



Steve Moyer
Vice President of Government Affairs

June 28, 2017

The Honorable John Culberson
Chair, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable José E. Serrano
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
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RE: NOAA FY18 Budget Request

Dear Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Serrano and members of the Subcommittee,

I am writing on behalf of Trout Unlimited (TU) in regards to Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations for the NOAA programs (Department of Commerce) within your jurisdiction. NOAA's habitat programs are of great interest to our 300,000 members and supporters, and are integral to the success of our mission to conserve, protect, and restore trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. Therefore, we are strongly opposed to the drastic and unwarranted proposed cuts, highlighted below, to some of NOAA's key habitat restoration programs.

NOAA's restoration programs are on the front lines in the fight to keep communities resilient, create American jobs, and promote local economies while benefiting fish and wildlife and improving coastal ecosystems. Investments in coastal habitat restoration create upwards of 30 new jobs for each \$1 million invested, benefitting local and regional coastal economies that generate more than half of the nation's GDP. Restoration results in cleaner water and more abundant habitats that buoy local economies by increasing land values, supporting commercial and recreational fishing, improving tourism, and creating new business and recreational opportunities.

As we look to the FY18 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we encourage you to support the following programs and reject proposed cuts. TU believes these programs represent sound investments in the health of the watersheds that support aquatic resources. In fact, many of these programs provide essential seed money for TU projects, which we leverage with private dollars, as well as state and other federal agency programs to extend their value. We urge you to

A mission to conserve, protect, & restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

National Office: 1777 N Kent St., Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22209
T: (703) 284-9406 F: (703) 284-9400 smoyer@tu.org www.tu.org

maintain funding for these programs and to pass a clean spending bill with no harmful natural resource riders – particularly related to conservation or management of water resources and public lands.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund

FY16 Enacted: \$65m

FY17 CR Baseline: \$65m

FY18 Request: \$0 [reduced \$65m]

TU FY18 Request: \$65m

TU strongly supports the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF), and categorically rejects the elimination of funding for the program. Under the program, NOAA provides funding to the states and tribes of the Pacific Coast region to implement projects that restore and protect salmon and steelhead populations and their habitats. Since 2000, funding from PCSRF has helped support thousands of projects throughout the region that have improved the status of sensitive salmon and steelhead populations that are vital to local economies, and to communities of recreational and commercial fishermen. Thanks to funding from the PCSRF, TU has partnered with coastal Pacific states to complete a number of important salmon recovery projects over the years. These projects include work such as restoring instream flows, enhancing instream and off channel habitat, and removing fish passage barriers. Without PCSRF funding, a greater financial burden would be placed on local and state authorities to undertake these expensive projects on their own and it is likely that fewer projects would be able to advance.

The PCSRF has already taken substantial cuts over the past several years, from \$80 million in FY10, to \$65 million in recent years. We urge the Subcommittee to maintain funding at \$65 million in FY18.

NMFS, Habitat Conservation and Restoration

FY16 Enacted: \$61.42m

FY17 CR Baseline: \$61.29m

FY18 Request: \$51.33m [reduced \$9.96m]

TU FY18 Request: \$61.29m

TU opposes the Administration's \$9.96 million cut to the Habitat Conservation and Restoration Program for FY18. This program's goal is to restore fisheries, revive populations of protected species, and improve the resiliency of coastal communities. Within this program, TU is particularly supportive of the Community-Based Restoration Program (CBRP). CBRP supports locally-driven and voluntary coastal restoration projects with national, regional, and local organizations through competitively awarded public-private partnerships. The program also complements traditional fishery management and leverages non-federal resources 3-5 times the Federal investment. Projects result in healthier habitats, which strengthen our commercial and recreational fisheries. Because of this program's important

community and fisheries benefits, we urge the Subcommittee maintain funding at the FY17 baseline level of \$61.29 million.

The National Sea Grant College Program

FY16 Enacted: \$73.67m

FY17 CR Baseline: \$72.86m

FY18 Request: \$0 [reduced \$72.86m]

TU FY18 Request: \$72.86m

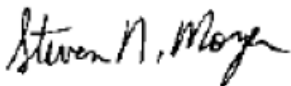
TU strongly opposes elimination of funding for the National Sea Grant Program. The National Sea Grant College Program is a vital part of protecting and sustaining coastal, marine, and Great Lakes resources in an effective and sustainable manner. The Sea Grant network includes 33 programs based at top universities in every coastal and Great Lakes state, Puerto Rico, and Guam, drawing in local expertise and fostering an attitude of responsibility in young Americans. The program undertakes important research on critical coastal and marine topics, developing insights and solutions that are then disseminated to stakeholder communities. Sea Grant's work is critical to TU's mission, and we rely heavily on the Sea Grant expertise and monitoring efforts to prioritize, develop, and evaluate salmon and steelhead restoration projects. Sea Grant goes to great lengths to ensure its data is available for decision-making and excels at presenting its monitoring data to landowners in a way that is accessible and informative. The Sea Grant program provides an opportunity for American scientists and students to put their minds to work in tackling vital issues that affect their communities and should continue to be supported.

Its elimination will not only cut off a major source of new ideas and solutions for managing some of America's most important aquatic habitats, but will also deprive future leaders from growing their knowledge of these important issues. We recommend that the Subcommittee maintain funding for this program at FY17 level of \$72.86m.

Conclusion

We appreciate the Subcommittee's past support for NOAA's fisheries habitat programs, and we urge the Subcommittee to reject the proposed cuts that we highlight above. In addition, we urge you to pass a clean spending bill with no harmful natural resource riders – particularly related to conservation or management of water resources and public lands. Thank you for considering our views on the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies appropriation bill.

Sincerely,



Steve Moyer