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**HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4014**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Stanford, Blake, Van De Wege, Pettigrew, Ryu, Lytton, and Pollet

TO THE HONORABLE BARACK OBAMA, 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 SECRETARY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, AND TO THE SECRETARY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, AND TO THE UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE:

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, The Columbia river travels over one thousand two hundred miles from its headwaters at Columbia lake, British Columbia, to its dramatic ending at the Pacific Ocean, approximately one hundred miles downstream from Vancouver, Washington; and

WHEREAS, The entire Pacific Northwest region depends on a healthy Columbia river system to provide environmental sustainability, national energy independence, the protection of public safety and infrastructure, and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, The Columbia river is home to six species of Pacific salmon and steelhead that at one time represented the largest salmonid run in the world with an estimated average of ten to sixteen million individual fish returning to the basin annually; and

WHEREAS, The entire length of the Columbia river once supported salmonid species, including the spawning of Chinook salmon in the waters near to the town of Canal Flats, British Columbia, located near the river's source and the support of a large Sockeye salmon run in Canada's Arrow lakes; and

WHEREAS, Many human activities have contributed to the decline of the Columbia river's native salmon and steelhead runs, including land and water developments that have blocked traditional habitats and dramatically changed natural conditions in the rivers where the fish first evolved; and

WHEREAS, These human activities have included the construction of fourteen large, multipurpose dams on the mainstem of the Columbia river designed to provide the important services of hydroelectric power, flood control, commercial navigation, irrigation, and recreation; and

WHEREAS, The engineering of the Grand Coulee dam in 1941, and subsequent construction of the Chief Joseph dam, did not include the fish passage capabilities of lower river dams, blocking access to thousands of stream miles and over forty percent of the historical salmon and steelhead habitat, and eliminated the harvest of over four million fish annually; and

WHEREAS, New and emerging technologies, including floating surface collectors, fish friendlier turbines, and spillway technologies are available, which make it technically feasible to restore salmon populations to portions of their natural range above the Chief Joseph dam and the Grand Coulee dam, as has been shown with established adult and juvenile passage systems around high-head dams on Washington's Baker, Lewis, and Skokomish rivers, along with Oregon's Deschutes river, and which is currently being studied and proposed at California's six hundred foot tall Shasta dam; and

WHEREAS, The ongoing process to revisit the terms of the Columbia River Treaty by the United States and Canada has created an opportunity to expand the current primary purposes of the treaty, which are power production and flood control, to include the integration of ecosystems functions as an equal purpose to the treaty; and

WHEREAS, The Regional Recommendations for the Future of the Columbia River Treaty after the year 2024, as developed by the group known as the United States Entity, includes the goal of developing a modernized framework for the treaty that ensures a more resilient and healthy ecosystem-based function throughout the Columbia river basin, which includes the consideration of salmon and steelhead reintroduction and passage above Grand Coulee dam, while maintaining an acceptable level of flood risk and ensuring reliable and economic hydropower benefits; and

WHEREAS, A possible plan for the implementation of salmon and steelhead restoration above the Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams was approved by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council in 2014 with the adoption of its Columbia River Fish and Wildlife Program; and

WHEREAS, The reintroduction plan developed by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council features a science-based, three-phase approach to investigate the possibility and options for reintroducing salmon on the Columbia river above the Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams; and

WHEREAS, The first phase of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's reintroduction phase is scheduled to be completed no later than the end of 2016 and includes an evaluation of existing studies related to fish passage and investigation of salmon survival potential in the habitats above the Grand Coulee dam; and

WHEREAS, The information gathered from the first phase of the reintroduction plan will inform the second and third phases of the plan and lead to informed decisions regarding how to move forward with implementing and funding reintroduction measures; and

WHEREAS, The reintroduction plan envisioned by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council includes cooperation and coordination with the partners necessary to make salmon reintroduction on the upper Columbia river possible, including tribal, state, federal, and Canadian partners; and

WHEREAS, In addition to myriad other benefits, the successful implementation of a plan to reintroduce salmon species above the Grand Coulee dam would restore native peoples' cultural harvests and spiritual values, provide an important facet of ecosystem adaptation to climate change, and help restore the economically valuable recreational and commercial fisheries that once extended from Canada to the Pacific Ocean; and

WHEREAS, Restoring salmon and steelhead runs above the Grand Coulee dam would result in an exponential expansion of available salmon and steelhead habitat and would have significant international benefits as hydropower operators in Canada are already obligated in their licensing agreements to develop fish passage on mainstem Columbia river and tributary dams in Canada, if the United States provides anadromous fish populations above the Grand Coulee dam; and

WHEREAS, While the regional weather in 2015 provided a snapshot of how a future Columbia river will be impacted by climate change with warmer temperatures, less snow pack, and compromised habitats, 2015 also highlighted the need for providing cold water refugia for the salmon populations in the Columbia river, and the reintroduction of salmon and steelhead populations above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams can provide the additional cold water refugia the salmon and steelhead of the Columbia river will need to be resilient into the next century;

NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the federal government and the region pursue the reintroduction of salmon and steelhead above the Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams through a pragmatic and science-based phased approach, such as the plan proposed by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, that can lead to fish passage and reintroduction featuring careful and coordinated planning, research, testing, and construction followed by monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management.

BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately transmitted to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States, the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, the Secretary of the United States Department of Energy, the United States Secretary of State, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of Washington.