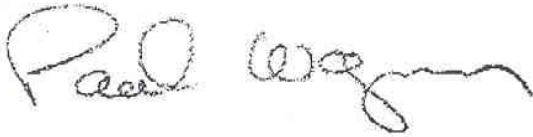Dear Brian:

Attached is a letter from the PIT Tag Steering Committee, which is a subcommittee of FPAC. We believe this letter raises significant technical and policy issues that the Members Management Group needs to address.

Your attention on this matter will be very much appreciated.

Sincerely

Paul Wagner

cc: Randy Fisher

Date: December 15, 2008

To: Fish Passage Advisory Committee

From: PIT Tag Steering Committee

RE: PSMFC's proposed changes to PTAGIS database system

Members of the PIT Tag Steering Committee (PTSC) were stunned to learn of Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission's (PSMFC) abrupt dismissal of Carter Stein, the Program Manager for the Pit Tag Operation Center (PTOC), on the basis of poor project performance.

We are aware that PSMFC is or is considering moving the PTOC/PTAGIS (PIT Tag Information System) database from its current Unix/Ingres platform to Microsoft/Oracle. PTSC members do not endorse or support any changes to the PTOC/PTAGIS at present. The PTOC/PTAGIS database is a critical information system for the Region Fishery Managers, Agencies, and Tribal Nations that is administered by PSMFC. We firmly believe that PSMFC needs to discuss any proposed changes in the PTOC/PTAGIS with the Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Tribal Nations, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), and the PTSC and that a change of this nature must be approved prior to PSMFC taking any unilateral action. It is the PTSC's recommendation that FPAC or CBFWA request that PSMFC not proceed with this change to the PTAGIS operating platform until these discussions occur and we are made aware of the perceived existing deficiencies in the PTAGIS database and the reasons behind a potential change in the database platform.

The PTOC, including PSMFC program staff, the PTAGIS database, and PIT tag infrastructure provides a real-time critical data collection and management tool for the region's Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Organizations. This program is funded by BPA under the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's (NPCC) Fish and Wildlife Program and is housed under PSMFC and as such, does not "belong" to PSMFC, but is operated and administered by PSMFC for the region.

We recommend the Fish Passage Advisory Committee (FPAC) or the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Agencies (CBFWA) address this concern with a letter to PSMFC's executive director because of the critical value of the operation and stability of PTOC/PTAGIS to the region and the complete lack of any discussion or justification with FPAC, CBFWA, BPA, Agencies, and Tribal Nations within the basin and the PTSC to make such a change. We have attached a draft letter that FPAC members may use and edit as they deem appropriate.

Background on PTSC:

The PTSC was established by charter between the CBFWA and PSMFC to provide Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Tribal Nations the ability to guide the direction and development of the network of PIT-tag systems in the Columbia basin. The Steering Committee's primary goal, as described in its charter, is to "coordinate the implementation of PIT Tag tagging and interrogation systems and to provide a comprehensive PIT Tag database accessible to all interested parties in the Columbia River Basin." In this role the PTSC serves as the designated technical liaison, reporting to FPAC, and we provide technical guidance to the PTOC manager and staff.

Committee members are unaware of any performance issues involving PTOC or the PTAGIS database. Under Carter Stien's leadership PTOC/PTAGIS has consistently fulfilled all project requirements. The technologies (e.g., Ingres database running on UNIX) are those approved by PTSC and funded through a long-established budgetary process involving NPCC, CBFWA, and BPA. The committee has been very pleased with Carter's performance. Under his direction, PTOC has diligently worked to meet the needs of the region, focusing both on improved technology and cost efficiency. The usefulness of PTAGIS and functionality of the PTAGIS database and infrastructure have continually grown under his visionary leadership and direction.

The PTOC has been guided by the principle of systems heterogeneity. This provides a high performance, low maintenance and low cost database server infrastructure that continues to support the dynamic growth of the PTAGIS system. In addition, application of this principle accommodates various software systems, hardware systems and vendors in order to integrate data from client, server and web-based systems. This also allows the PTAGIS system to utilize low cost, open-source software solutions and prevent technological lock-in of higher cost, sole-source systems and vendors.

Concerns regarding proposed technology changes:

We understand that PSMFC is considering changing the program's operating system from its current UNIX platform to a Microsoft platform using MS Oracle, although we have not been notified by PSMFC of its intent to make such a change. We have been told that PSMFC/PTOC personnel have been meeting with Tech Heads Incorporated to facilitate this change.

It appears that PSMFC Director, Randy Fisher, has unilaterally awarded a non-competitive contract to Tech Heads Incorporated to accomplish this work, which is not included in the current PTAGIS scope of work in Contract No. 36774 between BPA and PSMFC.

We believe the current UNIX based Ingres database management system provides a reliable, highly functional, and robust platform. It has been a stable system that provides

full data accessibility. PTOC personnel have upgraded PTAGIS with the latest operational system updates (Sept 2007) and have installed all update patches as they have become available. Similarly, the operating hardware has been updated to meet system needs and accommodate future growth. We believe replacing the current technology will be very costly and time consuming, and is without justification. We are unaware of any cost-benefit analysis that has been conducted that would show the benefit of changing to a Microsoft system or the costs incurred to rewrite all the necessary software.

Any changes of this nature require discussion, careful review, and approval from the PTSC, FPAC, region managers, BPA, and the Council (NPCC).