

For Immediate Release:

Washington Voters Value Wild Salmon Over Lower Snake River Dams

March 29, 2018

Contacts:

Tom France, National Wildlife Federation, [406-396-5085](tel:406-396-5085)

Todd True, Earthjustice, [206-406-5124](tel:206-406-5124)

David Metz, FM3 Research, [510-451-9521](tel:510-451-9521)

Robb Krehbiel, Defenders of Wildlife, [206-883-7401](tel:206-883-7401)

Wendy McDermott, American Rivers, [206-213-0330](tel:206-213-0330)

Kari Birdseye, Natural Resources Defense Council,
[415-875-8243](tel:415-875-8243)

Bill Arthur, Chair, Sierra Club Snake/Columbia Salmon Campaign, [206-954-9826](tel:206-954-9826)

Sam Mace, Inland Northwest Director, [509-863-5696](tel:509-863-5696)

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New poll shows 4 out of 5 voters believe preventing extinction of wild salmon is very important

SEATTLE – Fishing and conservation groups released a new poll confirming Washington residents care deeply about wild salmon and want to see these iconic Northwest fish restored.

Organizations funding the poll—conducted by Fairbank, Maislin, Maulin, Metz & Associates (FM3 Research)-- include National Wildlife Federation, Save Our wild

Salmon Coalition, Defenders of Wildlife, Earthjustice, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club and American Rivers. The poll included interviews with 400 likely voters with an oversample of 150 interviews in eastern Washington.

More than half of Washington voters support removing the four dams on the lower Snake River and they are more than willing to pay a few dollars extra on their energy bills to do so: 63 percent are willing to pay up to \$7 per month, while 74 percent would pay an extra dollar every month.

“This poll confirms what we’ve known all along: Northwest residents are more than willing to do what it takes to save our region’s wild salmon”, said Todd True, Senior Attorney for Earthjustice. Studies show we can affordably and efficiently replace the declining benefits of the lower Snake River dams without increasing electrical bills by much more than a dollar a month. The poll confirms that a large majority of people know salmon are worth this and more.”

“Washington voters put a strong priority on preventing extinction for wild salmon and understand we can remove the four lower Snake River dams, protect salmon, and make smart investments to replace the modest amount of power that is lost,” added Bill Arthur, Chair for Sierra Club’s Snake/Columbia Salmon Campaign. “It is time for the federal agencies to catch up with the public—and the science—and develop a smart dam removal option as part of the EIS being developed that will keep communities whole and restore sport, commercial and tribal fisheries.

Voters were asked their views on Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers' bill, H.R. 3144, which seeks to prevent any changes to the lower Snake dams by locking in place an illegal and failed salmon plan, upending a court-ordered process to look at all options to restore salmon including dam removal, and even stopping important recovery measures like spilling more water at the dams. Sixty-two percent of likely voters oppose this legislation, with 42 percent strongly opposing; only 26 percent support.

"Given a choice between restoring salmon and holding onto the dams on the lower Snake River, voters in Washington State pick salmon." said Giulia Good-Stefani, Staff Attorney with Natural Resources Defense Council. "People across the state understand how important salmon are to all of us and to our Puget Sound Orcas."

"This poll shows our public officials that bad legislation that would codify failed salmon plans do not reflect Washington voters' values, said Robb Krehbiel, Northwest Representative for Defenders. "We expect our leaders to oppose such counterproductive policies and pursue meaningful actions to restore rivers and ecosystems. Removing the four Snake River dams would provide more salmon for starving orcas and bring life back to the entire region."

A 4-page memo with highlights from the poll can be viewed here:

<http://www.wildsalmon.org/images/factsheets-and-reports/2018.poll.WA.Voter.Views.Snake-River.Dams.Salmon.Final.pdf>