



Members of the Washington State Legislature,

We are writing to ask for your support for the [Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program \(ESRP\)](#) during the 2021 legislative session. Puget Sound's beaches, bluffs, and estuaries are dynamic environments that form the foundation of the marine food webs that support our forage fish, salmon, and Southern Resident Orcas. Unfortunately, Puget Sound has lost 75% of its historical estuaries in the last hundred years, and over 29 percent of its shoreline has been armored to secure public and private property.

ESRP is firmly focused on addressing these challenges and stressors to our nearshore environment. By using a comprehensive sound-wide strategy, the program delivers ecosystem impacts through targeted investments to local organizations. Over the past decade, it has brought in over \$10 million in new federal funding for design, restoration and protection projects, leveraging countless matching grants and volunteer hours to get results on the ground.

This program also acts as an efficient job creator in the environmental sector. If fully funded, ESRP is expected to support over 180 jobs for the biennium, while restoring over 250 acres of estuary, securing nearly 1,000 acres of critical nearshore habitat, and removing over a mile of high-priority armor.

ESRP added the [Shore Friendly](#) pilot program to its existing investment portfolio in 2019, working to build it into a dedicated, sound-wide initiative. Shore Friendly is unique in using a social marketing strategy to connect directly with residential landowners (over 1,400 to date) to reduce hard shoreline armor while protecting private property. With your support, ESRP could kick start the next phase of Shore Friendly expansion, a 13-county landowner incentives program that leverages private capital to support bulkhead removal and natural shoreline restoration.

We urge you to show your support for ecosystems and communities across Puget Sound by providing \$20 million for ESRP in your 2021-2023 capital budget, as recommended by the Governor, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, and the Puget Sound Partnership.

This investment would not only support economic recovery at a time when it is needed more than ever, but help restore key ecological processes and advance stewardship of the iconic shoreline habitats that support our quality of life in Puget Sound.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Norton
Executive Director
Washington Association of Land Trusts

Bill Blake
Chair
Puget Sound Conservation District Caucus

Sherry Penney
Board President
Regional Fisheries Coalition