

Non-Federal U.S. Commissioners  
Phil Anderson  
W. Ron Allen  
Douglas Vincent-Lang

**UNITED STATES SECTION  
of the  
PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION**

Office of the  
U.S. Section Coordinator  
7600 Sand Point Way N.E.  
Building 1, F/NWR2  
Seattle, WA 98115

January 11, 2024

Dr. Richard Spinrad  
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
14th and Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington DC 20230-0001

**Re: NOAA Pacific Salmon Treaty Implementation Grants**

Dear Dr. Spinrad:

Congress appropriated \$39.5 million in FY2023 for implementation of the Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) and this funding is vital to implement our domestic commitments and international obligations for the PST. However, due to the transition to a new grants management system and other factors, grants have not yet been issued by NOAA resulting in an unanticipated and unacceptable financial burden borne by the states and tribes. We are writing to request that NOAA execute FY2023 grants as quickly as possible to rectify this unfortunate situation.

United States obligations under the PST are fundamentally a federal commitment, and the states and the tribes have the responsibility for the preponderance of the U.S. fishery and stock assessments. Timely federal grants are essential to implement the fishery and stock assessments required associated with the international obligations of the PST and meet domestic commitments including salmon hatchery programs. The states and tribes have acted in good faith in implementing these essential programs yet have not received grants for FY2023.

The funding allows the United States to:

- Maintain management infrastructure and improve monitoring of fisheries and salmon stocks to ensure the United States meets PST obligations;
- Meet the terms and conditions of federal Biological Opinions issued under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to ensure our fisheries do not jeopardize ESA-listed species;
- Contribute to conserving Southern Resident Killer Whales by increasing the available prey through habitat restoration projects and increased hatchery production of Chinook Salmon;
- Preserve at-risk Puget Sound Chinook Salmon stocks with hatchery conservation programs that maintain this unique genetic legacy and increase the number of spawners;
- Increase the strong science foundation necessary to meet conservation objectives, meet the data intensive provisions of revised agreements under the PST, and improve performance and continuity across the PST and domestic management; and
- Develop mitigation measures to begin to alleviate the economic and social burdens on fishing communities linked to the PST.

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The PST commits the United States and Canada to prevent overfishing, provide for optimum production, and provide for each party to receive benefits equivalent to the production of salmon originating in its waters. The United States has committed to maintain and improve science, resource monitoring, and management activities, and domestically we are committed to address the economic and community impacts resulting from harvest reductions agreed of the PST.

Certain activities related to PST implementation are subject to review under the ESA with particular focus on Southern Resident Killer Whales and ESA-listed Chinook Salmon. Ensuring compliance, including funding of actions identified in the Biological Opinion, with the ESA is fundamental – and necessary – to all United States fisheries prosecuted under the PST.

We appreciate that Congress has recognized the importance of these obligations and appropriated \$39.5 million for program implementation but are dismayed that the FY2023 grants have not yet been awarded four months into FY2024. This situation cannot continue without severe repercussions to the willingness of the state and tribes to work in good faith on projects that are essential to implementation of the treaty and fulfillment of obligations associated with one or more biological opinions. We would appreciate your efforts to expeditiously rectify this situation.

Sincerely,



Philip Anderson, Commissioner for States of Washington and Oregon



W. Ron Allen, Commissioner for Treaty Indian Tribes of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho



Douglas Vincent-Lang, Commissioner for State of Alaska

cc: Janet Coit, Assistant Administrator, NOAA Fisheries  
Jeffrey Thomas, Director, NOAA Acquisition and Grants Office  
Mark Seiler, NOAA Chief Financial Officer  
Governor Mike Dunleavy, State of Alaska  
Kelly Susewind, Director, WDFW  
Curt Melcher, Director, ODFW  
Jim Fredericks, Director, IDFG