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<http://www.portfridayharbor.org>  
Commissioners: Graham Black \* Greg Hertel \* Barbara Marrett

Dear Council Staff,

The Port of Friday Harbor respectfully requests that the Pacific Fishery Management Council set aside an allocation of 250,000 chinook salmon from the Fraser River for the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW).

Whale population is declining, and behaviors are changing due to the shortage of available salmon. Based on estimates of food requirements, a healthy Orca needs 18 to 25 adult Chinook salmon daily to meet their energy requirements. If the 75 living SRKW feed for 100 days in local waters, that means that, based on 20 salmon per day, at least 150,000 Chinook are needed just to maintain the status quo. If the Orca remain longer, as they have in many years, or if their numbers increase, more fish would be needed.

Currently, the Council allocate salmon for spawning, tribal catch, commercial catch, and sport catch. The fish that the whales need are hidden in what's called "Ocean Loss". Because Ocean Loss is a percentage of the total run, it fluctuates with run size, however, the whales need a **fixed number of salmon every season**. The net result of this is in years of low return, the SRKW have to compete even harder with other user groups and spawning escapement may suffer.

The health and presence of the SRKW is vitally important to the economy of the Port of Friday Harbor and San Juan County. Dozens of whale watch boats employing hundreds of people contribute to the local economy and pump revenue into the state via licensing and sales tax. In 2017, 37,000 discreet sales were recorded from whale watch boats based in the Port and 36,000 sales were recorded from the Victoria Clipper. The local sales alone generated \$315,000 sales tax and \$3,400,000 in total sales in just the Port. This does not include whale and wildlife watch from kayaks, or other harbors on San Juan Island. Multiply this by the many other marine centers around the Salish Sea and this adjustment to allocation is easily justified by economics alone but beyond that, the legal requirements due to their endangered status, their iconic presence in the Pacific Northwest, and just because it's the right thing to do, the Orca should be given a seat at the table. The allocation for them should be prioritized right behind spawning escapement but ahead of all other user groups. Unlike other enhancement schemes, this would have an immediate effect and be without much direct cost because of infrastructure

construction. It also has the benefit of a quick return because we would be dealing with existing fish currently in the ocean instead of hypothetical returns from enhanced hatchery production or larger runs from dam removal.

On behalf of the residents of San Juan Island and on behalf of the Residents that swim in the waters surrounding San Juan Island, thank you.

Sincerely,

Greg Hertel, Commissioner  
Barbara Marrett, Commissioner  
Graham Black, Commissioner

Port of Friday Harbor