



## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

June 17, 2016

Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership  
811 SW Naito Parkway, Suite 410  
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Friends,

Thank you for inviting me to the 2016 Science to Policy Summit: *Climate Change – How vulnerable is the lower Columbia River and what are we doing about it?* I regret I am unable to join you to discuss the important issues that face the Lower Columbia River Estuary. In Washington state, climate change is already altering the region's water cycle, threatening drinking water supplies, and has impacted salmon habitat and prey availability, and has resulted in ocean acidification in our waterways. It is critical that we take steps to address climate change, and work together to restore our coastal and estuarine ecosystems.

In the Pacific Northwest we have seen the impacts ocean acidification has had on a wide array of marine species from shellfish, to Dungeness crab, to algae. Before we can adequately address ocean acidification, however, we must conduct further research to understand impacts on specific species and ecosystems, as well as research to develop tools to help us mitigate and adapt to ocean acidification. That is why I sponsored S.1886, the Coordinated Ocean Monitoring and Research Act, which would expand the ocean acidification monitoring network, increase research funding, and require risk assessments so we know which species are most vulnerable. We must do more to improve resilience of our precious marine ecosystems and the coastal communities whose livelihoods depends on them.

Ocean acidification is not the only symptom of climate change affecting the Pacific Northwest. Several years of low snowpack and drought have negatively impacted Pacific salmon populations. The importance of salmon to our state—economically, recreationally, and culturally—is enormous. That is why I have consistently supported expanding salmon conservation, research and habitat restoration activities, like the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF). The PCSRF provides critical funding to facilitate recovery and sustainability of Pacific salmon populations and the commercial, recreational, and Tribal fisheries which rely on them. In addition to recovering threatened populations, we must also protect healthy salmon stocks, while they are still thriving. That's why I plan to reintroduce the Pacific Salmon Stronghold Act. This Salmon Stronghold Act has enjoyed bipartisan support for many Congresses and I will work across the aisle to get these protections in place.

Thank you all for the incredible work you do to protect our environment and ensure that the unique resources of the Pacific Northwest will continue to thrive. You have my best wishes for a successful summit and I look forward to hearing about your findings.

Warmest Regards,

Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator