

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

June 29, 2021

President Joe Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

As Members of Congress from the Pacific Northwest, we write regarding the Columbia River Treaty (Treaty) and the urgency of prompt negotiation of a modernized Treaty. We stress the need for a top-level White House led strategy for the Treaty negotiations, as well as regular substantive updates to Members of Congress on the status of negotiations and estimated funding needs.

The 1964 Treaty provided the framework for the United States and Canada to provide certainty and benefits to both nations. Much has changed over the past 57 years. Population growth, changing weather patterns, clean energy and carbon reduction state-based requirements, and coal plant retirements are all driving transformational changes in our regions' utility sector and broader economy. After almost a decade of work in the Northwest and British Columbia and 10 rounds of formal Treaty talks between the two countries, the time to press for completion of the Treaty modernization effort is now. The status quo is not acceptable to our region and comes at significant economic harm.

Federal funding will be necessary for flood risk management as soon as fiscal years 2023 and 2024. To date, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has not articulated a strategy to reach a flood risk management agreement with Canada or identified funding requirements for post-2024 flood control operational changes dictated within the Treaty. Without regular, ongoing consultation, it may not be feasible for Congress to appropriate funds in a short time frame, in potentially variable amounts, especially considering budget constraints. This is made more unattainable if Congress does not receive funding justification through the budget process as early as possible.

The 2013 Regional Recommendation made clear that power benefits to Canada, known as the Canadian Entitlement, must be rebalanced to reflect an equitable sharing of the Treaty's benefits. The U.S. government and others have studied the issue and concluded that the U.S. is vastly overpaying Canada for the benefits it receives, now more than \$150 million per year. This cost is passed on to our constituent ratepayers. We oppose any assumption or negotiation position that our ratepayers will continue to indefinitely pay the outdated and unfair Canadian Entitlement or be responsible for flood control payments that should be a federal obligation.

The U.S. and Canada have not held a formal negotiation round in nearly a year. Given the lack of information provided to Congress regarding negotiation status, we request a meeting as

soon as possible with senior Administration officials from the White House, State Department, the United States Entity, and other relevant federal agencies responsible for the Treaty. We reject the argument that providing adequate information to the delegation puts our negotiating position at risk. We need to understand the United States strategy, policy positions, and tools available to the United States and provide our input to successfully and promptly complete negotiations with Canada to modernize the Columbia River Treaty.

Sincerely,



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Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress



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Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress



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Patty Murray  
United States Senator



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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



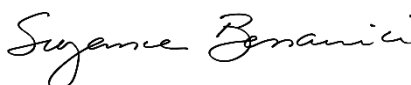
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Cliff Bentz  
Member of Congress



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Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



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Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



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Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress



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Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress



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Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress



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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



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Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress



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Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



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Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



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Matthew Rosendale, Sr.  
Member of Congress



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Kurt Schrader  
Member of Congress



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Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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Mike Simpson  
Member of Congress



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Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



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Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress

cc:

Secretary of State Antony Blinken

Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman

Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm

Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland

Deputy Director Shalanda Young, Office of Management and Budget

Administrator John Hairston, Bonneville Power Administration

Jaime Pinkin, Assistant Secretary of the Army Corps of Engineers for Civil Works

Michael W. Gray, Director for North America, National Security Council