



NISQUALLY INDIAN TRIBE

Department of Natural Resources

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July 22, 2026

The Honorable Michael Baumgartner
U.S. House of Representatives
124 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Emily Randall
U.S. House of Representatives
1531 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Baumgartner and Representative Randall,

On behalf of the Nisqually Indian Tribe, I write in support for H.R. 9621, the Northwest Endangered Salmon Predation Prevention Act of 2026. We appreciate your leadership in advancing legislation that recognizes the urgent need for a more effective and balanced approach to salmon recovery in Western Washington, including Puget Sound and its tributaries, and the Columbia River Basin.

The Nisqually Indian Tribe has depended on salmon since time immemorial. Our ancestors reserved the right to fish under the Treaty of Medicine Creek of 1854 with the understanding that salmon would continue to sustain future generations. Today, that promise can only be fulfilled if salmon populations are healthy enough to support both recovery and treaty-reserved harvest.

For decades, the Tribe has been a leader in salmon recovery. We have restored hundreds of acres of estuarine habitat, invested in watershed restoration, partnered with federal and state agencies on scientific research, and implemented conservative fisheries management to rebuild struggling salmon populations. These efforts have required significant resources and long-term commitment, yet many salmon runs continue to decline because they face increasing mortality before they can reach spawning grounds or return to Tribal fisheries.

One of the most significant challenges is the dramatic growth in pinniped predation. Harbor seals and sea lions now concentrate at river mouths, estuaries, and other migration corridors where salmon are especially vulnerable. As salmon populations decline, the loss of even a relatively small number of adult or juvenile fish can have outsized consequences for recovery efforts.

H.R. 9621 recognizes that successful salmon recovery requires addressing every significant source of mortality. By creating a more adaptive management framework, strengthening the role of treaty Tribes as fisheries co-managers, and encouraging the development of innovative exclusion technologies, this legislation provides practical tools to complement ongoing investments in habitat restoration and conservation. Importantly, it preserves existing treaty rights while helping ensure those rights remain meaningful for future generations.

The Nisqually Indian Tribe believes salmon recovery and marine mammal conservation are complementary goals that can and should be pursued together. H.R. 9621 reflects that balanced approach and will help restore the ecological conditions necessary for salmon, Tribal fisheries, and the communities throughout the Pacific Northwest that depend upon them.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to protecting salmon and upholding the federal government's trust responsibilities to Tribal Nations. We respectfully urge Congress to advance H.R. 9621.

Sincerely,

 VICE Chair

Ken Choke
Chairman

Nisqually Indian Tribe