



## **King County**

**Shannon Braddock**

King County Executive

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[www.kingcounty.gov](http://www.kingcounty.gov)

June 30, 2025

The Honorable Girmay Zahilay  
Chair, King County Council  
Room 1200  
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Zahilay:

This letter transmits a proposed Ordinance that if approved, would enable King County to renew interlocal agreements (ILAs) to continue salmon conservation efforts with partners in the following watersheds: the Snoqualmie and South Fork Skykomish Watershed within Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 7, the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed, also known as WRIA 8, and the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed, also known as WRIA 9. These are continuation of existing ILAs that have been approved and funded by over 40 governments for the past 25 years. The current ILAs expire on December 31, 2025.

In response to the listing of Puget Sound Chinook salmon under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), King County and other partners have been working together since 2001 to develop and implement watershed-based salmon conservation plans in the Snoqualmie portion of WRIA 7, and in the WRIA 8 and WRIA 9 watersheds.

At the time of the Chinook salmon listing under the ESA, most populations in Puget Sound had declined to just five percent of their historical abundance. Despite efforts to date, in King County and throughout Puget Sound, Chinook salmon populations have not yet shown a measurable increase in abundance, but they are holding steady. Monitoring shows that our restoration efforts are on the right track as salmon are actively utilizing restored sites. Overall, the rate of recovery plan implementation has been slower than originally anticipated and many of the largest habitat restoration projects to date have only been completed in the past five years. Salmon conservation is a long-term effort to reverse more than a century of impacts, and significant priority project and program work remains to be done.

Working together to address salmon recovery issues is more effective than each of the partners addressing issues individually. Continuing collaborative watershed-based salmon conservation

efforts in the Snoqualmie portion of WRIA 7 and in the WRIA 8 and 9 Watersheds provide a range of benefits for King County and ILA partners, such as:

- Providing a governance structure for implementation and adaptive management of salmon conservation plans in King County's major watersheds;
- Sharing the cost of coordinating and tracking implementation of salmon plans;
- Providing a means for securing state and federal funding for salmon conservation;
- Providing a structure for recommending projects and programs for funding by the King County Flood Control District's Cooperative Watershed Management grant program;
- Increasing coordination among the many diverse partners to address issues with watershed-wide implications, and
- Demonstrating our collective commitment to recovering listed species under the Endangered Species Act.

This proposed legislation furthers King County's goals under the Clean Water Healthy Habitat initiative, and drives many of the ecological priorities along rivers, streams, and marine shorelines under the Land Conservation Initiative. Continuing to restore salmon habitat also supports King County's Strategic Climate Action Plan. High-priority salmon recovery actions, such as reconnecting floodplains, protecting forest cover, and restoring riparian areas, will make watersheds more resilient and help to offset climate change impacts.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed Ordinance. This important legislation will help to ensure that the extraordinary level of interjurisdictional cooperation and productivity achieved through the King County portion of WRIA 7, WRIA 8, and WRIA 9 salmon recovery efforts continues, and that salmon continue to be a part of King County's environmental and cultural heritage.

If your staff have questions, please contact Josh Baldi, Division Director of the Water and Land Resources Division, Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-477-9440.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Braddock", written over a horizontal line.

for

Shannon Braddock  
King County Executive

The Honorable Girmay Zahilay

June 30, 2025

Page 3

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff, King County Council

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Karan Gill, Deputy Executive, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Stephanie Pure, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive

John Taylor, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)

Josh Baldi, Division Director, Water and Land Resources Division, DNRP