



October 3, 2005

TO: Members Advisory Group (MMG)  
FROM: Lawrence Schwabe, Resident Fish Advisory Committee Chair  
SUBJECT: Achieving and Maintaining Fish and Wildlife Program's 70-15-15 Objective

In the July 5, 2005, memorandum from Patty O'Toole and John Ogan to the Members of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council) (Subject: Project Selection Design –Fiscal Year (FY) 07-09), the authors indicated that the Council “will need to implement...maintaining the Program's 70/15/15 split among anadromous fish, resident fish, and wildlife projects, respectively.”

The Resident Fish Advisory Committee (RFAC) is encouraged by the Council's desire to manage the Fish and Wildlife Program (Program), during FY2007-2009, using the 70/15/15 funding allocation as described in the *2000 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program*. Unfortunately, the Program is presently not managed following the 70/15/15 funding structure that was recommended in 2000. The Council's FY2006 recommended fish and wildlife start-of-year budget illustrates the Council's continued deviation from the 70/15/15 objective. For FY2006, the Council's recommendation results in a 78.5/14.5/7 split among anadromous fish, resident fish, and wildlife projects, respectively.

The Council's start-of-year budget recommendations for resident fish projects have declined in recent years. In 2001, the Council's recommended budget for resident fish projects was \$24.8 million. The recommended budget for resident fish efforts has since declined, resulting in a loss of \$4.8 million from 2001 to 2006. For FY2006, \$20 million has been recommended for implementation of resident fish projects.

The current process for reallocating funds that become available upon the completion of a project or upon project budget reductions is contributing to the loss of funds dedicated to the resident fish portion of the Program. From FY2005 to FY2006, several resident fish projects were completed, terminated, or experienced a budget reduction. Although budgets were increased for some resident fish projects during this time-period, the increases did not offset the financial losses associated with other resident fish projects. In addition, Council staff recommended (July 5, 2005, memorandum from Patty O'Toole and John Shurts to the Council members (Subject: Fiscal Year 2006 Fish and Wildlife Program start-of-year planning budget and project recommendations) discontinuing funding recommendations for projects recommended in Idaho above Hells Canyon that Bonneville Power Administration never implemented due to issues regarding Federal Columbia River Power System responsibilities. Until budget management practices are revised, there is a high likelihood that annual funding for resident fish projects will continue to decline.

Upon reviewing recent memorandums from the Council staff to the Council members, the RFAC is not confident Council staff has identified a specific process to ensure that the resident fish and

wildlife segments of the Program will maintain current funding levels for resident fish and wildlife projects, much less achieve a 70/15/15 split during FY2007-2009.

To retain the funding levels that currently exist, while developing a process to ensure a 70/15/15 allocation, the RFAC recommends reinstating project-type placeholders (i.e., anadromous fish, resident fish, and wildlife), an approach that was used prior to 2002. With the existence of placeholders, funds that become de-obligated within the three categories would be assigned to the respective project-type placeholder and subsequently used to fund within-year requests or new projects that have previously received favorable recommendations within the same category. The development of a three-tiered structure in the reallocation process would allow the Program to better track the 70/15/15 objective.

The RFAC appreciates your consideration of these comments and requests that you consider requesting the Members to meet with Council members to discuss creating processes that ensure that the 70/15/15 objective is met during FY2007-2009 and that funds that have been committed to specific segments of the Program are maintained in the respective portions of the program.

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