



SNOWE SECURES \$30,000 IN EFFORTS TO RESTORE ATLANTIC SALMON POPULATIONS TO MAINE'S RIVERS

Senator Requested Funding From NOAA Administrator to Assist Community Outreach Along Penobscot River

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Continuing her efforts to bring back the endangered Atlantic salmon to Maine's rivers in a manner that does not unfairly threaten the economic livelihoods of Mainers, U.S. Senator Olympia J. Snowe (R-Maine), Chair of the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Oceans, Fisheries and Coast Guard, today announced that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has transferred \$30,000 in federal funding to assist in the Penobscot River Restoration Project - which aims to open more than 500 miles of river habitat to the endangered Atlantic salmon and several other species of native sea-run fish.

"I applaud Administrator Lautenbacher for rightly recognizing the critical role the federal government plays in assisting Maine recover its endangered Atlantic salmon. This grant demonstrates the resounding support for restoration efforts by conservation groups, and state and local officials. Working in partnership with local communities to ensure Atlantic salmon protection and restoration is the only way that significant progress is made to replenish this endangered species in our state's waters," Snowe said. "The Penobscot River Restoration Project will further assist in the long-term survival of this species by reopening and improving access to vital habitats throughout Maine."

NOAA Administrator Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher Jr, in a response to a letter sent by Snowe, said that the NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service will transfer the federal funding to the Maine Department of Economic Development to conduct community outreach efforts in order to help local communities on the Penobscot River address any problems or concerns with potential dam removals, which would enhance fish passage.

In March 2004, Snowe wrote a letter to Administrator Lautenbacher requesting that NOAA facilitate progress on the project by providing funding for community involvement, outreach, and assessments of social and economic impacts of the project on local communities, to be used to develop mitigation measures to alleviate any negative impacts. Snowe cited a report by the National Academy of Sciences that she requested - "Atlantic Salmon in Maine" - released in January 2004 which emphasized the importance of addressing dam removal in restoring salmon habitat and populations. Additionally, Snowe requested \$15 million in the Fiscal Year 2005 Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations bill for Atlantic Salmon recovery efforts in Maine. The Atlantic salmon is currently on the federal endangered species list.