2022 Sierra Club Washington Legislative Priority: Salmon Recovery
Talking Points and Background Facts for District Lobby Teams

Salmon recovery across the state, from the coast to Puget Sound to the Snake River, is a top priority for Sierra Club.

We need bold and urgent action to help salmon in Washington State. Here’s why:

- Salmon are endangered: At present, in this state, 14 species of salmon and steelhead are listed at risk of extinction on the Endangered Species Act.
- Salmon face increasing threats to their survival: With climate change and rapid population growth in our region, salmon have never faced a greater threat than they do today. Warming streams, decreasing snowpack and stream flows, barriers like culverts and dams, loss of critical nearshore habitat and water quality problems all contribute to their decline.
- Salmon scarcity threatens orca populations: In addition, the decline of salmon populations has been identified as the single greatest threat to Southern Resident Orca whales, which are also listed under the Endangered Species Act and whose numbers have declined to a near critical level.
- Salmon are indispensable to Tribal Nations and Treaty Rights: Sierra Club strongly supports Tribal Treaty Rights. Allowing salmon to remain threatened by extinction is a failure of our legal and moral obligations to both salmon and the Indigenous peoples of our state.

What is our ask?

- Support salmon recovery: We want legislators to commit to supporting important salmon recovery bills and budget items in the upcoming legislative session.
- Engage and support upcoming legislation: We understand that Governor Inslee will advocate for a package of both legislation and budget items in the 2022 legislative session. We are deeply appreciative of his leadership.
- We hope legislators will strongly consider the legislation currently being developed by the Governor’s office and stakeholders.
- Stay in touch: We will follow up with more information and communication once draft legislation is available for review.

A Few Notes...

- Snake River:
  - We also strongly support the initiative put forward by Governor Inslee and Senator Murray to address the long-standing issue of recovering salmon and steelhead runs of the Snake River, including looking at breaching the dams and making investments to replace the services they currently provide. We’re grateful for their leadership.
  - We view Snake River and this legislation as two pillars needed for salmon recovery, but our ask and focus in our legislative meetings is on the state legislation.

- Our Priorities: Sierra Club tends to avoid comment on issues like hatchery vs. wild fish. Habitat, resilience, and water quality are our primary areas of focus.