

**TESTIMONY OF**  
**DONALD KNOWLES**  
**DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF PROTECTED RESOURCES**  
**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE**  
**BEFORE THE**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS, ATMOSPHERE AND FISHERIES**  
**COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION**  
**UNITED STATES SENATE**  
**MAY 14, 2002**

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am Don Knowles, Director of the Office of Protected Resources for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). I am here representing Bill Hogarth, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries. I want to thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss NMFS' views on S. 1825--the Pacific Salmon Recovery Act. Among other things, S. 1825 authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to provide financial assistance to State and Tribal governments in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, and Idaho for salmon habitat restoration projects in coastal waters and upland drainages. The Department of Commerce recently sent a letter with comments on S.1825 to the Chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee. I would like to request that the letter and the attached comments be included in the record. For today's testimony, I will provide you background on the Pacific salmon listings and the current administration of the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF), report on activities funded in FY 2000 and FY 2001, and outline comments on the current version of S. 1825.

## **Pacific Salmon Listings**

Since 1991, the National Marine Fisheries Service has listed 26 Evolutionarily Significant Units of Pacific salmon as either threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The geographic area covered by the listings is approximately 159,000 square miles, roughly equivalent to the area of the State of California. The listings affect the entire West coast of the United States. The salmon issue is not just a regional one, it is also a National issue and affects energy production and the national economy.

Pacific salmon have declined in numbers since commercial fishing began in the late 1800s. A variety of factors have contributed to the decline including over-harvesting, fluctuating ocean conditions, and other human influenced activities. The decline of the runs has evolved over time and is due to many complex factors. In the same way, we must approach salmon recovery in a comprehensive manner. The Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund is an effective tool to help this recovery happen. We are beginning to see improved runs, which are due to favorable ocean conditions, restrictions in harvest, ecological improvements in the operation of hydropower systems, and habitat restoration and hatchery improvement efforts.

## **Background of the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund**

The Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund was established in FY 2000 at the request of the Governors of Washington, Oregon, California, and Alaska following NMFS' listing of coastal salmon and steelhead runs under the Endangered Species Act. The Governors recognized the need to form lasting partnerships between Federal, state, local, and tribal governments and the public for recovering Pacific salmon and their habitats and to address impacts to local and state economies. The PCSRF

supplements existing and proposed programs, and seeks more efficient and effective salmon recovery and conservation efforts through enhanced sharing and pooling of expertise and information. Through FY 2002, \$258 million has been appropriated to the fund, with \$58 million appropriated in FY 2000, \$90 million in FY 2001, and \$110 million in FY 2002. The President's budget for FY 2003 includes a request for \$90 million. We recommend that the bill's authorization of \$350 million for each fiscal year through FY 2007 should be changed to conform to the Budget request.

In January 2002, NMFS convened a workshop with state and tribal representatives to discuss funded activities and ways to maximize the benefits of the fund. The workshop produced an agreement between states and tribes to improve coordination of monitoring and evaluation of PCSRF-funded activities. NMFS, in cooperation with the states and tribes, is in the process of finalizing a report outlining the activities resulting from the first two years of the program. Based on the presentations at the workshop, we believe the fund has already produced tangible results. In the first two years of the program, over 800 projects related to salmon habitat restoration, planning and assessment, research and monitoring, enhancement, and outreach and education have been funded. Highlights include: Washington's completion of 40 in-stream passage projects, Alaska's monitoring and assessment of populations and habitat, the Yurok Tribe's habitat restoration projects in the Klamath Basin, Oregon's work funding local watershed initiatives, and many other excellent projects. We are compiling a progress report, summarizing the first 2 years of funding, and expect to have this available in June. I am sure the state and tribal representatives who are here today will be happy to tell you about other beneficial uses of the fund.

## S.1825

The Department of Commerce supports the objective of S.1825 to provide funding to the states and tribes for Pacific salmon recovery efforts. In particular, we support the expansion of this funding to Idaho. Support for Pacific Salmon Recovery should be comprehensive and focused on opportunities to provide the greatest benefits to recovery of salmon populations. As you know, many watersheds within Idaho contain some of the best salmon habitat in the Columbia River Basin. Idaho funding will help to provide fish access to this habitat as well as to undertake other restoration activities.

While S. 1825 is similar to the current program for Pacific salmon recovery funding, it does propose significant changes to the amount allocated, the entities that receive funds, and the requirement for planning, peer review, and public participation in the program. Many of the aspects of the bill regarding planning, peer review and public participation are already being conducted on a voluntary basis as part of the Memorandum of Understanding that we require the states and tribes to sign to receive Federal funds. Each state and tribe has tailored its program to the individual circumstances within each state or tribe, and has incorporated the PCSRF funds into existing programs for prioritization and distribution. We would be pleased to work with the Committee to review existing processes and to determine if changes are needed to existing State, tribal, and regional frameworks for planning, peer review, and public participation.

We look forward to working with the Committee on the improvements to S. 1825 that were detailed in the Department's views letter transmitted to the Committee on May 6, 2002.

We appreciate your commitment and continued support to Pacific salmon recovery efforts and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.