



COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE AUTHORITY

DRAFT

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Coordinating and promoting effective protection and restoration of fish, wildlife, and their habitat in the Columbia River Basin.

The Authority is comprised of the following tribes and fish and wildlife agencies:

Burns Paiute Tribe

Coeur d'Alene Tribe

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation

Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

National Marine Fisheries Service

Nez Perce Tribe

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall

Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Coordinating Agencies

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Upper Columbia United Tribes

Compact of the Upper Snake River Tribes

November X, 2008

Senator _____ :

The Columbia Basin Fish & Wildlife Authority (CBFWA) is an organization whose memberships consists of the four state and two federal fish¹ and wildlife management entities and eleven Indian Tribes of the Columbia River Basin. As members of the CBFWA, whose mission is to protect, mitigate, and enhance the fish and wildlife resources and the ecosystems on which they depend, we would like to address the importance of reauthorizing the Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act of 2007 (FRIMA), S. 1522/H.R. 3830.

FRIMA was enacted in 2000 to create a program that focuses on screening and passage improvements at water diversions where both fish and irrigated agriculture are important economic and social resources. Fish screens and fishways provide an immediate benefit to fishery resources while maintaining the supply of water valued by agricultural and other users. Fish screens effectively prevent the loss of millions of salmonids annually in the four states considered by FRIMA. Providing fish passage at diversion dams instantly opens up additional habitat for spawning and rearing by local fish populations. Projects implemented through the FRIMA program continue to help support sustainable fisheries and sustainable agricultural practices.

Funding for this program began in 2002 and since that time, _____ projects have been implemented with a total FRIMA contribution of _____ and a non-federal partner match of _____. FRIMA legislation required a local partner cost-share of at least 35%. In the 6 years since originally implemented, the partner cost share has averaged _____% of the costs for all projects approved. This large investment by applicants and other partners has allowed the limited funding available to be spread over additional projects and has increased the project ownership by local irrigation users.

The region wide support and importance of this program is evident by the co-sponsorship of this legislation by all eight Senators of the states in the Pacific Northwest. CBFWA requests your support in reauthorizing FRIMA, allowing water users in the Columbia Basin to continue to implement fish screening and passage projects for the benefit of fish and agriculture.

Sincerely,

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¹ The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA/NMFS) are members of Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority. However, the USFWS and NOAA/NMFS did not participate in the development of this letter and takes no position on the content. *(The USFWS/NOAA/NMFS statements are used here as placeholders pending receipt of abstention statements. IDFG has also communicated that they will be submitting a statement of abstention.)*