



News Release

Coastal Conservation Association

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Bill Aims to Eliminate Non-Tribal Gillnets on the Columbia River

By request of the Governor, and with strong bi-partisan support, Senate Bill 5297 would end non-tribal gillnetting on the Columbia River

Olympia, WA – Today, by request of Governor Jay Inslee, [Senate Bill 5297](#) was introduced in the Senate to eliminate non-tribal gillnets from the Columbia River. With strong bi-partisan support, the bill would eliminate non-tribal mainstem gillnetting after January 1, 2025. This bill comes on the heels of the recent voluntary gillnet buyback program where \$14.2 million was spent to retire 85 percent of the active Columbia River gillnet licenses.

“We are very pleased with the bill and look forward to working with the Legislature to ensure it makes it over the finish line this session,” said Nello Picinich, Executive Director of CCA Washington. “A special thanks is owed to Governor Inslee and the bill sponsors for taking this strong stance in support of conservation.”

Thirteen stocks of Columbia River basin salmon and steelhead are listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. The bill recognizes that non-tribal gillnets are ill-suited in the mixed stock fisheries of the mainstem lower Columbia River, where wild and ESA-listed stocks are intermingled with returning, fin-clipped hatchery-reared salmon specifically produced for harvest.

“Thanks to our thousands of members across Washington State who helped make this momentous occasion a reality,” said Gary Loomis, Chairman Emeritus of CCA Washington and longtime salmon advocate. “While we still have much work to accomplish, this is a time to celebrate all that we have accomplished over the past 15 years.”

This bill follows other significant victories by CCA Washington to enhance and protect populations of Columbia River salmon in recent years, including an end to mainstem commercial gillnetting during the spring and summer seasons and federal legislation to protect salmon and steelhead populations from unnatural levels of sea lion predation.

“Every step we take to save our salmon and steelhead depends on the active engagement of our members,” said Picinich. “Eliminating non-tribal gillnets will require a united effort, but I am confident that achieving this incredible goal is within reach. We will be working and communicating extensively to give concerned citizens every opportunity to join us in this effort.”

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About CCA - Coastal Conservation Association is a non-profit organization comprised of 200 chapters in 18 coastal states spanning the Gulf of Mexico, Atlantic and Pacific coasts. In 2007, CCA expanded into the Pacific Northwest and the organization quickly grew to more than 9,000 members and continues to launch new chapters in both Oregon and Washington. As the largest marine conservation organization in the country, CCA’s grassroots influence is felt through state capitals, U.S. Congress and, most importantly, in the conservation and restoration of our marine resources. For more information, please visit www.CCAWashington.org.