

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Mark McCauley, County Administrator

FROM: Monica Montgomery, Water Programs Coordinator
Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) and WSU Extension

DATE: April 3, 2023

SUBJECT: Letter of Support – Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative
Reauthorization

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

The Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is one of seven county MRCs that are part of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (NWSI). The Initiative was established by Congress in 1998 to help address declining marine resources of the Northwest Straits region (including the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Strait of Georgia, and Northern Puget Sound). This drafted letter of support urges Senator Murray to seek congressional reauthorization, which will ensure ongoing federal support that fully funds the Initiative, including the Jefferson MRC and projects that promote the protection and restoration of the marine and nearshore environments of East Jefferson County.

ANALYSIS:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

If successful, reauthorization will ensure ongoing federal support that funds the Jefferson County MRC.

RECOMMENDATION:

Signatures on the drafted letter of support.

REVIEWED BY:


Mark McCauley, County Administrator

Date

3/29/23

April 3, 2023

Senator Patty Murray
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Senator Murray,

The Jefferson County Board of Commissioners urges you to support Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Reauthorization. Congressional reauthorization is needed to ensure ongoing federal support that fully funds the Northwest Straits (NWS) Marine Conservation Initiative. The Initiative's leadership and work is critical to the health of our marine resources in our county and six others—a majority of counties in the Puget Sound region. We rely on these resources for a strong economy and a robust way of life.

The NWS Initiative provides technical assistance, coordination, and base funding support to seven county-based Marine Resources Committees (MRC), including the Jefferson County MRC. The work that MRCs do protects and restores our valuable marine resources and nearshore environment. Our county, like others, faces ongoing pressures from population growth, climate change, and habitat loss, making the contributions of MRCs more important than ever.

MRCs are made up of local volunteers who prioritize and lead restoration, monitoring and education projects and serve as advisory bodies to local elected officials, including the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners. The MRC serves a unique role by convening a diversity of community perspectives from Tribal, economic, recreational, and environmental interests to prioritize and initiate consensus-driven work. A few examples from our county include Olympia oyster restoration, community education on marine ecosystems, and marine habitat monitoring.

Project implementation through our MRC is a cost-effective way of contributing to recovery and protection of marine resources that are important to our county residents and the local economy. Funding and support from the NWS Initiative assures we can maintain this locally driven approach to solving problems in our region.

We hope that we can count on your help to see that this important work will continue and be adequately funded.

Sincerely,

Cc: Senator Maria Cantwell
Representative Rick Larsen
Representative Derek Kilmer