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September 30, 2022

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), IJA Department of Commerce  
Ref: NOAA-NMFS-HCPO-2022-2007354

**RE: Letter of Support for Restoration 4 All Technical Project; The Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grant for Underserved Communities**

Dear NOAA Technical Grant reviewers and staff,

On behalf of the Puget Sound Partnership (Partnership), I write in strong support of the Edmonds College (EC), Latino Education Training Institute (LETI), and Snohomish Conservation Districts' (SCD) collective proposal to NOAA's Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grant for Underserved Communities. The Partnership is the state agency leading the region's collective effort to restore and protect Puget Sound. I want to thank you for your strong commitment to diversity and inclusion in habitat and salmon recovery in Puget Sound: local organizational and citizen leadership is crucial to achieving full Puget Sound recovery.

The collective work demonstrated within this proposal is a unique opportunity that advances advocacy and climate justice for local communities of color in Snohomish County whilst expanding ecosystem restoration field crew and directly implementing priority reforestation and habitat restoration activities in Stillaguamish (WRIA 5) and Snohomish (WRIA 7) watersheds. EC, LETI, and SCD will use this grant opportunity to develop a robust technical program that educates and prepares communities of color in the fields of environmental restoration and protection.

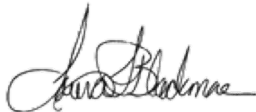
The program creates a pipeline to job readiness, program development, and management in the environmental and habitat restoration career field for the Latino community. It will include two college level quarters of trainings and final quarter of internship that, upon completion, will culminate in state-verified certifications and preparedness in the areas of priority riparian habitat restoration activities such as planting native trees and shrubs along rivers and streams, planting agroforestry species to create "working buffers" adjacent to native riparian forest buffers, removing invasive vegetation species, constructing livestock exclusion fencing, and implementing erosion control techniques.

The proposed project objectives are:

- Originate and implement a replicable three-quarter training program that includes two quarters of bilingual classroom materials and a third quarter of internship
- Educate and train local Snohomish County residents of color in riparian restoration while expanding new educational opportunities and pathways in these career fields
- Develop a strong sense of community and connection to local and state governments, nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions

Please consider supporting 'Restoration for All' that creates a model for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in high priority environmental restoration and protection implementation efforts throughout Puget Sound.

Sincerely,



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- c: Larry Epstein, Deputy Director, Puget Sound Partnership  
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