

News Release

U.S. Congress



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2014

CONTACT: MEGHAN ROH (MURRAY), 202.224.2834

MICHAEL TADEO (HASTINGS), 202.226.9019

JEN GILBREATH (DEFazio), 202.225.4081

26 Northwest Lawmakers Highlight the Importance of the Columbia River Treaty

Bipartisan Group of Lawmakers Press Obama Administration for Local Input in Treaty's Future

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, all 26 lawmakers representing Washington, Oregon, Montana, and Idaho urged President Obama to make the future of the 1964 Columbia River Treaty a priority for 2014. In a letter led by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (R-WA), and House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Peter DeFazio (D-OR), the 26 lawmakers highlighted the importance of the Columbia River Treaty and asked the Administration to take direct action on this issue by mid-year 2014, as called for in a recent regional recommendation led by the Bonneville Power Administration and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“It is essential that the Administration now advance this work through discussions with Canada to ensure that a post-2024 Treaty better reflects the interests of our constituents in the region and the United States as a whole. As you convene an Interagency Policy Committee on the Recommendation, we draw your attention to the Recommendation’s clear call for a decision and action by the Administration on this matter by mid-year,” wrote Members in the letter.

Members also underscored the importance of the Obama Administration to be open and transparent in the treaty negotiations with Canada and for the Administration to consider input from Northwest lawmakers and regional stakeholders as the process moves forward.

“The Columbia River provides significant economic and cultural benefits to our region and how it is managed through the Treaty will have major impacts into the future. Therefore, it is important that you remain in regular and close communication with the Pacific Northwest Congressional Delegation during the Interagency Policy Committee process and keep us apprised of potential negotiations with Canada. In addition, we encourage the Administration to remain open to input from and engagement with concerned regional stakeholders, many of whom have valuable expertise in managing the Columbia River and played an integral role in developing the Recommendation.”

For fifty years, the Columbia River Treaty between the United States and Canada has provided the framework for coordinated hydropower generation and flood control on the Columbia River system. Starting this year, either side can seek to terminate the Treaty with ten years notice, prompting a renewed look at the Treaty in the United States and Canada. The regional review led by the Bonneville Power Administration and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers resulted in the “Regional Recommendation for the Future of the Columbia River Treaty after 2024,” which was delivered to the Administration for further action in December 2013. (To view the “Regional Recommendation for the Future of the Columbia River Treaty after 2024,” click [here](#).)

Click [here](#) to view the letter.

The full list of signatories is below:

U.S. Senate: Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID), Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA), Sen. Jim Risch (R-ID), Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT), Sen. John Walsh (D-MT), and Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR)

U.S. House: Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), Rep. Steve Daines (R-MT), Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Rep. Suzan DelBene (D-WA), Rep. Doc Hastings (R-WA), Rep. Denny Heck (D-WA), Rep. Jamie Herrera Beutler (R-WA), Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-WA), Rep. Raul Labrador (R-ID), Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA), Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA), Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), Rep. Dave Reichert (R-WA), Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID), Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-OR), Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA), and Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR)

###