

DRAFT – for discussion only



2023 Legislative Priorities for Salmon Recovery and Puget Sound Watershed Health

Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Partners

Below are initial draft ideas for 2023 federal and state legislative priorities. WRIA 8 staff are seeking partner input on priorities for advocacy.

Proposed ideas for Federal Priorities

- **Support Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) in Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.** The PCSRF program is the primary federal funding for salmon recovery and supports annual grants for priority salmon habitat protection and restoration projects.
- **Support funding to advance design and construction of critical prioritized infrastructure repairs to the Hiram M. Chittenden (Ballard) Locks**, including design of an exclusion structure for the diffuser well and important upgrades and improvements to the fish ladder. **Advocate for the Corps' continued engagement in the multi-partner Roundtable process to identify and advance alternatives to address elevated water temperatures and low dissolved oxygen in the Lake Washington Ship Canal.**
- **Support key Puget Sound restoration funding programs and policy priorities, including:**
 - **National Estuary Program (NEP).** This NEP funding is core program funding for Puget Sound Partnership and for competitive grants supporting implementation of near-term actions called for the Action Agenda for Puget Sound recovery.
 - **Puget Sound Geographic Program in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.** This program provides key funding to support Puget Sound recovery priorities, implementation of voluntary actions, and adaptive management. Funding supports local and regional partner efforts, including ten local integrating organizations and seven Marine Resources Committees. The program supports innovative approaches to addressing stormwater, habitat, shellfish, flooding, water quality and quantity, and endangered species recovery, including Chinook salmon and Southern Resident orcas.
 - **Passage of the “Promoting United Government Efforts to Save Our Sound” (PUGET SOS) Bill, which will establish a Puget Sound Recovery National Program Office in the Environmental Protection Agency to coordinate federal Puget Sound recovery efforts with state, local and tribal recovery efforts and**

enable greater levels of federal funding for Puget Sound recovery. The PUGET SOS 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.

- **Support federal funding for research and management of stormwater runoff to reduce impacts to salmon.** Chemicals from decaying tires, specifically 6PPD-quinone affect coho, Chinook, sockeye and steelhead. In particular, coho have been shown to be most sensitive and succumb to “urban runoff mortality syndrome” within hours of exposure. Federal funding is needed to identify alternative, less harmful tire chemicals and to implement projects to capture and treat stormwater runoff.
 - **Support directing funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure and Jobs Act to priority habitat restoration and water infrastructure improvements in WRIA 8 and Puget Sound.** Several salmon recovery related priorities are identified for funding through the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure and Jobs Act. Help inform direction of funding to priority salmon recovery projects and programs. Advocate that funding flowing through existing state programs supports and supplements existing salmon recovery priorities.
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Proposed ideas for State Priorities

*NOTE: State agencies are currently developing budget requests, which should be available by late August. WRIA 8 anticipates aligning its budget priorities with agency requests, which will be added to an updated version of this document.

Capital Budget

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- **Support key salmon recovery Capital Budget funding programs, including Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR), Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB), Floodplains by Design, Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board, and Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP).** These programs support implementation of the highest priority habitat protection and restoration projects throughout Puget Sound. The PSAR and SRFB funds together support annual grant rounds for salmon habitat protection and restoration projects in watersheds around the state. PSAR and SRFB funding is a cornerstone of WRIA 8's annual grant round, and supports a portion of the Lead Entity program funding, which provides grants to watersheds, including WRIA 8, to manage the grant round and track and report on salmon recovery progress.
- **Support other Capital Budget funding programs that can match and support salmon recovery priorities, including Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account, Water Quality Combined Funding program.** These programs are less directly focused on salmon recovery, but support a broad range of land protection and

outdoor recreation priorities, including park acquisition and development, habitat conservation, farmland and forestland preservation, water quality protection and stormwater management, These funds often compliment WRIA 8 grant funding to implement priority restoration projects.

Operating Budget

- **Support funding for salmon recovery Lead Entities in Recreation and Conservation Office budget.** These funds support Lead Entities in watersheds around the state to administer a locally-based process to develop and prioritize projects for funding to the state Salmon Recovery Funding Board (per RCW 77.85). These funds provide an annual \$60,000 grant to WRIA 8 as the designated Lead Entity for our watershed.
- **Support state agency budget requests for monitoring salmon populations, and for studies and management of predation, elevated water temperatures, artificial light at night, priority aquatic invasive weeds, and other issues that affect survival of WRIA 8 salmon populations.** Monitoring salmon populations is critical to understanding and reporting on progress towards recovery goals. State support is important and necessary for studying and managing issues affecting salmon survival in WRIA 8 and Puget Sound.

Policy Legislation

- **Track and support legislation that seeks to improve regulatory protections for areas that are important for salmon habitat.** This could include proposals to define and implement “net ecological gain,” and regulatory improvements that enhance protection of riparian areas and lake and marine shorelines.
- **Support proposed reforms to the Growth Management Act that align with salmon recovery goals and targets,** including efforts to integrate salmon recovery and climate change into comprehensive planning.
- **Support innovative efforts to streamline regulatory review and permitting to support habitat restoration project implementation.** Currently habitat restoration projects go through the same regulatory review and permitting process as development projects. Seek and support efforts to streamline review and permitting for restoration.
- **Support increasing funding to regulatory entities for permit enforcement regarding land use regulations.** Lack of adequate regulatory permit enforcement enables continued unpermitted development and loss of habitat and critical areas.
- **Support legislation and funding requests that promote stormwater management planning, coordination, and implementation at a watershed scale,** address critical data/information needs, and seek innovative solutions to achieve multiple benefits from integrating stormwater management and habitat protection and restoration. Support advancing research and policy/product changes to address impacts of the tire dust chemical 6PPD-quinone on salmon survival. Champion legislation that prioritizes implementation of low impact development, facilitates green stormwater infrastructure, and that supports

retrofits to older stormwater facilities to improve protection of the environment at the watershed scale.

- **Support efforts to address effects of climate change on salmon and salmon habitat.** WRIA 8 recognizes that recovering salmon requires planning for and adapting to changing watershed conditions resulting from climate change. WRIA 8 supports policies and programs that address temperature impaired water bodies to improve salmon migration and survival, increase the pace of salmon habitat protection and restoration to improve ecosystem resiliency, and that mitigate projected effects of climate change on salmon.
- **Track and participate in efforts to improve existing funding authorities to support salmon recovery and Puget Sound restoration priorities,** including efforts to develop new watershed-based and/or regional funding mechanisms to support multiple-benefit projects that address salmon recovery and Puget Sound restoration priorities.