

# Subcommittee on Federal Lands

Tom McClintock, Chairman  
Hearing Memo

July 10, 2015

**To:** Natural Resources Committee Members

**From:** Spencer Kimball, Subcommittee Staff, x 6-7736

**Subject:** Legislative hearing on H.R. 2270 (Heck, D-WA), the “*Billy Frank Jr. Tell Your Story Act*”

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The Subcommittee will hold a legislative hearing on H.R. 2270 – “*Billy Frank Jr. Tell Your Story Act*” **on July 14, 2015 at 10:30 AM; 1334 Longworth.**

## **Bill Summary**

H.R. 2270, introduced by Congressman Denny Heck (D-WA), (and co-sponsored by all ten Members of the Washington delegation) would re-designate the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, located in the State of Washington, as the “Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge,” establish a new National Historic Site within the wildlife refuge, and require the Secretary of the Interior to involve local tribes in the development of educational materials for that National Historic Site.

## **Invited Witness**

*The Honorable Denny Heck (D-WA)*  
Member of Congress

## **Background**

H.R. 2270 would designate the wildlife refuge on the Nisqually River Delta in the State of Washington as “The Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge.” This refuge was established in 1974 to protect and conserve wildlife in the Nisqually River Delta, which is near the Puget Sound.

The bill creates a National Historic Site at the location of the signing of the 1854 Medicine Creek Treaty, which established reservation land as well as the right to fish for Puget Sound area tribes. It also requires the Secretary of the Interior to involve the Nisqually, Muckleshoot, Puyallup, and Squaxin Island Tribes in the development of educational materials for use at this National Historic Site.

The bill is principally intended to honor the life and legacy of Billy Frank Jr., a champion for Native American treaty rights and environmental stewardship in the Puget Sound area. Frank Jr. grew up fishing on the Nisqually River and dedicated his life to bringing together tribes, government officials, and others to improve treaty rights, tribal sovereignty, environmental stewardship, and salmon recovery in the area.

He campaigned against limits on tribal fishing; his efforts led to a 1974 federal court decision which reaffirmed certain Tribes' rights to half of the fish harvest in Washington.<sup>1</sup> Frank Jr., who passed away in 2014, was awarded the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism and the Martin Luther King Jr. Distinguished Service Award, and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010.

The bill is supported by the Northwest Indian Fish Commission, Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, and the National Congress of American Indians.

### **Administration Position**

Unknown at this time.

### **Cost**

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

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<sup>1</sup> 384 F. Supp. 312; 1974 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 12291.