



September 29, 2014

The Honorable Patty Murray
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rogers
203 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Doc Hastings
1203 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Crapo
239 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler
1130 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James E. Risch
483 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Raúl Labrador
1523 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for the Columbia River Basin Restoration Act of 2014 (H. R. 5216)

Dear Senators Murray, Cantwell, Crapo, Risch; Representatives Rogers, Hastings, Herrera-Beutler, and Labrador:

The Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force's innovative collaborative partnership works towards achieving water quality standards for toxics, specifically PCBs, in the Spokane River. On January 23, 2013 a diverse group of organizations set aside differences and agreed to work towards achieving the water quality standard for PCBs in the Spokane River. A Memorandum of Agreement signed by five water discharge permit holders, three agencies, and three environmental groups established the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force (Task Force). Public interest in the Task Force is high. Approximately 18 organizations representing agencies, industry, and environmental interests attend our monthly meetings. The short term goal: to identify and reduce the inputs of toxics, specifically PCBs, into the Spokane River.

The Columbia River Basin Restoration Act of 2014 (H. R. 5216), introduced in the House of Representatives by Representatives Blumenauer and Bonamici, recognizes the importance that a healthy Columbia River and its tributaries has towards maintaining the vitality of the people and communities in the region. As the largest river system in the Pacific Northwest, the Columbia provides significant ecological and economic benefits. Protection and restoration of this resource is paramount. **The Columbia River Basin is the only large aquatic ecosystem in the United States that does not receive dedicated**

appropriations, in spite of the fact that degradation and contamination of the river threatens the economic viability of the region.

Our Task Force is actively addressing toxics in the Spokane River--one of the major Columbia River tributaries. Over the past two years the Task Force has prepared plans and implemented studies needed to clean up the river. Our current need is to fund implementation of these important plans. Of particular importance, is the City of Spokane's Integrated Clean Water Plan (the first in the country to be prepared voluntarily), which lays out specific actions needed to achieve a "cleaner river, faster."

The Task Force continues to set a standard in leadership for collaborative efforts.

Both the local area and region as a whole benefit when resources are applied towards cooperative groups such as the Task Force. For example, members of the Task Force also participate in the Columbia River Toxics Reduction Work Group. The Work Group's 2010 Action Plan contains 61 recommended actions to address toxics in the Columbia River basin. More than half of those actions could be implemented immediately in the Spokane River provided there is adequate support.

The Task Force supports H. R. 5216 and respectfully requests that you help move this important piece of legislation forward.

Sincerely,

Bernard P. (Bud) Leber, Jr.
Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force
Technical Work Group Chair

cc
The Honorable Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
1111 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici
439 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
2134 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515