

January 13, 2020

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Chairman
Water, Oceans, and Wildlife Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
1527 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom McClintock
Ranking Member
Water, Oceans, and Wildlife Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
2312 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Huffman and Ranking Member McClintock,

Thank you for your leadership on the Water, Oceans, and Wildlife Subcommittee. I write today on behalf of the board of directors and the members of the National Water Resources Association (NWRA) to express concerns and oppose H.R. 4723, the Salmon Focused Investments in Sustainable Habitats Act of 2019 (FISH Act).

The NWRA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit federation of state water resources associations, regional associations, agricultural, and municipal water providers. Our members provide water and hydropower to approximately 50 million individuals, families, agricultural producers, and other businesses in a manner that supports communities, the economy, and the environment. NWRA members share a desire to see healthy fisheries and many members actively participate in programs aimed at improving the ecosystems for numerous fish species. The key to success in many of these programs is collaboration and engagement of water users and locally elected officials like irrigation and municipal water districts.

We are concerned that H.R. 4723 would directly affect water and hydropower supplies but, as currently drafted, does not include water and power provider consultation. Section 4 of the bill directs consultation with a number of entities but does not include consultation with either the Bureau of Reclamation, the largest wholesale water provider in the nation, or local governmental entities like irrigation and municipal water districts. We are also concerned that Section 5 of H.R. 4723 as drafted would expand provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) beyond “major federal actions” to include any federal action. This is a significant expansion.

Please know that, while we have concerns with this legislation as drafted, NWRA and our members stand ready to provide additional information and we hope you find our comments constructive. We look forward to working with you make collaborative changes to H.R. 4723.

Respectfully,



Ian Lyle
Executive Vice President
National Water Resources Association