

**WHATCOM COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**Elizabeth Kosa
Director**




NATURAL RESOURCES

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Satpal Singh Sidhu, County Executive
Honorable Members of the Whatcom County Council

THROUGH: Elizabeth, Public Works Director

FROM: Gary Stoyka, Natural Resources Manager 

DATE: March 29, 2023

RE: Letter of Support for Reauthorization of Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative

Requested Action

On behalf of the Whatcom Marine Resources Committee, Public Works staff respectfully requests that the Whatcom County Council sign the enclosed letter of support for the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Reauthorization.

Background and Purpose

The purpose of this letter of support is to encourage congressional reauthorization of the initiative and ongoing federal support and funding. The Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is one of seven citizen-based committees in the Northwest Straits region working on marine issues. The committee was established by the Whatcom County Council in 1999 as provided for under the Congressionally-authorized Northwest Straits Initiative.

Federal funds have routinely supported the work of the Northwest Straits Commission and MRC's. The MRCs' purpose is to guide local communities, using up-to-date information and scientific expertise, to achieve the important goals of resource conservation and habitat protection within the Northwest Straits. In Whatcom County, work has included community outreach programs, citizen science and biological surveys, Olympia oyster restoration, water quality improvement, and habitat restoration projects. With approximately 140 miles of marine shoreline in Whatcom County, the work of the MRC and engagement of the community in this bottom-up approach is an important element of protecting and restoring this valuable resource.

The MRC will be presenting an annual report summarizing their recent work at the April 18, 2023 Council Water Work Session. Additional information about the committee's work can be found at: <https://www.whatcomcountymrc.org/>.

Please contact Austin Rose at extension 6286 or Gary Stoyka at extension 6218, if you have any questions or concerns regarding this letter of support.

Encl.