Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 19, 2021

Richard Spinrad
Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Martha Williams
Principal Deputy Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Administrator Spinrad and Principal Deputy Director Williams,

We write to you to urge your agencies' to further investigate the effects of 6PPD-quinone on coho salmon and other salmonids, aquatic species, and watersheds across the country.

Recently published research has shown that 6PPD-quinone is highly toxic to endangered coho salmon.[1] While it has been well documented that road runoff is often associated with significant, sudden die offs of coho salmon in urban streams, this is the first research to specifically identify the specific toxin that could be killing the coho. Because this finding is new, there are still many questions including whether 6PPD-quinone is toxic to other salmonids, whether it affects other aquatic wildlife, whether it bioaccumulates and biomagnifies up the food chain, and to what extent it is impacting other watersheds across the country.

Recently in the Natural Resources Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, we heard from scientists and stakeholders about the impact of 6PPD-quinone on the health and productivity of salmon runs, livelihoods, tribal identity and treaty rights, as well as potential solutions to address this issue. We also heard about salmon recovery efforts including recovery plans, restoration efforts, and adaptive management. The discovery that a chemical as ubiquitous as its chemical precursor in tires, 6PPD, may be contributing to widespread salmon mortality has profound implications for salmon recovery efforts. Given the dismal trajectory of West Coast salmon populations, your agencies should be working with great urgency to gain a better understanding of this threat and to take any necessary actions to address it.

Accordingly, we request a timely response to the following questions:

[1] Tian, Zhenyu, *et al.* 2021. "A Ubiquitous Tire Rubber–Derived Chemical Induces Acute Mortality in Coho Salmon." *Science Magazine, American Association for the Advancement of Science*. sciencemag.org/content/371/6525/185.

1. What are NOAA and FWS doing to evaluate the impacts of 6PPD-quinone on salmonids and other species?
2. What impact is 6PPD-quinone-linked, pre-spawn mortality having on your agencies' coho salmon recovery efforts? How are your agencies incorporating the impacts of this chemical on endangered salmon recovery efforts?
3. What are sublethal effects of 6PPD-quinone on aquatic species and is there concern about bioaccumulation and biomagnification to higher trophic levels?
4. What are your agencies doing to monitor watersheds where 6PPD-quinone is present and to understand its impacts on aquatic ecosystems?
5. How are your agencies working with researchers and stakeholders to understand and address the impacts of 6PPD-quinone?
6. If salmon mortality from 6PPD-quinone is significant and widespread, as some experts believe, what do your agencies plan to do about it?
7. What additional resources or authorities do your agencies need to address the impacts of this chemical on the fish, wildlife, and resources that you manage?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter and the work you have done to address this issue thus far.

Sincerely,

Jared Huffman
Chair
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife

Katie Porter
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Ed Case
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress