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For Immediate Release - Over the past weekend Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson released a broad sweeping plan to restore Idaho salmon and steelhead populations. This comprehensive plan addresses many factors currently harming these fish, including retirement of the 4 Lower Snake River Dams. His proposal goes further than fish restoration and offers solutions to this historic problem that leave no Idahoan behind and paves the way for a brighter future.

“Our salmon and steelhead fishing industry has become a nebulous web of questions, concerns and restrictions. With season closures and reduced or eliminated bag limits it has been difficult to make a living in our profession. Our community has also felt the devastating economic repercussions of this” says Roy Akins founder and Executive Director of the Idaho River Community Alliance. “During much of the fishing season our bars and restaurants sit empty. Our hotels are struggling to keep their doors open with few fisherman to fill their vacant rooms and some of our guides and outfitters have been forced to leave their homes to look elsewhere for work.” When spring Chinook salmon numbers are high enough to allow a longer fishing season Riggins can generate \$10 million in three months.

The anadromous fishing industry of Idaho and the communities that depend on these fish for survival have been pushed to the limit. Past large scale options for solving this problem have been difficult to support as they often left our friends, neighbors and fellow statesmen out to dry. A solution that brings our fish back in sustainable numbers is only *our* solution when it works for all of us. Congressman Mike Simpson has proposed exactly that. His new plan, the “Columbia Basin Fund” has taken an approach to this issue unlike any we have seen. He has pursued all possible avenues to learn how every corner of the Columbia River Basin can become a more productive fishery and is proposing to give significant investments to each of these avenues to alleviate the problems they are causing for our fish. Funding for agriculture in the upper Snake river basin to help mitigate waste runoff, funds to improve and restore riparian areas in historic spawning grounds, upgrades for out of date hatchery infrastructure, this plan is so much more than a simple “dam retirement plan.”

This is an all inclusive solution for bringing our salmon and steelhead home. Because of this, and because his plan also accounts for and works with all of the current Snake River Corridor users the Idaho River Community Alliance supports Congressman Simpson and his Columbia Basin Fund proposal. We realize that there is still work to be done to ensure the on the ground application of this plan works for everyone and we look forward to being a part of a plan that creates a brighter future for Idaho.

About the Idaho River Community Alliance

The Idaho River Community Alliance (IRCA) operates as a 501 (c)(6), established in 2019 in Riggins, Idaho. The IRCA was founded by local business owners and community members to advocate on behalf of their river communities of central Idaho in the Salmon and Clearwater river drainages. There are two different chapters of the IRCA, the Lewiston chapter and Riggins Chapter. These two chapters work both independently and together on projects and messaging. This release represents both chapters.

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