

PENOBSCOT RIVER RESTORATION TRUST

Representative Michaud Secures Army Corps Participation in Penobscot River Restoration Effort, Senators Snowe and Collins Advance Funds

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(Washington, DC; Old Town, ME) Efforts to restore once abundant historic fisheries and revitalize communities on the Penobscot River received another boost forward with a recent vote by the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. On June 28, 2006, the Committee passed a study resolution that gives the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers the authority to begin its review of the steps needed to restore the Penobscot River. In addition, the Senate advanced \$100,000 toward the initial phase of the Corps review of the river in the Fiscal Year 2007 Energy and Water Appropriations bill. These funds still need to be secured in the Conference Committee Report between the House and Senate.

Passing the study resolution is essential to allow the Corps to analyze the potential for environmental restoration, anadromous fish restoration and other related interests within the Penobscot River in Maine and its tributaries. This step allows the Army Corps of Engineers to legally become engaged as a partner in the Penobscot River Restoration Project.

The Penobscot River Restoration Trust, the Penobscot Indian Nation, and cooperating groups applaud Representative Michael H. Michaud (D-Maine) for securing the participation of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in restoration of the Penobscot River and Senators Olympia J. Snowe and Susan Collins (both R-Maine) for securing funds in the Senate Energy and Water bill that will support the Corps involvement.

"Congressman Michaud's relationships on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of the House of Representatives allowed this important and essential legal step forward to occur. The Trust is looking forward to building a formal working partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers as we explore ways to remove the dams and build a fish passage," says Laura Rose Day, Executive Director of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust. "This exceptional bipartisan support for the project reflects the widespread public support for a restored Penobscot River that can provide a wider range of natural assets to the region's businesses, traditions, cultures, and recreation. We appreciate the delegation's support for this important investment in Maine's future."

The participation of the Corps marks important progress in the federal support necessary for successful implementation of the Penobscot River Restoration Project, an unprecedented collaboration between PPL Corporation, owner of 10 hydropower dams on the lower Penobscot River, and federal, state, tribal and conservation interests to restore 11 sea-run fisheries, including

striped bass, American shad, Atlantic salmon, Atlantic sturgeon, and the endangered shortnose sturgeon, while also providing the opportunity to maintain more than 96% percent of current energy production on the river.

The discovery of a remnant population of endangered shortnose sturgeon on the Penobscot River by University of Maine researchers earlier this month points to the potential for restoration of this rare fish on the river. After removal of the two lowermost dams on the river, shortnose sturgeon will have access to 100% of their historic spawning and juvenile rearing habitat.

"This resolution is an important step forward for the Penobscot River Restoration project. I grew up along this river, worked in a mill on this river, and from my earliest days in the Maine Legislature have fought hard to restore the Penobscot to its former glory. I'm glad to support the efforts of those who are making this groundbreaking project a reality," says Representative Michaud.

Widely hailed as one of the most ecologically significant and innovative river restoration efforts in the country, the Penobscot agreement includes the decommissioning and removal of the Veazie and Great Works dams to allow migratory salmon, shad, striped bass, and other fish to move freely up and downstream. The agreement similarly calls for the purchase and decommissioning of the Howland dam and proposes the construction of an innovative fish bypass to allow sea-run fish to swim around the dam. The Milford Dam, regional headquarters for PPL Corporation, will become the first dam on the river and be fitted with a state-of-the-art fish lift. The dams will be purchased from PPL Corporation for approximately \$25 million, and another \$30 million will be needed over the next 8-10 years for implementation costs such as dam removal, fish bypass construction, fish restoration, economic development and mitigation.

The Trust is actively seeking acquisition funds from a combination of public and private sources. Maine's Congressional Delegation has been instrumental in securing more than \$4 million dollars in federal funds for the project. Private fundraising efforts have thus far resulted in an additional \$4.5 million toward completion of the project.

The Penobscot River Restoration Trust (PRRT) is a nonprofit corporation whose member organizations include the Penobscot Indian Nation, American Rivers, Atlantic Salmon Federation, Natural Resources Council of Maine, Maine Audubon, The Nature Conservancy and Trout Unlimited, and whose mission is to implement the Penobscot River Restoration Agreement.

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