



WESTERN LEADERS NETWORK CALLING ON CONGRESS TO SUPPORT CRITICAL SALMON RESTORATION INITIATIVE

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Western Leaders Network, a nonpartisan nonprofit organization of more than 450 local and tribal elected officials across the Interior West, is calling on Senators and members of Congress to support congressional funding for salmon recovery and river restoration in the Interior West.

WLN will be urging the Biden Administration and Congress to support the Columbia Basin Initiative, a new bipartisan proposal put forth by U.S. Representative Mike Simpson of Idaho to remove four dams on the lower Snake River and restore salmon populations. Founded in 2017 to amplify the voices of local and tribal leaders and advance conservation efforts, [Western Leaders Network recently expanded its issue work to include salmon habitat recovery and river restoration in the Interior West and Pacific Northwest.](#)

“Salmon populations in the Interior West and Pacific Northwest have long been on the verge of extinction, which has cultural, economic and environmental ramifications for tribes and communities,” WLN Executive Director Gwen Lachelt said. “Western Leaders Network is excited to expand our issue work and take part in the advancement of salmon restoration initiatives, as this aligns with our organization’s work of protecting public lands and waters and building a more sustainable and resilient West.”

The Shoshone Bannock and Nez Perce Tribes of Idaho have worked for decades to bring salmon back from the brink of extinction in the Columbia and Snake rivers, but efforts led by federal agencies have resulted in failed restoration plans, broken treaties with tribes and \$17 billion spent over the past 30 years.

“As an Idahoan and Shoshone Bannock member, I’m proud to be a part of this organization and the growing movement to prevent the extinction of a vital species that is so central to our heritage and way of life as Indigenous people. This is not a time to sit on the sidelines,” said WLN Indigenous Leaders Organizer Rudy Soto.

Representative Simpson’s initiative offers a comprehensive package to address the imminent salmon extinction crisis, restore inland salmon and steelhead-dependent economies, and secure an affordable, reliable and clean energy future for current and future generations. His proposal

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includes \$33 billion to remove four dams on the lower Snake River and invest in Northwest inland communities, mitigation measures and infrastructure to help transition to a free-flowing river.

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