

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

August 11, 2016

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write to express concern about the U.S. Department of State's slow progress toward modernizing the 1964 Columbia River Treaty (Treaty).

We urged the Administration in letters dated April 15, 2014 and April 14, 2015 to prioritize modernizing the Treaty, and requested that the Administration initiate negotiations with Canada in 2015. Treaty modernization and negotiations with Canada directly affect the economy, environment, and flood control needs of communities we represent in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana along over 1,200 miles of the Columbia River and its tributaries.

Unfortunately, more than seven months into 2016 the negotiating parameters that are a prerequisite for formal negotiations still have not been approved by the U.S. Department of State. We have been told for many months that this document, known as a Circular 175, is almost complete. We note that the U.S. Entity Regional Recommendation for the Future of the Columbia River Treaty After 2024 (Recommendation) was completed in December of 2013.

The Columbia River plays a critical role in the economy and culture of each of our states, and potential management changes initiated through the Treaty could have major impacts far into the future. We are united in the belief that the Recommendation should be the basis for ensuring that cross-border management of the Columbia River better reflects the interests of the Pacific Northwest and the nation. The Recommendation, developed through close collaboration of the states, Columbia Basin tribes and federal agencies, outlines nine principles for a modernized Treaty, and reflects a multi-year effort to achieve regional consensus on complex river management issues among a diverse group including agricultural groups, power producers, environmental organizations, and users of the river for navigational and recreational purposes.

We respectfully request that the U.S. Department of State conclude the review process, approve the Circular 175 immediately, and press Canada to appoint a lead negotiator and engage in negotiations. We appreciate the willingness of the U.S. Department of State to remain in contact with the Pacific Northwest Congressional Delegation, and ask that when Congress returns in September we meet in person to discuss your progress and what we can do to ensure the Treaty progresses expeditiously.

We appreciate your taking our concerns seriously, and look forward to discussing this matter in person.

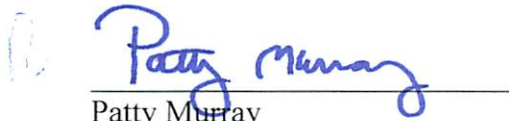
Sincerely,



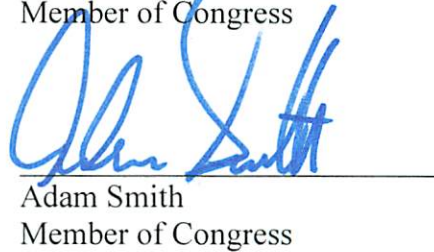
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



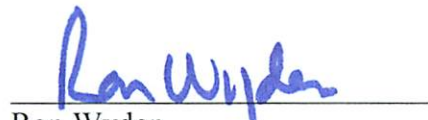
Denny Heck
Member of Congress



Patty Murray
United States Senator




Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



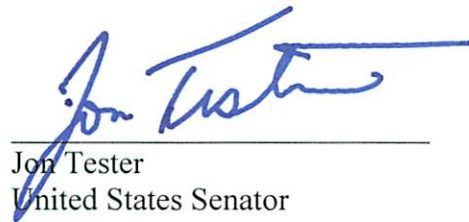
Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress




Jon Tester
United States Senator



Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress



Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress




Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress



Dave Reichert
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress




Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



Greg Walden
Member of Congress



Ryan Zinke
Member of Congress



Mike Simpson
Member of Congress

cc: Mr. Brian Doherty, Chief Negotiator for the Columbia River Treaty, U.S. Department of State

- Mr. Brian Harris, Director for North American Affairs, National Security Council
- Ms. Christy Goldfuss, Managing Director, Council on Environmental Quality
- The Honorable Ernest Moniz, Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy
- The Honorable Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy
- The Honorable Elliot Mainzer, Administrator, Bonneville Power Administration
- The Honorable Eric Fanning, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Army
- The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), U.S. Department of the Army
- Brigadier General Scott Spellmon, Commander, Northwestern Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- The Honorable Sally Jewell, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior
- The Honorable Michael Connor, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior
- The Honorable Penny Pritzker, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce
- The Honorable Kathryn Sullivan, Administrator, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration

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