

March 15, 2017

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

Dear Senator Crapo:

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.

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

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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,

Rep. Del Raybould, Chairman  
House Environment, Energy and Technology Committee

DR/lfb

cc: The Honorable C.L. "Butch" Otter  
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The Honorable Scott Bedke  
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