

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENDORSING ) RESOLUTION NO. 06-3684A  
REGIONAL SUPPORT FOR PROTECTION OF )  
ENDANGERED WILDLIFE AND ITS HABITAT ) Introduced by Councilor Burkholder  
UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT. )  
)  
)

WHEREAS, the people of Clackamas, Washington and Multnomah Counties created Metro in recognition of the need to plan for a healthy environment to maintain and enhance the quality of life of all citizens; and

WHEREAS, in addition to urban infrastructure enhancements, Oregonians' quality of life relies upon the scenic and recreational values of our wild rivers and forests; and

WHEREAS, the people of the Portland area metropolitan service district recognize that the health of native fish and wildlife are inextricably linked to the strength and vitality of the region's health, economy, and future; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Policy Advisory Committee recognized the connection between regional growth management strategies and a healthy environment, and recommended that Metro Council address state and federal policies, in particular the Endangered Species Act (ESA), in a Vision Statement adopted in 2000; and

WHEREAS, Metro's innovative Nature in Neighborhoods initiative integrates conservation of fish and wildlife habitat with the economic needs of communities; and

WHEREAS, Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods initiative for conserving fish and wildlife habitat furthers the purpose of the 1973 Endangered Species Act to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved; and

WHEREAS, the Oregon Zoo, as managed by Metro, is a source of pride for Metro area residents as it draws visitors from around the state and the country to learn from its exhibits on sensitive wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the Oregon Zoo also accepts responsibility for conserving threatened and endangered species and their habitats, especially species native to the Pacific Northwest, including the Oregon silverspot butterfly, the Western pond turtle, Taylor's checkerspot butterfly, mardon skipper, Kincaid's lupine, and Great Basin pygmy rabbit, and the California condor, which was observed within 100 miles of present-day Portland by Lewis and Clark; and

WHEREAS, the Endangered Species Act of 1973 has served as the safety net for wildlife, especially for Oregon natives like the peregrine falcon, gray whales, and wild coho salmon; and

WHEREAS, since 1998, Chinook chum, and coho salmon and steelhead trout in the Willamette and Lower Columbia river basins have been listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act and the status of these species is an important consideration in the region's long-term growth management strategies; and

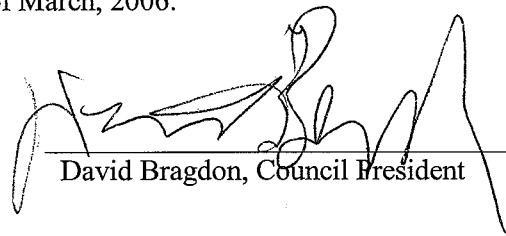
WHEREAS, Metro serves on the Lower Columbia Recovery Domain Stakeholder Team working closely with the State of Oregon and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries to assist in developing a recovery plan for ESA-listed salmon and steelhead in the Oregon portion of the Domain, providing important feedback to the State of Oregon on the effectiveness of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds; and

WHEREAS, the United States has a long and proud tradition of conservation and protection of fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, several legislative proposals which are currently pending before the United States Congress would weaken the ability of the Endangered Species Act to recover listed species; now, therefore,

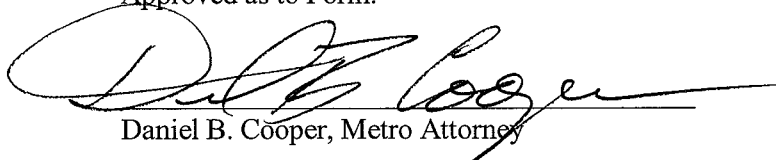
BE IT RESOLVED that it shall be the policy of the Metro Council to support, through its staff, agents and advocates, upholding the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 and more effectively using the tools it provides to bring together diverse and competing interests for the recovery of threatened and endangered fish and wildlife species and to ensure that the environmental, cultural, and economic benefits associated with these species and their habitats are passed on to future generations.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 30<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2006.

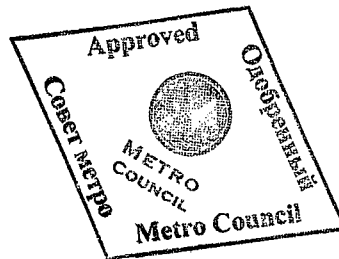


David Bragdon, Council President

Approved as to Form:



Daniel B. Cooper, Metro Attorney



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WHEREAS, the United States has a long and proud tradition of conservation and protection of fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, several legislative proposals which are currently pending before the United States Congress would weaken the ability of the Endangered Species Act to recover listed species; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that it shall be the policy of the Metro Council to support, through its staff, agents and advocates, upholding the Endangered Species Act as an effective tool to bring together diverse and competing interests to address the recovery needs of threatened and endangered fish and wildlife species and to ensure that the environmental, cultural, and economic benefits associated with these species and their habitats are passed on to future generations.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 30<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2006.

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David Bragdon, Council President

Approved as to Form:

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Daniel B. Cooper, Metro Attorney

## STAFF REPORT

### IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 06-3684, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENDORSING REGIONAL SUPPORT FOR PROTECTION OF ENDANGERED WILDLIFE AND IT'S HABITAT UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT.

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Date: March 17, 2006

Prepared by: Kathryn Sofich

#### **BACKGROUND**

Since its inception in 1978, the Metro Regional Council has been a national leader in planning and policy making that preserves and enhances the quality of life and the environment for current and future generations in the Portland area. Metro's commitment to planning for a healthy environment is specifically demonstrated through the Nature in Neighborhoods initiative and the operation of the Oregon Zoo. The desire to protect habitat for wildlife and fish stems from Metro's recognition that our quality of life and the strength of the region's economy are linked to preserving the wild characteristics that Oregonians hold dear.

A strong federal Endangered Species Act is vital to Metro's efforts to keep the region vibrant and healthy. Since 1974, the Endangered Species Act has provided a safety net for the fish and wildlife Oregonians cherish. Because of the foresight and planning on the part of Congress in the 1970s, Oregonians can witness healthy bald eagles along our waterways, peregrine falcons nesting in downtown Portland, and wild coho salmon in the Clackamas River. Despite chronic under-funding, the Endangered Species Act has brought about the full recovery of 14 species and is protecting 1,312 more by providing habitat that is critical for recovery.

As one of the United States' strongest and most successful environmental laws, the Act provides important context for the institutional goals of both the Oregon Zoo and the Nature in Neighborhoods initiative.

For example, through their endangered species recovery program, the Zoo has committed to protecting endangered species on Zoo grounds, as well as supporting monitoring programs and grants to protect critical habitat for these species.

In addition, the Endangered Species Act's mandate for critical habitat designation serves as a model for Metro's innovative Nature in Neighborhoods initiative. Metro has clearly stated that fish and wildlife in this region need protection as the region grows. Metro's directive for habitat connectivity is based on the principles described in the Endangered Species Act.

Passage of this resolution will express Metro's support for one of our nation's strongest environmental laws, the Endangered Species Act. All the region's members of the U.S. House of Representatives voted against the bill that would weaken the Act.

#### ANALYSIS/INFORMATION

1. Known Opposition: none

2. Legal Antecedents:
  - A. The Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. §§ 1531 through 1544;
  - B. Regional Framework Plan
    - a. Fundamental 3: Protect and restore the natural environment including fish and wildlife habitat, streams and wetlands, surface and ground water quality and quantity, and air quality;
    - b. Title 3, Nature in Neighborhoods; and
    - c. Title 4, Watershed Health & Water Quality; and
  - C. Urban Growth Management Functional Plan
    - a. Title 3, Water Quality and Flood Management; and
    - b. Title 13, Nature In Neighborhoods.
  
3. Anticipated Effects:
  - A. Provides consistency with Oregon Zoo's institutional goals of conservation and endangered species recovery programs.
  - B. Provides the Council and Metro employees and staff the opportunity to speak publicly, on behalf of Metro, in favor of protecting the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
  - C. Provides consistency with Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods initiative, which is based upon the principle of habitat protection as designated in the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
  
4. Budget impacts: None