



June 18, 2018

Senator Richard Shelby, Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
304 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Patrick Leahy, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
437 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Lamar Alexander, Chairman  
  
Energy and Water Development  
Appropriations Subcommittee  
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Dianne Feinstein, Ranking  
Member  
Energy and Water Development  
Appropriations Subcommittee  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: **Anti-Salmon Riders in the House Energy and Water Development  
Appropriation bill**

Dear Senators,

Our organizations represent West Coast and national fishing interests, including commercial and recreational fishermen, charter boats, fishing equipment manufacturers and retailers, restaurants, tribal interests and others who value a healthy salmon fishing industry. We write today in opposition to several provisions that were included in the House version of the FY 2019 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill. Each of these provisions threatens the health of

West Coast salmon runs and salmon fishing jobs. On behalf of our industry, we urge you to reject these provisions during consideration in the Senate, in the conference process and in other legislative processes.

**San Joaquin River – Sec. 205:** The House bill would block the restoration of salmon runs in California’s San Joaquin River. The San Joaquin River restoration agreement was approved by Congress and the federal courts after two decades of conflict. That restoration agreement received consensus support among the Bureau of Reclamation, the State of California, as well as California’s fishing, environmental and water agency interests, including the water authority that receives water from the San Joaquin River. This agreement is restoring flows and salmon to the San Joaquin, formerly California’s second most important salmon producing river. Prior to this agreement, 60 miles of this critical salmon river were literally dry in most years. This agreement also includes water management provisions to help local interests meet their water needs. There is no justification for shutting down restoration of the San Joaquin River and its salmon run.

**Columbia River – Sec. 506.** This provision, modeled after H.R. 3144, would threaten the thirteen imperiled wild salmon and steelhead populations in the Columbia River Basin. Historically, adult salmon returns to this Basin were 10 to 16 million fish annually. Now, a small fraction of historic populations of wild salmon and steelhead return to Pacific Northwest rivers. This provision would block court-mandated increases in water releases by the Columbia Basin’s dams. This increased springtime “spill” over the top of dams increases the survival of downstream migrating juvenile salmon survival. Improved survival is essential to maintaining healthy salmon runs. This provision would leave in place an inadequate plan of operations dams that fails to provide adequate protection for salmon. The appeals court panel stated, in their ruling in this case, that “significant evidence from decades of studies show(s) that spill volumes higher than those proposed in the 2014 Biological Opinion will lead to higher survival rates for outmigrating (juvenile salmon.)” These higher court-mandated spills are a key reason why Columbia River salmon runs are healthier than many other West Coast runs. We urge you to continue to fight to protect these critically important salmon runs.

**Dam Removal – Sec. 507.** This provision would prevent federal dam removals without explicit Congressional authorization. It is well known that dams have blocked and impaired salmon migration on most of the salmon producing rivers on the West Coast. Dams also damage downstream habitat and create conditions that encourage predation losses and the establishments of non-native species. Today, there are approximately 84,000 dams in the United States, more than 1,000 of which are federally owned and operated. Given the limited lifespan of these facilities, there is a pressing need to upgrade and, in some cases, remove antiquated dams. In recent decades, there are many cases where dams have been removed with the strong support of dam owners. Requiring explicit Congressional authorization for each removal of a federal dam – no matter now small and broadly supported –

would add unnecessary delay and cost. In some cases, dam removal is an important salmon restoration tool. We urge you to oppose this new obstacle to what is already a very lengthy and inclusive process.

Tens of thousands of West Coast jobs depend on the health of our iconic salmon runs. We urge you to oppose these and other riders in the appropriations process that threaten the health of our salmon runs and fishing industry.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



John McManus  
Golden Gate Salmon Association



Noah Oppenheim  
Pacific Coast Fed. of Fishermen's Assns.  
Institute for Fisheries Resources



Liz Hamilton  
NW Sportfishing Industry Assoc.



Scott Gudes  
American Sportfishing Association



Marc Gorelnic  
Coastside Fishing Club



James Stone  
Nor-Cal Guides and Sportsmen's Assn.

Cc: Senator Kamala Harris  
Senator Jeff Merkley  
Senator Ron Wyden  
Senator Maria Cantwell  
Senator Patty Murray  
Senator Lisa Murkowski