



December 15, 2023

*(sent electronically only)*

Dear Members of the Washington State Legislature,

This letter responds to direction in the 23-25 Transportation Budget (ESHB 1125, Section 305 (12)(c)) to provide an update on implementation of the statewide culvert remediation plan.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board (FBRB) sent the [Biennial Report on the Development of Statewide Fish Passage Barrier Removal Strategy](#), dated June 30, 2021, which summarized the work that was done on the principles that will form the basis of a statewide approach to barrier removal and recommendations to further refine an approach. WDFW has provided a [Progress Report on the Development of a Statewide Fish Passage Barrier Removal Strategy in October 2023](#).

We want to take this opportunity to provide an update on implementation of WSDOT's fish passage program delivery. WSDOT appreciates the Legislature's continued support and efforts to ensure funding is available for the fish passage program that aligns with the culvert injunction compliance.

As of June 2023 ([2023 WSDOT Fish Passage Annual Report \(wa.gov\)](#)), WSDOT has corrected 114 injunction barriers, improving access to more than 500 miles of habitat since the injunction became effective. This has restored access to 45% of the blocked habitat<sup>1</sup>. Fish barriers corrected during summer 2023 will be reported in WSDOT's June 2024 Fish Passage Progress Report. During the 2023-2025 biennium, our plan includes executing construction contracts for nearly 300 fish barrier corrections. Once construction of these barrier corrections is complete, we will have restored access to 80% of the blocked habitat. Our plan includes getting another 112 fish barrier corrections under construction contract in 2025 to achieve restoring access to 90% of the blocked habitat by March 2030 as required by the injunction.

Previous reports and other program information is available on our website at: [Fish passage | WSDOT \(wa.gov\)](#). Please contact Kim Rydholm, at (360) 705-7404 if you have any questions about WSDOT's fish passage program delivery.

Sincerely,

Ahmer Nizam  
Environmental Services Office Director

---

<sup>1</sup> The injunction requires WSDOT to open 90% of the cumulative habitat blocked by all Significant Gain WSDOT-owned barriers within the case area by 2030. "Significant Gain" means barriers blocking fish access to at least 200 meters of upstream habitat.