

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 22, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum,

We are writing to you with concerns that the Administration is planning to dismantle the Ecosystems Mission Area of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Eliminating this workforce will have detrimental effects on fragile ecosystems nationwide, including the Puget Sound in Washington state and Willamette River in Oregon, which are vital lifelines for Tribal Treaty rights and the economy, providing a way of life for those that call the Pacific Northwest home. While we can all agree that our government should be more efficient, we urge you to consider the long-term consequences of these proposed cuts.

N¹-(4-Methylpentan-2-yl)-N⁴-phenylbenzene-1,4-diamine (6PPD) is a compound used in tires to prevent them from degrading. When 6PPD is exposed to ozone, it produces a reaction product called 6PPD-quinone (6PPD-Q), which is toxic to coho salmon when water runs off the road and into their habitats. Because 6PPD is essential for tire and passenger safety, replacing it with an equal substitute is an extensive process that requires years of scientific testing. Efforts to find an alternative are currently being explored in partnership with the tire manufacturing industry to ensure potential options meet safety standards.

The work of the USGS Western Fisheries Center is pivotal to testing potential alternatives to 6PPD in tires through their collaboration with both the Washington State Department of Ecology and the U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association (USTMA). Additionally, USGS is working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Flexsys, which is a company committed to finding an alternative tire additive that doesn't harm salmon but keeps drivers safe. We are grateful for their work, and they are hopeful that a safer replacement is within close reach, dependent on the availability of additional funding and workforce support.

Salmon are a way of life and economic engine in the Pacific Northwest, especially for our Tribal Nations. Salmon fishing alone generates millions in annual economic activity in Washington state, and the industry provides over 23,000 jobs. Because of 6PPD-Q contamination, this keystone species is facing an imminent threat of extinction, and we cannot afford to wait decades for breakthrough research. We urgently need researchers and scientists to continue their work

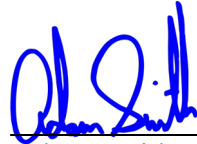
towards progress that keeps our passengers on the road safe but also prevents an irreversible decline in salmon populations.

If the USGS Ecosystems Mission Area is eliminated, the years of progress and investments made towards a clean alternative are at risk. We know this Administration cares about protecting and supporting the livelihoods of the American people and urge you to support this important work by reconsidering the decision to dismantle the Ecosystems Mission Area.

Sincerely,



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



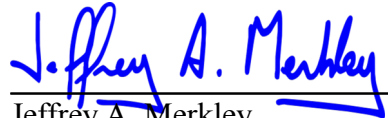
Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



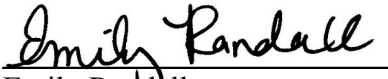
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily Randall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Emily Randall

Member of Congress