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**UNITED STATES SECTION
of the
PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION**

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**Statement Submitted by
W. Ron Allen, Alternate Commissioner
U.S. Section of the PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS
On the FY 2021 Budget for the
Department of State**

March 12, 2020

Mr. Chairman, and Honorable Members of the Committee, I am Ron Allen, the Alternate Tribal Commissioner and Chair for the U.S. Section Budget Committee of the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC). The U.S. Section prepares an annual budget for implementation of the Pacific Salmon Treaty. Funding comes from the Departments of State, Commerce, and Interior. The integrated budget details program needs and costs for Tribal, Federal, and State agencies involved in the Treaty.

Department of State funding in support of implementing the Pacific Salmon Treaty is part of the International Fisheries Commissions line item. The FY 2020 funding level was \$5,935,000. The U.S. Section recommends a funding level of \$6,185,000 for FY 2021, which includes a \$250,000 increase in annual operations and a one-time request of \$1,750,000 to complete funding for the mark selective fishery fund. These costs will provide essential support to implement the revised chapters of the annex of the Treaty.

The Department of State provides funding for the dues to operate the bilateral Pacific Salmon Commission Secretariat office in Vancouver, British Columbia. The United States and Canada have kept the dues constant for eleven years. The U.S. Section recommends a \$250,000 annual increase in the dues. Canada is expected to match the increase in dues. It is anticipated that the annual increase in dues will be sufficient to maintain operations over the next ten years. The Commission's Finance & Administration Committee works closely with the Secretariat staff to keep costs in check. The Secretariat faced challenges in recent years to ensure the operation of test fisheries necessary for the management of Fraser River sockeye and pink fisheries as outlined in Annex 4 Chapter 4 of the Treaty. Declines in the return of Fraser River sockeye and changes in the Canadian Use of Fish Policy have impacted the viability of the test fisheries.

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The Secretariat faces challenges regarding funding for the pension liability as the Secretariat staff ages and retires. Our section urges the Department of State to continue covering this liability consistent with other International Fishery Commissions outside of the dues structure.

The Department of State provides funding, through an inter-agency agreement, with Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service, to support United States participation in the annual meeting process and to support staffing of the U.S. Section office. A hallmark of the PSC process is the input from affected fishing interests from Alaska to Washington, Oregon and Idaho. Maintaining the funding at least at current levels is essential to address these challenges.

The Annex IV Chapters contain the specific actions agreed to by the United States and Canada to implement the Treaty. The provisions of the revised Annex Chapters will be in force for the next ten years. The revised Chinook Chapter contains a provision to establish a Mark Selective Fishery Fund. Properly implemented, mark selective fisheries provide an option to harvest abundant hatchery stocks, while not increasing impacts on naturally spawning stocks and maintaining allocation arrangements between fisheries. The U.S. Section recommended a one-time appropriation of \$3,500,000 to establish the fund in FY 2020. The U.S. Section appreciates the \$1,750,000 included in the FY 2020 appropriations. The U.S. Section respectfully requests another \$1,750,000 in FY 2021 to fill the anticipated need in the Mark Selective Fishery Fund.

Funding to support activities under the Pacific Salmon Commission comes from the Departments of Interior, State, and Commerce. The U.S. Section can provide an additional budget summary and details to the Committee as required. Adequate funding from all three Departments is necessary for the United States to meet its Treaty obligations. The funds are needed for critical data collection and research activities directly related to the implementation of the Treaty and are used in cooperative programs between Federal, State, and Tribal fishery agencies and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in Canada. The commitment of the United States is matched by the commitment of the Government of Canada.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Canada established the Pacific Salmon Commission, under the Pacific Salmon Treaty of 1985, to conserve salmon stocks, provide for optimum production of salmon, and to control salmon interceptions. After more than thirty years, the work of the Pacific Salmon Commission continues to be essential for the wise management of salmon in the Pacific Northwest, British Columbia, and Alaska. For example, upriver bright fall Chinook salmon from the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River are caught in large numbers in Alaskan and Canadian waters. Tribal and non-tribal fishermen harvest sockeye salmon from Canada's Fraser River in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and in Puget Sound. Canadian trollers off the west coast of Vancouver Island catch Washington coastal and Puget Sound Chinook and Coho salmon. In the Northern Boundary area between Canada and Alaska, fish from both countries are intercepted by the other country.

The Commission provides a public forum to ensure cooperative management of salmon populations. The United States and Canada successfully concluded lengthy negotiations to improve management, building on and adjusting the coastwide abundance-based management regime for Chinook salmon established in the 1999 agreement. The revised Coho Chapter also continues to build on a framework for abundance-based management. The revised Annex Chapters for Chinook, Coho, Chum, Transboundary and Northern Boundary fisheries will be in force for the next ten years. The United States and Canada are in the process finalizing a revised Fraser River Sockeye and Pink salmon chapter, which will expire at the end of 2029.

Before the Treaty in 1985, fish wars often erupted with one or both countries overharvesting fish that were returning to the other country, to the detriment of the resource sustainability. At the time the Treaty was signed, Chinook salmon were in a severely depressed state because of overharvest in the ocean as well as environmental degradation in the spawning rivers. Under the Treaty, both countries committed to rebuild the depressed runs of Chinook stocks, and they recommitted to that goal in 1999 when adopting a coastwide abundance-based approach to harvest management. Under this approach, harvest management will complement habitat conservation and restoration activities being undertaken by the states, tribes, and other stakeholders in the Pacific Northwest to address the needs of salmon listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act. The 2018 Chinook Chapter continues these commitments. The revisions to the Chinook Chapter will continue to build on the progress made in previous agreements. The combination of these efforts is integral to achieving success in rebuilding and restoring healthy, sustainable salmon populations.

Finally, I ask you to consider the fact that the value of the commercial harvest of salmon subject to the Treaty, managed at productive levels under the Treaty, supports the infrastructure of many coastal and inland communities. The value of the commercial and recreational fisheries, and the economic diversity they provide for local economies throughout the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, is immense. The Commission recently funded an economic study of the fisheries that has determined this resource creates thousands of jobs and is a multi-billion-dollar industry. The value of these fish to the twenty-four treaty tribes in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho goes far beyond their monetary value, to the cultural and religious lives of Indian people. A significant monetary investment is focused on salmon due to the listings of Pacific Northwest salmon populations under the Endangered Species Act. Given these resources, we can continue to utilize the Pacific Salmon Commission to develop recommendations that help with the development and implementation of solutions for minimizing impacts on listed stocks. We continue to work toward the true intent of the Treaty, and with your support, we will manage this shared resource for mutual enhancements and benefits.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my written testimony submitted for consideration by your Committee.

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I want to thank the Committee for the support that it has given the U.S. Section in the past. Please feel free to contact me, or other members of the U.S. Section to answer any questions you or other Committee members may have regarding the U.S. Section of the Pacific Salmon Commission budget.