

Jan. 22, 2023; DRAFT Letter of support for seeking US DOT culvert replacement funding:

Proposed Letter to County Executive, for discussion and possible action 1.24.2023

Whatcom County, the Nooksack Tribe, and Lummi Nation have a long history of working together to restore salmon populations in the Nooksack watershed. For decades Whatcom County has participated in WRIA 1 management forums and in salmon restoration, seeking solutions for water and salmon.

We write today to provide County Council support for having Whatcom County collaborate with the Nooksack Tribe, and for the County to take the lead in an application to the US Department of Transportation's National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program. These funds will initiate repair of county fish barriers along roads in Whatcom County. We support a comprehensive and coordinated plan to address our existing barriers.

The deadline for the grant is February 6th, and this opportunity to remove barriers to salmon passage is too important to be missed. The opportunity may not come again. We encourage the Executive to collaborate with the Nooksack Tribe on getting the County's application submitted.

Recently the largest city in our county signed an agreement with the Nooksack Tribe, Lummi Nation, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to begin to identify, replace and mitigate fish passage barriers within Bellingham. We applaud that, and support a similar agreement with Whatcom County and the Tribes as described in the January 5, 2023 letter from Nooksack Tribal Council Chair RoseMary LaClair, to move forward together to correct these barriers.

Signed,

Whatcom County Council