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Contact:

Matt Morrison, Executive Director, Pacific Northwest Economic Region
206-443-7723 / Cell: 206-399-4026; Matt.Morrison@pnwer.org

Nate Weigel, Invasive Species Program Manager
712-202-6305; nate.weigel@pnwer.org

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Federal budget allocates \$5 million to Prevent Aquatic Invasive Mussels in Pacific Northwest

Efforts within the Pacific Northwest to defend against invasive quagga and zebra mussels were given a major boost this week as Congress appropriated \$5 million within the federal omnibus budget for watercraft inspection stations in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. The federal funds, administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will require a one-to-one funding match with the states. The funding also includes an additional \$1 million for control of invasive flowering rush.

The Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) has worked with state agencies, federal legislators and officials, as well as regional nonprofit associations to support and organize the region's defense against these mussels for the past several years. A Regional Framework for Perimeter Defense against invasive zebra and quagga mussels was written by [PNWER's Invasive Species Working Group](#). The framework identifies ways states and Canadian provinces can work together to prevent the spread of mussels and estimates funding needs and possible sources to implement control measures.

The Pacific Northwest is the only region in the United States that does not have established populations of invasive quagga or zebra mussels, which multiply quickly and are easily transported across jurisdictions on boat hulls and in ballast tanks. Quagga and zebra mussels disrupt native fish habitats and destroy aquatic ecosystems in infested waterways. An invasion will rapidly foul and damage the operations of hydropower, irrigation, fish hatcheries, and municipal water facilities vital to our region's economy at a cost of \$500 million annually, according to an economic impact assessment for the region.

"These funds will double our efforts to expand the regional defense against these economically devastating invasive species," said Matt Morrison, executive director of PNWER. "They have never been eradicated once they become established. Our best bet is keeping them out." PNWER's Vice President from Montana, Rep. Mike Cuffe said, "In 2016, Montana discovered quagga larvae in several reservoirs in the upper Missouri river, which prompted Governor Bullock to declare a natural resource emergency and the legislature to significantly increase funding to prevent the spread of these invasives into the Columbia Basin. No new mussels were found in 2017. This federal funding is good news for the entire region."

"We would like to thank the entire delegation who worked with us on this issue, especially Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Representative Herrera-Beutler (R-WA), Representative Mike Simpson (R-ID), Senator

Merkley (D-OR), and Senator Steve Daines (R-MT), as well as the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission," said Morrison.

The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) is a public/private non-profit created by statute in 1991. Member jurisdictions include Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana and Washington, and the Canadian provinces and territories of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and Yukon. PNWER's mission is to increase the economic well-being and quality of life for all citizens of the region; identify and promote "models of success;" and serve as a conduit to exchange information.