

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke  
Secretary of the Interior  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

We write to draw your attention to the immediate threat of invasive mussels to the Pacific Northwest region and request your assistance, through the Department of the Interior, in combating their spread.

In November 2016, invasive mussel larvae were detected at Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Tiber Reservoir in Montana. Prior to this detection, the Pacific Northwest remained one of the only regions in North America without invasive quagga and zebra mussels. Any further spread of invasive mussels would have devastating and extensive impacts on the economy, natural resources, and river operations throughout the region. In fact, if invasive mussel populations become established in the Pacific Northwest, it is estimated to cost our region \$500 million every year just to manage the effects of an infestation.

Therefore, we believe it is imperative that we work together to ensure that these species do not breach the Continental Divide and invade the Columbia River system. Failing to do so would likely result in widespread infestation throughout the Columbia River Basin. Once these mussels are introduced, there is no known way to eradicate them.

The Department of Interior is critical for augmenting efforts of the States in preventing the spread of invasive mussels through such means as establishing and operating watercraft inspection stations and invasive mussel monitoring. The earlier an invasion is detected, the more cost-effective and successful management efforts will be. We appreciate any efforts the Department can undertake to coordinate with stakeholders for monitoring best practices, and we applaud the Department for establishing the Invasive Species Working Group and its several subcommittees focused on this issue.

As you continue in these efforts, we request that the Department do everything possible to ensure containment at the source at high-risk federally infected waterbodies, which is the most effective way to prevent any further spread of invasive mussels. The main source of infected watercraft entering the Pacific Northwest region originates from the Lower Colorado River system, particularly from Lake Mead National Recreation Area. In past years, Members of Congress and states have requested that the Department institute mandatory inspection and decontamination for all vessels leaving infested federal waterbodies, unfortunately the Department has yet to


implement this request. As you establish new priorities at the Department of Interior, we reiterate this request and ask for immediate attention to this serious economic and environmental issue.

We offer our assistance and willingness to work with you and your staff on this matter. Thank you, we look forward to your response.

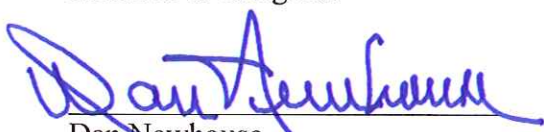
Sincerely,



Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress



Mike Simpson  
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress



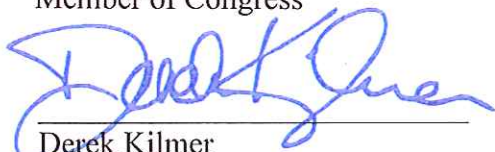
Raúl Labrador  
Member of Congress



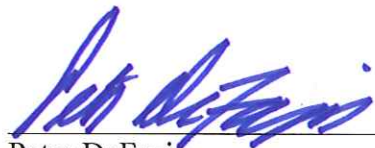
Denny Heck  
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress



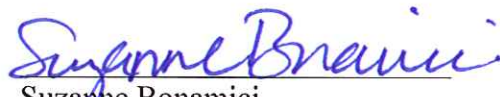
Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader  
Member of Congress



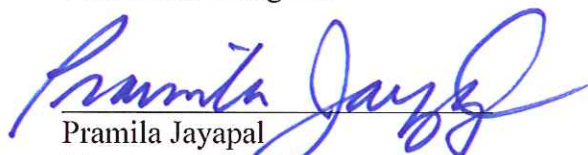
Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



Dave Reichert  
Member of Congress