

Susan Monson

Dear Gov. Inslee, Director Watson, and the Washington Dept. of Ecology,

Washington has a rare opportunity to help struggling orcas—and the Columbia and Snake rivers' iconic salmon runs. I urge you to exercise Washington's authority under Clean Water Act section 401 to help ensure the Columbia Basin's federal dam operators address rising water temperatures, protect salmon, and help save the Southern Resident orcas from extinction.

Starving orcas need Chinook salmon. Under the state's Clean Water Act authority, you can help orcas. The Southern Resident orcas are on the brink of extinction, partly because they cannot find enough Chinook salmon to eat. Orca scientists point to the steep losses of the once large returns of Columbia River spring Chinook as being particularly harmful to the survival and reproduction of the orcas. Despite these declines, salmon biologists also view the Columbia and Snake rivers as among the best Chinook salmon restoration opportunities anywhere on the West Coast.

More than one-third of the salmon and steelhead populations in the Columbia Basin vanished during the last century. With your leadership, Washington can help struggling Columbia River salmon runs—and the orcas they sustain.

Sincerely,

Susan Monson