28 January 2019

Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Re: Appreciation for Salmon Recovery Leadership

Dear Governor Inslee:

The Nez Perce Tribe is writing to express its appreciation for your leadership on the critical issues surrounding salmon and orcas, and your commitment to taking bold actions to save and restore these iconic creatures and the ecosystem that sustains them.

Salmon are critical to our culture, economy, and way of life. The Tribe is committed to rebuilding the Columbia and Snake River salmon runs to healthy, harvestable levels and fairly sharing the conservation burden. Of the Snake River runs, sockeye are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and spring/summer Chinook, fall Chinook, and steelhead are all listed as threatened under the ESA. The dams on the lower Snake River and the mainstem Columbia River have had – and continue to have – an enormous impact on salmon and steelhead and on the Nez Perce people. The Nez Perce Reservation, and many of the Tribe’s usual and accustomed fishing places, in addition to those on the mainstem Columbia, lie above the eight dams on the lower Snake and Columbia rivers.

The Tribe, as a fishery co-manager with Treaty-reserved rights, has been an active leader in all aspects of salmon recovery. The Tribe has long supported breaching the four lower Snake River dams and investing in the local communities affected by that decision. The Tribe has also supported increased spill at the dams to assist juvenile salmon survival.

The Tribe appreciates that your budget submittal demonstrates tangible commitments related to breaching the lower Snake River dams and implementing increased spill at the mainstem Columbia and lower Snake River dams.

The Tribe appreciates your commitment to facilitating a stakeholder process to discuss the social and economic impacts and mitigation costs associated with breaching the lower Snake River dams.
This focus on identifying community needs associated with dam breaching is appropriate, and, as the Tribe understands it, is not redundant or duplicative of the distinct Columbia River System Operations Review process.

Again, we appreciate your leadership and commitment related to issues important to the Nez Perce Tribe and look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Mr. Shannon F. Wheeler
Chairman