



October 31, 2016

Re: Puget Sound Recovery Becomes National Priority

I am writing today to personally highlight and explain some recent news about Puget Sound recovery and to thank you for your tireless efforts, extending special thanks to those of you who have participated in the two extremely successful “*Puget Sound Day-on-the-Hill*” trips to Washington, DC. Those efforts directly and significantly shaped our recent accomplishments.

Christy Goldfuss, the managing director of the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), visited Puget Sound this month. Along with Governor Inslee, members of our Leadership Council, Washington Congressional Delegation and Puget Sound Treaty Tribes, Ms. Goldfuss announced [new federal actions](#) that make it clear that *our regional priorities are now shared national priorities*.

The actions announced included the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among federal agencies and formation of a new Puget Sound Federal Task Force. The MOU will significantly increase alignment and coordination among federal agencies in reaching the goals of the Action Agenda. The Task Force, which includes members of the President’s Cabinet, will provide oversight and accountability. This work will be advanced through the development of a Federal Action Plan, which will support and complement the Puget Sound Action Agenda, as well as advancing tribal treaty priorities for Puget Sound.

Managing Director Goldfuss and federal partners also announced and emphasized their support for certain projects and funding opportunities, including:

- Congressional authorization to undertake two large-scale estuary and coastal habitat projects to be funded through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These projects would proceed upon consultation with landowners and other interested partners, as well as Congressional allocation of \$450M.
- Funding to support the Army Corps of Engineers’ commitment to provide improved fish passage at Mud Mountain Dam, located on the White River. The project requires an initial \$23 million to begin construction (now included in the President’s FY2017 budget) with a total project cost estimated at more than \$100 million.

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- The investment by the Environmental Protection Agency of \$124 million, through the National Estuary Program. This investment will be matched by the State of Washington, for a total investment of \$248 million. These dollars will fund, over the course of the next five years, the prioritized actions in the Puget Sound Action Agenda.

At this powerful moment for Puget Sound, we must remember that achieving the full potential now created requires us to forcefully continue our engagement in, and education about, Puget Sound recovery needs. We must work together to ensure development of a federal Action Plan that is robust and effective, and to communicate to decision-makers at all levels that resources made available for our recovery and protection work must be commensurate with the needs.

You are critical to our collective success, and we at the Partnership applaud you for your commitment and engagement to ensure we protect our unique, shared resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sheida R. Sahandy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Sheida Sahandy,  
Executive Director

*To watch the press conference, click on the following link. [Watch CEQ Director Goldfuss, Governor Inslee, Congressmen Derek Kilmer and Denny Heck, Suquamish Tribe Chairman Leonard Forsman, Tulalip Tribes Chairman Mel Sheldon, and others announce major new federal actions for Puget Sound recovery.](#)*

*For more information about the CEQ visit, see Christy Goldfuss' blog post: [Taking Action to Protect the Puget Sound.](#)*