

*Idaho Council of Trout Unlimited
P.O. Box 1971
Boise, Idaho 83701*



Pacific Fishery Management Council
Dan Wolford, Chairman
7700 N.E. Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Chairman Wolford and Council Members,

Representing Idaho outdoor anglers who care about salmon and steelhead, the Idaho Council of Trout Unlimited ask the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) to fulfill the commitment it made a year ago to prohibit unregulated fisheries targeting forage fish on the West Coast. The time to act is now, and we urge the Council to begin the process of amending one or more of its management plans to extend protection to currently unmanaged forage species.

The Idaho Council of Trout Unlimited works to conserve, protect, reconnect, and restore Idaho's coldwater fisheries and watersheds. While our fisheries may be located hundreds of miles from the ocean, we know that recovering salmon and steelhead runs depend on a healthy ocean ecosystem. Every year, millions of ocean-bound juvenile salmon and steelhead migrate through mountain streams, over dams, and past cities and farms. Their survival depends to a large degree on forage fish as cover from an array of predators. Later, after leaving the river, they depend on forage fish as a critical food source for the bulk of their life cycle in the ocean.

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NPCC) wrote a letter in November 2012 stating that electric ratepayers spend \$250 million a year to offset the damage to salmon habitat caused by federal hydroelectric dams. In its letter to the PFMC, the NPCC cited its independent scientific analysis finding that the Columbia's estuary and plume are "exceptionally important" in determining the proportion of juvenile salmon and steelhead trout that will return to the basin as spawning adults, largely because of the presence of forage fish.

The Idaho Council of Trout Unlimited is supportive and appreciative of the Council's attention to this matter and the work it has done to transition to an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management by adopting a Fishery Ecosystem Plan. We understand the Council doesn't control all of the factors affecting the survival and recovery of Pacific salmon and steelhead. Significant money and effort is expended to restore their freshwater habitats, yet salmon and steelhead spend the majority of their lives in the Pacific ocean and we are dedicated to ensuring they have the best chance possible to return. The Council has an opportunity now to take an important step forward in helping to maintain a healthy ocean ecosystem so our salmon and steelhead can return home to Idaho.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Jones".

Chris Jones, Chairman

Idaho Council of Trout Unlimited

Conserving, protecting, and restoring North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds