

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

CONSENT AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Kate Dean, Commissioner

DATE: September 6, 2022

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for Hood Canal Coordinating Council for NOAA Grant

STATEMENT OF ISSUE: The Hood Canal Coordinating Council, of which Jefferson County is a member, has asked for a letter of support to accompany their application to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service for a project titled "Hood Canal Summer Chum Habitat Priorities and Immediate Needs." This project is designed to restore, protect, and maintain marine and estuarine ecosystems in Washington State's Hood Canal and Eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca with a primary focus on habitat used by ESA-listed Hood Canal Summer Chum. The proposed suite of regionally important actions will strategically advance summer chum recovery by restoring natural habitat forming processes and will also provide socioeconomic benefits to the largely rural communities across the Hood Canal region. The focus of this application to develop and implement projects in the following categories:

Summer Chum salmon habitat restoration and protection assessment: An overall assessment will be completed to identify outstanding habitat restoration and protection needs. The analysis will provide a mechanism to focus and prioritize efforts where they are most needed to ensure the recovery success of summer chum salmon. The results of the 3 assessment will inform the types of projects needed.

Estuary restoration: Projects will be designed, developed, and implemented in four key estuary areas; Duckabush River Estuary (in Hood Canal), Tahuya River estuary (in Hood Canal), Big Beef Creek estuary (in Hood Canal), and the Snow/Salmon Creek estuary (in eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca).

ANALYSIS: The Hood Canal Summer Chum is nearing recovery targets and has the potential to be the first salmon species to be delisted from endangered species status. This project will help ensure the full recovery. It will also support an important infrastructure project on Highway 101 in Jefferson County- the replacement of the bridge over the Duckabush River.

FISCAL IMPACT: None to Jefferson County

RECOMMENDATION: Signing and sending the letter of support.

REVIEWED BY:


Mark McCauley, County Administrator

Date 9/2/22



Board of County Commissioners
1820 Jefferson Street
PO Box 1220
Port Townsend, WA 98368

Kate Dean, District 1 Heidi Eisenhour, District 2 Greg Brotherton, District 3

September 6, 2022

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway, 14th Floor
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: Letter of Support - Hood Canal Summer Chum Habitat Priorities and Immediate Needs

To Whom It May Concern:

Jefferson County is glad to support the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) grant proposal titled "Hood Canal Summer Chum Habitat Priorities and Immediate Needs." We are pleased that the work done by HCCC and partners has led to significant progress toward recovery of iconic Hood Canal Summer Chum, and the vital funding from this grant will get us still closer to full recovery.

Jefferson County also strongly supports this proposal because we recognize that a healthy and thriving ecosystem provides myriad socioeconomic benefits to Hood Canal communities. Our economy, recreation, transportation and way of life depends on clean water, abundant marine species and solid infrastructure. We are proud that our region has an opportunity to delist and recover Hood Canal Summer Chum- a nationally significant conservation achievement, providing a blueprint to others for how investments in habitat restoration and sustainable fisheries management can effectively recover salmon and steelhead stocks on the west coast.

This project aims to modernize rural transportation infrastructure and significantly improve habitat connectivity at the Duckabush River estuary, a project that Jefferson County and myriad partners have been working on for many years. It is representative of the restoration opportunities that arise as aging infrastructure reaches the end of its useful life. It also supports both tribal treaty rights and a robust economy.

Thank you for consideration of funding for this regionally significant salmon recovery ecosystem restoration proposal.

Sincerely,
Jefferson County Commissioners

Kate Dean
District 1

Heidi Eisenhour, Chair
District 2

Greg Brotherton
District 3