

## Southern Resident Killer Whale Task Force Recommendations and Congressman Larsen's Work to Save the Orcas

In March 2018, Governor Inslee signed Executive Order 18-02 establishing the Southern Resident Killer Whale (SRKW) Task Force. The Task Force's long-term goal is to create a healthy ecosystem for SRKWs, increase the orca population by one whale per year through 2028 and measurably improve the orcas' health.

Orcas are an important cultural symbol and environmental linchpin in the Pacific Northwest. I am dedicated to helping SRKWs recover and thrive in Puget Sound.

### TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

### MY WORK IN CONGRESS TO SAVE THE ORCAS

#### Prey

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Fund and enforce habitat restoration laws where Chinook stocks most benefit SRKWs.</i></li> <li>• <i>Fund and amend policies on the acquisition and restoration of nearshore habitat to increase forage fish for salmon sustenance.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase funds to support sustainable fisheries, hatcheries and stock management, available habitat, recovery plans and the Endangered Species Act.</i></li> <li>• <i>Prepare an implementation strategy to re-establish salmon runs above existing dams, increasing prey availability for SRKWs.</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secured \$172 million for NOAA's Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, essential for the conservation and recovery of endangered salmon across rivers and watersheds on the West Coast, in bipartisan <i>Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021</i>.</li> <li>• Included a provision in bipartisan <i>Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021</i> to authorize \$1 billion to improve habitat connectivity which will help Washington replace more than 400 fish barrier culverts across the state.</li> <li>• Secured funding to improve salmon and steelhead passage and critical habitats under the <i>Water Resources Development Act of 2020</i>. Introduced related legislation with Rep. Kim Schrier in 116th Congress.</li> <li>• Support funding for the Howard Hanson downstream fish passage project to reopen at least 60 miles of salmon and steelhead habitat above the dam.</li> <li>• Spearheaded authorization of more than \$451 million of new habitat restoration projects for salmon in Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project.</li> <li>• Sent letter to the State Department opposing mining in the Skagit River headwaters in British Columbia due to the potential harmful impacts on salmon and the environment.</li> <li>• Sent letters to the Administration opposing Pebble Mine, which would destroy the world's largest salmon fishery and jeopardize the regional environment and economy.</li> <li>• Voted to permanently reauthorize and fund the LWCF.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

#### Vessels

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Establish a statewide "Go-slow" bubble for small vessels and commercial whale watching vessels within half a nautical mile of orcas.</i></li> <li>• <i>Establish a limited-entry whale-watching permit system for commercial whale-watching vessels and commercial kayak groups in the inland waters.</i></li> <li>• <i>Work with the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Boating Squadron on voluntary compliance outreach efforts as these rules take effect.</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secured \$1 million in the House FY2021 spending bill for SRKW research and monitoring at NOAA to improve recovery.</li> <li>• Sent a letter to the U.S. Navy and NOAA requesting more information on efforts to mitigate impacts of Northwest Training and Testing operations in the Pacific Northwest on SRKWs.</li> <li>• Helped secure provisions in the <i>Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2020</i> requiring recommendations on orca conservation targets, and agencies to assess the feasibility of a U.S. program to reduce noise impacts on orcas in Puget Sound.</li> <li>• Met with Canadian Consul General Brandon Lee, Canadian Ambassador David MacNaughton and the Port of Vancouver-B.C. to discuss:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The impact of vessel traffic related to the TransMountain Pipeline Extension Project on SRKWs</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|--|--|

- Canada's \$1.5 billion Ocean Protection Plan to improve marine safety and promote responsible shipping
- U.S. Coast Guard's oversight role in supporting marine safety in U.S. waters.
- Called on the National Marine Fisheries Service to extend the public comment period for proposed rules to restrict vessel activity near orcas.
- Challenged the U.S. Coast Guard on oil spill response capacity and resources regarding the TransMountain Pipeline Extension Project.

## Contaminants

- *Identify, prioritize and act on chemicals that impact orcas and their prey.*
- *Work with the EPA and NOAA on using Clean Water Act and Water Pollution Control Act authorities to increase water quality standards.*
- *Increase monitoring of toxic substances in marine waters; create and deploy adaptive management strategies to reduce threats to orcas and their prey.*
- Founder and Co-Chair of the Congressional Estuary Caucus to champion robust federal funding to support these critical ecosystems.
- Led bipartisan efforts supporting \$750,000 for each of the 28 National Estuary Program (NEP) projects (\$21 million in total) in FY2021.
- Helped enact the *Protect and Restore America's Estuaries Act* into law, to reauthorize and increase funding for the NEP.
- Support the *Puget SOS Act* to improve federal engagement in Puget Sound recovery efforts.
- Support the *America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018*, requiring recommendations to improve access to funding for stormwater infrastructure.
- Support the *West Coast Ocean Protection Act* prohibiting oil/natural gas exploration, development or production off the West Coast.
- Support the *Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act* to break the cycle of plastic waste in waterways.
- Support the *Save our Seas 2.0 Act* to improve U.S. response to marine debris/plastics and encourage international cooperation.

## Climate Change

- *Under a 2008 state law, Washington must reduce greenhouse gasses over time, first to below 1990 levels by 2020.*
- *Additional consideration for the impact of climate change when developing strategy to help the SKRWs.*
- Supported the bipartisan *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021*, providing significant funds for clean transportation initiatives, climate change adaptation and coastal resilience/fish and wildlife habitat restoration projects.
- Secured \$89 million for the EPA's Puget Sound Geographic program, a critical resource for research to address climate change, in the bipartisan *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021*
- Support the *Climate Action Now Act*, prohibiting federal funds from withdrawing the U.S. from the Paris Agreement, and requiring the President to develop a plan on emission reduction.
- Support the *COAST Research Act* to reauthorize NOAA's Ocean Acidification and Monitoring funds and improve federal efforts to address changing ocean conditions.
- Support the *Living Shorelines Act* investing in green, nature-based infrastructure and restoring living shorelines.
- Oppose efforts to replace the Clean Power Plan and methane pollution standards with a far weaker rules that undermines public health and the environment.

- Support resolutions highlighting the UN's IPCC Climate Change report and IPCC Ocean and Cryosphere report to urge immediate federal action to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Voted for comprehensive energy reform legislation, *the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009*, to create a cap-and-trade system to use market-based incentives to reduce carbon emissions.