

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 9, 2022

J. Michael Cline
Chairman of the Board
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
1133 Fifteenth St. N.W., Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Chairman Cline:

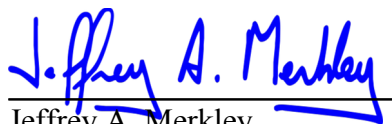
We write to express our support for the Wallowa Lake Dam Rehabilitation and Wallowa River Restoration Project in rural Wallowa County, Oregon, for which the Nez Perce Tribe is applying for \$5 million in grant funds through the America the Beautiful Challenge (ATBC).

With ATBC funds, the Nez Perce Tribe will have crucial funding to assist partners with rehabilitation of the over 100 year old Wallowa Lake Dam and ensure that fish passage is incorporated. The Nez Perce, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation have together been pursuing restoration of Sockeye as part of a comprehensive salmon restoration program in northeastern Oregon. Wallowa Lake Dam is owned and operated by the Wallowa Lake Irrigation District (WLID). With tribal and state partners, WLID seeks to rehabilitate the dam so that it restores reservoir capacity for irrigated agriculture, protects downstream communities from flooding, and supports fish that are listed under the Endangered Species Act.

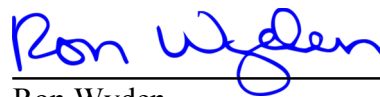
The project will have landscape scale benefits and boost climate resiliency in Northeast Oregon. The addition of fish passage for Wallowa Dam will restore access to hundreds of miles of pristine spawning habitat in the Eagle Cap Wilderness, the largest designated Wilderness Area in Oregon. Further, up to 5,000 acre feet (AF) of water will be released from Wallowa Lake, of which 4,500 AF will be protected to the Oregon-Washington state line as a secondary instream water right. The additional river flows will also enhance outdoor recreation opportunities in this stunning corner of Oregon. In addition to supporting salmon during their critical summer spawning and migration period, the project will help farmers during drought, and protect drinking water for local communities.

Thank you for your full and fair review of the Wallowa Lake Dam Rehabilitation and Wallowa River Restoration Project. Should you have any further questions, please contact Jessica Keys in Senator Merkley's office at (541) 278-1129 or Kathleen Cathey in Senator Wyden's office at (541) 962-7691.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Jeffrey A. Merkley in blue ink, written in a cursive style.

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Ron Wyden in blue ink, written in a cursive style.

Ron Wyden
United States Senator