July 15, 2014

Honorable Dean Heller
U.S. Senate
324 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Heller:

On behalf of the Western Governors’ Association, we are writing to commend you for introducing S. 2530, the “Protecting Lakes Against Quaggas Act of 2014.” Quagga mussels have a significant impact on the economy and environment in the West and your legislation proposes strong steps to confront this growing problem.

States and other stakeholders have spent billions of dollars to prevent and control the domestic invasion of quagga mussels. S. 2530 would add quagga mussels to the national list of invasive species covered under the Lacey Act (18 U.S.C. 42). By doing so, it would invest federal and state authorities with an important tool for containing and eradicating quagga mussels through increased inspections of watercraft crossing state lines. To the extent that S. 2530 authorizes and facilitates deployment of these efforts, it represents an important defense against proliferation of the quagga mussel throughout the West.

Western Governors appreciate the provision in the bill clarifying that water transfers which may unintentionally transport quagga mussels through water conveyances are not in violation of the Lacey Act. Restricting the movement of water across state lines would place an undue burden on states that rely on deliveries of water from upstream neighbors.

Western Governors appreciate your efforts to craft common-sense solutions to the costly problem of invasive species and look forward to working with you in support of S. 2530.

Respectfully,

Brian Sandoval
Governor, State of Nevada
Chairman, WGA

John A. Kitzhaber, M.D.
Governor, State of Oregon
Vice Chairman, WGA

cc: Representative Joseph Heck