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**HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4001**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Walsh and Irwin

TO THE HONORABLE DONALD J. TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION:

We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent and petition as follows:

WHEREAS, Sea lion predation is a significant threat to already critically endangered and threatened salmon stocks in Washington and throughout the Pacific Northwest; and

WHEREAS, Although sea lion populations were once near depletion, the species has dramatically rebounded in recent decades; and

WHEREAS, Since 1983, the United States California sea lion population, which resides on the Pacific coast of the United States and ranges from British Columbia, Canada, to Baja California, Mexico, has grown at an estimated 6.2 percent per year; and

WHEREAS, A stock assessment report prepared by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association Fisheries Division, most recently revised in 2015, estimates that the total United States population of California sea lions is 296,750 animals; and

WHEREAS, The Columbia River Basin has seen an almost one-third increase of California lions in recent years, from seven-hundred fifty animals in 2013 to two thousand three hundred forty in 2015; and

WHEREAS, The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association Fisheries Division has calculated that an optimum sustainable population could be maintained while removing nine thousand two hundred California sea lions from the stock per year. However, a small fraction of that number, only about three hundred eighty-nine animals, are removed annually; and

WHEREAS, Congress recently adopted changes to the Marine Mammal Protection Act to marginally increase allowable California sea lion removals by states and Tribes in parts of the Columbia River and its tributaries; and

WHEREAS, The state of Washington still lacks effective tools to manage the constant threat of quickly growing sea lion populations to the precious salmon stocks of the Pacific Northwest; and

WHEREAS, In the early twentieth century, the state of Washington along with other states offered a bounty on sea lions of three dollars per sea lion, which proved to be an effective tool to reduce sea lion populations;

NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that Congress amend further the Marine Mammal Protection Act to allow the use of hunting or bounty programs as tools to effectively manage populations of predatory sea lions.

BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately transmitted to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of Washington.