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



**Statement Submitted by
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US Section of the PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES
On the FY 2020 Budgets for the
Bureau of Indian Affairs and the US Fish and Wildlife Service**

March 6, 2019

Madam Chair, and Honorable Members of the Committee, I am Ron Allen, the Alternate Tribal Commissioner and Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee for the US Section of the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC). The US Section prepares an annual budget for implementation of the Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST). The United States and Canada recently completed the revision of five of the Annex Chapters to the PST. The Annex Chapters contain the details for operations of fisheries under the Treaty and will be in operation for the next ten years.

Funding to implement the PST comes from the Departments of Interior, Commerce, and State. The integrated budget details program needs and costs for Tribal, Federal, and State agencies involved in the Treaty. Tribal participation in the Treaty process is funded within the Bureau of Indian Affairs budget as a line item within Rights Protection Implementation.

In order to meet the increased obligations under the Pacific Salmon Treaty Agreement, the 25 affected tribes identified costs at \$5,200,000 for Tribal research projects and participation in the US-Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty process. This represents an increase of \$857,278 from FY 2017 levels. The funding for Tribal participation in the Pacific Salmon Treaty is a line item in the BIA's budget under Rights Protection Implementation.

Under US Fish and Wildlife Service programs, the US Section identified funding needs as follows:

USFWS participation in the Treaty process was funded at \$372,362 for FY 2017. The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission's Regional Mark Center (PSMFC) receives support from the USFWS to provide data services to the PSC process at \$236,189 for FY 2017. The US Section recommends increasing the funding for PSMFC by

\$150,000. The recommended total for the two programs for FY 2020 is \$758,551.

The base funding for the USFWS supports critically important on-going work and participation in the process. The funding for Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission's Regional Mark Processing Center is utilized to meet Treaty requirements concerning data exchange with Canada. These program recommendations are integrated with those of participating State and Federal agencies to avoid duplication of effort and provide for the most efficient expenditure of limited funds.

The US Section of the PSC is recommending an adjustment in funding to support the work carried out by the twenty-five treaty tribes' participating in implementation of the Treaty. Programs carried out by the Tribes are closely coordinated with those of participating State and Federal agencies. Tribal programs are essential for the United States to meet its international obligations. Tribal programs have taken on additional management responsibilities over time. The revised Chinook Chapter includes a new metric for evaluating terminal area fisheries. The CYER (Calendar Year Exploitation Rate) metric requires additional data collection and data management by the affected tribes. All participating agencies need to be adequately supported to achieve a comprehensive US effort to implement the Treaty.

The USFWS activities are essential, so the US can maintain the coded wire tag database necessary to implement the Treaty. The work of the Regional Mark Processing Center includes maintaining and updating a coastwide computerized information management system for salmon harvest data as required by the Treaty. This work has become even more important to monitor the success of management actions aimed at reducing impacts on ESA-listed salmon populations. Canada has a counterpart database. The US database will continue to be housed at the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Funding to support activities under the Pacific Salmon Commission comes from the Departments of Interior, State, and Commerce. The US Section can provide a cross-cut budget summary to the Committee. Adequate funding from all three Departments is necessary for the US to meet its Treaty obligations. All the funds are needed for critical data collection and research activities directly related to the implementation and are used in cooperative programs involving 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.

Madam Chair, 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 thirty-five 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 Coho salmon and Puget Sound Chinook salmon. In the Northern Boundary area between Canada and Alaska, fish from both countries are intercepted by the other country in large numbers. The Pacific Salmon Commission provides a forum to ensure cooperative management of salmon populations. The United States and Canada reached agreements for revised Annex Chapters for management of Chinook, Coho, Chum and transboundary salmon populations for the next ten years. The Annex Chapter for management of Fraser River Sockeye and Pink salmon expires at the end of 2019 and an update is expected to be completed soon. It is critically important to have adequate resources for US participants to implement the revised agreements and protect our Tribal Treaty resources.

Before the Treaty, fish wars often erupted with one or both countries overharvesting fish that were returning to the other country, to the detriment of the resource. 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 recommitted to that goal in 1999 when adopting a coastwide abundance-based approach to harvest management. Under this approach, harvest management has complemented habitat conservation and restoration activities 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 updated Annex Chapters continue these commitments. The combination of these efforts is integral to achieving success in rebuilding and restoring healthy, sustainable salmon populations.

Finally, you should consider 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, recreational fisheries, and the economic diversity they provide for local economies throughout the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, is immense. The Commission funded an economic study of the fisheries and determined that 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 continue to utilize the Pacific Salmon Commission to develop recommendations that help with the development and implementation of solutions to minimizing impacts on listed stocks. We continue to work towards the true intent of the Treaty, and with your support, we will manage this shared resource for mutual enhancements and benefits.

Madam Chair, that concludes my written testimony submitted for consideration by your Committee. I want to thank the Committee for the support that it has given the US Section in the past. Please feel free to contact me, or other members of the US Section to answer any questions you or Committee members may have regarding the US Section of the Pacific Salmon Commission budget.