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**Salmon Solutions bill restores sound science and fiscal responsibility to federal salmon efforts**

*Taxpayer groups, fishing businesses, fishermen, clean energy advocates and conservation organizations applaud bi-partisan legislation*

WASHINGTON, DC — Today, Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA) and Rep. Tom Petri (R-WI), joined by 23 additional co-sponsors from across the nation, introduced the Salmon Solutions and Planning Act (SSPA) in the House of Representatives. The bill would provide Congress and federal agencies with up-to-date, thorough information about how best to protect and restore wild salmon and steelhead in the Pacific Northwest's Columbia and Snake River Basin.

Challenging the expensive status quo while calling for an approach that puts all recovery options, including lower Snake River dam removal, on the table, Congressman McDermott said, "I'm not willing to practice the politics of extinction, doing nothing until there is nothing left to do, until there are no more wild salmon left to save. I'm willing to listen, but I'm not willing to wait."

United States taxpayers and Northwest ratepayers have spent more than \$8 billion on efforts to protect and restore endangered wild salmon in the Columbia and Snake River Basin. And yet, populations of wild Snake River salmon have shown little improvement since being listed under the Endangered Species Act in the 1990s; most are hovering well below levels required for recovery. Declining runs have curtailed fisheries and hurt regional economies throughout the Pacific salmon states of Alaska, California, Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

"For the fishing industry, it's all about the jobs — and we've lost more than 25,000 fishing-related jobs coastwide due to the decline of Columbia-Snake River salmon. Without abundant, harvestable populations of salmon, our coastal communities will never economically recover," said Glen Spain, Northwest Regional Director of Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, a major commercial fishing industry group. "This new bi-partisan bill gives President Obama and Congress a chance to step in and ensure an economic future for salmon-dependent communities through sound science and effective salmon restoration, instead of the denial and bungling of the past."

Federal recovery efforts have been stymied and taxpayer dollars misdirected, in large part, due to incomplete and outdated information.

"We have a responsibility to make sure that the wild salmon of the Snake River and the rest of the Columbia Basin in the Pacific Northwest survive and thrive for future generations, but we should do so in a fiscally responsible manner. Current efforts appear to be inadequate, in

addition to being costly,” said Congressman Petri. “We must stop throwing good money after bad; it’s past time to do some fresh thinking and take the right actions before it’s too late.”

The legislation comes on the heels of a letter signed by outdoor clothing company Patagonia and more than 90 other national business leaders asking Congress to support a salmon “solutions” table and to act on legislation that will help bring about a durable resolution to the long-standing challenge of salmon recovery.

“Conservation is a core priority for the outdoor industry, and wild salmon play an important role in the recreation economy. We simply can’t afford to lose them,” said Lisa Pike-Sheehy, Patagonia’s Director of Environmental Initiatives. “We need updated, comprehensive and unbiased information so we can evaluate, on a level playing field, all potential salmon recovery options, including lower Snake River dam removal. We applaud the members of Congress supporting this bill.”

The solutions legislation comes at an opportune time. The Obama administration is reviewing the flawed Columbia-Snake salmon plan, while three Northwest Senators — Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Mike Crapo (R-ID), and Jim Risch (R-ID) — have called on the administration to convene a salmon solutions table that brings together key stakeholders to discuss all scientifically-credible options, including lower Snake River dam removal, to help recover endangered salmon and enhance the region’s economy while saving taxpayer dollars. The studies authorized in SSPA would provide information needed to make such stakeholder discussions even more successful.

"If we don’t alter our current course, taxpayers will continue to foot the bill for costly salmon recovery and will shoulder the massive cost of extinction as well,” said Autumn Hanna, senior program director for Taxpayers for Common Sense. “We need an effective, fiscally responsible federal salmon recovery strategy that is based on an examination of all available options including lower Snake River dam removal. We urge Congress to support this bill and authorize the necessary studies to vet this option and protect taxpayers from billions more in wasted dollars.”