

March 3, 2017

The Honorable Mike Crapo
United States Senate
239 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable James E. Risch
United States Senate
SR-483 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Simpson
U. S. House of Representatives
2084 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 80515

The Honorable Raúl Labrador
U. S. House of Representatives
1523 Longworth HOB
Washington DC 80515

Dear Senators Crapo and Risch and Representatives Simpson and Labrador:

We, the members of the House Energy, Environment and Technology Committee, are writing to request \$8 million in federal matching funding for FY 2018 to combat the immediate threat of invasive quagga and zebra mussels to the Pacific Northwest region. Until recently, the Pacific Northwest region remained one of the only regions in North America without invasive quagga and zebra mussels. In November 2016, invasive mussel larvae were detected at Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Tiber Reservoir, located in Montana, and part of the Missouri River system. In response, Montana Governor Steve Bullock declared a natural resources state of emergency.

Further spread of these invasive mussels will have a devastating and far-reaching impact on the economic and environmental wellbeing of the entire region. If invasive mussel populations become established in the Pacific Northwest, it will cost the region \$500 million a year, so it is vital that we work together to ensure that the invasive mussels do not make the short trip across the Continental Divide and into the Columbia River system. Failing to ensure this would not only result in Idaho water bodies becoming infested with quagga and zebra mussels, but the rest of the Columbia River Basin and region as well.

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For these reasons, we ask Congress to appropriate \$8 million of the authorized \$20 million for FY 2018 to the four Northwest States of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington, according to the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN), which includes the Water Resources Development Act of 2016 (WRDA). The \$8 million in federal matching funding would be used to enhance funds already allocated by the states for watercraft inspection and decontamination stations with the purpose of protecting the Columbia River Basin against invasive mussels. Now that invasive mussel larvae have been found in Montana, federal assistance is key to ensuring that the Columbia River Basin system is protected and that invasive mussels do not spread to the rest of the region.

We appreciate the funding that Congress appropriated under the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA) and WIIN to assist the four Northwest States. The emergency in Montana highlights the constant and ongoing threat of invasive mussels to the region, and the importance of the States continued receipt of federal matching funding to support their efforts to protect against these aquatic invaders. Therefore, we respectfully ask that you consider our request and take the necessary steps to ensure that federal funds are appropriated to the four Northwest States in FY 2018.

Thank you. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Members of the Idaho State House of Representatives
House Environment, Energy and Technology Committee

Rep. Del Raybould, Chairman

Rep. Jeff Thompson, Vice Chairman

Rep. Stephen Hartgen

Rep. John Vander Woude

Rep. Neil A. Anderson

Rep. Robert Anderst

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Rep. Ron Mendive

Rep. Janet Trujillo

Rep. Greg Chaney

Rep. Ronald Nate

Rep. Heather Scott

Rep. Don Cheatham

Rep. Wendy Horman

Rep. Luke Malek

Rep. Dorothy Moon

Rep. Elaine Smith

Rep. Paulette E. Jordan

Rep. Ilana Rubel

DR/lb

