



STATE OF WASHINGTON

October 28, 2010

The Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Gary Locke, Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Ray LaHood, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretaries Salazar, Vilsack, Locke, and LaHood:

We are writing to bring you exciting news about the progress we are making supporting rural jobs while restoring forest ecosystems in Washington State. We also want to inform you of a significant opportunity to rapidly and productively employ people in rural high-unemployment areas.

Since 2000, Washington State and private landowners have invested over \$162 million in restoring fish passage for salmon, steelhead and other fish species, many of which are listed under the Endangered Species Act. Over 3,040 fish-blocking structures have been removed, thus opening 2,200 miles of important habitat previously inaccessible to fish. This work creates a significant number of family-wage jobs in rural communities, supports small businesses, honors Indian treaty fishing rights, improves water quality, and reduces the risk of floods downstream.

The Family Forest Fish Passage Program has a proven track record of repairing fish passage barriers on small, family-owned tree farms, which account for over 40 percent of private forestlands in Washington and over 3 million acres. This cost-share program provides public funds to prioritize and implement projects that improve forest roads and remove fish-blocking structures (usually under-sized culverts) and replaces them with properly sized culverts or bridges. Since its inception in 2003, our state has invested over \$17 million in this program, completing nearly 200 projects and opening more than 400 miles of stream habitat. However, we face a backlog of over 400 projects – a wait list that grows by 50 to 80 applications each year.

We know our values of sustaining green jobs in rural communities, rebuilding salmon runs, honoring Indian treaty fishing rights, promoting our forest industry, improving water quality, and minimizing flooding are shared by President Obama and by you and your agencies. Therefore, we are asking that you join us as full partners in this endeavor.

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With an additional \$15.5 million in annual federal funding, to be combined with ongoing state appropriations, we will be able to repair more barriers on private and county roads and add hundreds of jobs right away through existing programs proven to have low overhead costs, a high level of multi-stakeholder support, and an excellent track record of accountability. Increased fish passage work on private and county roads would also leverage federal Legacy Roads investments on USDA Forest Service lands, as well as the restoration investments of other federal agencies.

Washington State is poised to put people to work and support local economies immediately. Our state is already well-positioned to capitalize on the unique economic opportunities surrounding the growing green job sector. A modest \$15.5 million federal investment will enable state and local agencies, tribes, conservation organizations, and private partners to accelerate the pace of work on small family forestlands and county roads and continue to inventory watersheds to identify and prioritize roads and fish passage barriers for repair or removal.

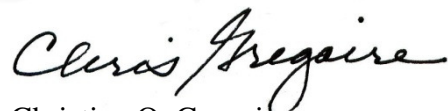
This investment would immediately add desperately needed family-wage rural jobs for small businesses, contractors, loggers, construction workers, and engineers. These projects also represent an important investment in long-term jobs by supporting the sustainability of our working private forestlands.

The enclosed brochure describes our past successes and the benefits of a modest federal investment in more detail. We respectfully ask that you support our request and identify contact persons in your agencies to coordinate with us. Please have your designated staff contact:

John Mankowski
Executive Policy Advisor to Governor Gregoire
PO Box 43113, Olympia, WA 98504
John.Mankowski@gov.wa.gov.
(360) 902-0551

We look forward to working with you in full partnership to achieve our mutual goals of supporting green jobs while restoring our natural treasures.

Sincerely,



Christine O. Gregoire
Governor



Peter Goldmark
Commissioner of Public Lands

Enclosure

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cc: The Honorable Patty Murray, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Norm Dicks, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Jim McDermott, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Adam Smith, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Jay Inslee, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Doc Hastings, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Brian Baird, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Rick Larsen, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Dave Reichert, U.S. House of Representatives