across the Pacific Northwest, invasive zebra and quagga mussels present a serious threat to our water infrastructure and environment. In fact, the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife estimate that if zebra and quagga mussels invade the Columbia River system, they could cost hydroelectric facilities between \$250-300 million annually not including costs associated with environmental damages or increased operating expenses to hatcheries and water diversions.

While zebra and quagga mussels have infested waters across the country, they have not taken hold in Pacific Northwest waters—and we hope to keep it that way. Should they become established, there is no method for eradication. Instead, our states will be forced to remove these mussels from water infrastructure projects, thereby increasing costs for hydropower and irrigation, and causing harm to our water quality and fish habitats.

Last year, Congress passed and the President signed the *Water Resources Reform and Development Act*, which authorizes \$20 million for use by the Army Corps of Engineers on mussel prevention, inspection, and monitoring in the Columbia River Basin. As members of the Northwest Energy Caucus, we support including these funds in fiscal year 2016 Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

We recognize and appreciate the challenges facing the Appropriations Committee. However, we believe this is an important, preventive measure to protect the Pacific Northwest's salmon habitat, water quality, agriculture, and essential hydroelectric power. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



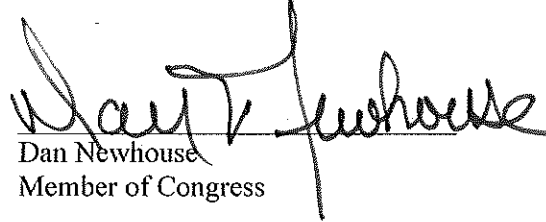
Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



Dave Reichert
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
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