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October 14, 2025

Director Kelly Denit
Office of Sustainable Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway, 13th Floor
Silver Springs, MD 20910

Dear Director Denit:

I am writing to provide input to the National Marine Fisheries Service on Executive Order (EO) 14276, *Restoring America's Seafood Competitiveness*. As the independent voice in Congress for Southwest Washington, I appreciate the opportunity to share some of the challenges our fishermen face and work toward durable solutions to ensure our fisheries remain sustainable and productive.

Pacific County, Washington, is one of the most fish-dependent communities in the country. Our fishermen can't afford to navigate the ever-moving goal posts for whale take permit eligibility or one-size-fits all licensing policies. To that end, including active crab fishermen on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Take Reduction Team (TRT) would ensure generational, lived experience informs these decisions, and that protection efforts balance sustainable fishing practices.

In addition, our entire community relies on energy generated from the Columbia River dams and many families rely on salmon for their food supply—yet California and Stellar sea lion populations are dramatically shifting their territories to feast on salmon as they navigate the barrier created by the dams. The current process for removing sea lions here (which, as the name implies, belong in the sea—not the river) purports to be humane, but is profoundly convoluted and borders on theater. The financial and cultural impacts are unsustainable. Some accounting methods estimate a price tag of nearly \$40,000 in costs associated with complying with the current regulatory process. Not removing these sea lions is not an option, and the solution is not simply to underfund this necessary species control.

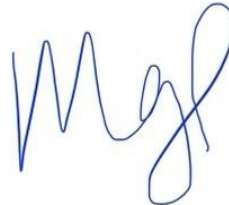
I am working in Congress to bring home the resources our community needs to cost-effectively and humanely balance this ecosystem. At the same time, we need NOAA, in close partnership with states and Tribes, to examine what strategies yield the best results for pinniped removals—including direct, lethal removal.

I also encourage NOAA to work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to address any supply-side factors limiting the consumption of seafood in schools through local and regional initiatives. Expanding access to locally caught seafood in school meal programs not only introduces students to healthy, locally sourced food, but also keeps more food dollars in our communities.

Finally, to support American seafood competitiveness, we must build out our domestic manufacturing capacity. When fishermen can't source buoy lines and other equipment domestically, the safety and reliability of our supply chains, as well as the health our communities suffer. Strengthening domestic supply chains is about resilience. We need to make sure our fishermen have the right tools to keep our coasts working.

As NOAA moves forward with this important order, it's critical our national strategy prioritizes and strengthens the real people who make a living at sea. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MGP', with a stylized, looping flourish at the end.

Marie Gluesenkamp Perez
Member of Congress

CC:
Governor Bob Ferguson
Office of the Governor
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