

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

January 19, 2024

The Honorable Richard W. Spinrad
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere & NOAA Administrator
NOAA/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Administrator Spinrad,

I am writing in support of Tulalip Tribes of Washington's application to the NOAA Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal grant program. They are seeking **\$20,000,000** to remove or replace priority fish passage barriers in the South Whidbey Basin Watershed, which drains into Puget Sound and includes significant salmon habitat.

The Tulalip Tribes of Washington include more than 5,100 people, including 2,700 tribal members who live on the Tulalip Indian Reservation, which covers 22,000 acres along the Puget Sound just north of Everett, Washington. The 2022-2026 Action Agenda for Puget Sound, the Puget Sound National Estuary Program's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, lists fish passage barrier removal as one of the primary strategies to recovering declining salmon populations. The Snohomish and Stillaguamish rivers, both of which run through the Tulalip Indian Reservation, produce fish stocks, such as Chinook, steelhead, coho, and chum salmon, that are critical to the survival of endangered populations of Southern Resident Orcas and have been the target of habitat conservation efforts.

This project will restore fish access to 71.1 miles of habitat for anadromous salmon and other fish by removing 15 fish passage barriers throughout multiple watersheds in the Puget Sound. Additionally, it will improve, enhance, and protect stream and river crossing infrastructure, reduce flood hazards and increase community climate change resilience, which will increase the abundance of Endangered Species Act listed and Tribal treaty retained fish populations, such as salmon. Restoring natural processes, habitat connectivity, and migratory fish abundance will further connect underserved Tribal and rural communities and contribute to the survival of iconic, economically important, and culturally vital fish species.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of the Tulalip Tribes of Washington's application to the Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal grant program.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator