

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

# ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES

SENATOR MARIA CANTWELL, *Ranking Member*



@EnergyDems

## **Opening Statement Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) Business Meeting to Markup the Yakima River Basin & Sportsmen's Bills November 19, 2015**

"Thank you, Madam Chairman, and thank you for scheduling this markup. I, too, agree that the committee has been productive and today's committee markup is another example of that. I also want to thank the staff for all of their hard work on the legislation before us today.

"I am particularly grateful that you have included S. 1694, which builds on the highly successful water program in the Yakima River Basin in the state of Washington.

"S. 1694 amends existing legislation to authorize a long-term plan for addressing water challenges in the basin to:

- Provide drought relief for farmers and communities in one of the most agriculturally productive regions in the West;
- Enhance municipal, industrial and domestic water supplies;
- Conserve 85,000 acre-feet of water; and
- Restore ecosystems and fisheries throughout the basin.

"Acting now on this legislation is critical, and I think it sets a tone for how to get larger water projects done in the West. A coalition of people were working collaboratively to solve the issues, as opposed to continued lawsuits that get challenged in court and don't give us the tools that we need to address the drought issues. So I do believe that it serves as a national model for water.

"I'd also like to thank you for working with me on the substitute amendment to the Sportsmen's bill.

"I believe the amendment has clarified and improved the bill. I am particularly pleased that the language includes permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and is identical to what we worked out in committee earlier this year.

"I believe the Land and Water Conservation Fund is the single most important program that will benefit sportsmen and all recreational users access of public lands.



“In particular, I want to note that the language we have agreed to in the Sportsmen’s bill adds a new requirement that not less than 1.5 percent of annual LWCF appropriations, or \$10 million, whichever is greater, is to be used for projects that will help secure public access to federal lands for hunting, fishing or other recreational purposes, and I know this has been a long-standing priority for sportsmen and sportsmen advocates.

“So I thank you for your willingness to work on these issues and look forward to the rest of the mark up.”

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