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August 14, 2001

Sarah McNary, Director
 Fish and Wildlife Division
 Bonneville Power Administration
 P.O. Box 3621- KEW-4
 Portland, OR 97208

Dear Sarah:

The Council has continued its review of proposals submitted for the Action Plan solicitation to address the impacts to fish and wildlife from this year's emergency hydropower operations. At the Council's June 27 meeting in Pendleton, it recommended an initial list of proposals following the review of the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP). The Council also decided to give sponsors of projects that did not receive "fundable" recommendations from the ISRP the opportunity to respond to the issues in the ISRP's report.

The ISRP received responses from 10 proposals and provided revised recommendations to the Council on August 3. At the Council's meeting on August 8 in Polson, Montana, it reviewed the ISRP's revised recommendations. The Council adopted additional proposal funding recommendations based on the ISRP's scientific review, the Council's policy considerations, and Bonneville's responses to the Council's previous recommendations.

This letter will frame the Council's recommendations by reference to the ISRP recommendations of August 3.

ISRP "Fundable" recommendations:

Project ID	Title	Sponsor	Province	Subbasin	Request	ISRP Response Recommendation
23028	Increase Naches River In-stream Flows By Purchasing Wapatox Water Right	YN	Columbia Plateau	Yakima	\$4,000,000	Fundable
26031	Improve Upstream Fish Passage in the Birch Creek Watershed	ODFW	Columbia Plateau	Umatilla	\$300,410	Fundable

The Council recommends funding for these proposals. Bonneville included proposal 23028 in the list of proposals it is willing to fund, but conditioned funding on resolving policy concerns. The Council would appreciate consultation with our staff as you resolve those issues.

ISRP finds “fundable” or “technically sound” but not fitting with Action Plan criteria; Council recommends:

Project ID	Title	Sponsor	Province	Subbasin	Request	ISRP Response Recommendation
26005	Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program (Objective 1: Early Actions)	Kittitas County Water Purveyors	Columbia Plateau	Yakima	\$1,588,000	Fundable under Columbia Plateau, loose fit to Action Plan solicitation
26019	South Fork Clearwater, Selway, and Salmon River Basins Monitoring and Evaluation of Spring / Summer Chinook Salmon Outplant Program	S.P. Cramer & Associates	Mountain Snake	Clearwater	\$75,200	Does not fit solicitation but technically sound.
23084	Acquisition of Lower Desolation Creek, John Day Basin	CTUIR	Columbia Plateau	John Day	\$4,987,754	Does not fit solicitation but scientifically justified.

The Council interprets the ISRP’s findings for these proposals as technically sound from the perspective of scientific review. The suitability of the proposals under the criteria, while a central question for the ISRP, is ultimately a judgement for the Council and Bonneville. The Council concluded that these proposals should be recommended for funding under the Action Plan solicitation because of their ultimate merit for fish populations affected by this year’s hydrosystem operations.

Proposal 26019 is one of two companion proposals that Bonneville proposed to add to the Council’s previous list of fundable projects. It provides the monitoring component for Proposal 26013:

26013	Adult Spring/Summer Chinook and Steelhead Transport -- Snake River Basin -- Nez Perce Tribe	Nez Perce Tribe	Mountain Snake	Clearwater	\$195,267	Not fundable
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Bonneville staff informed the Council that Bonneville is discussing the applicability of this proposal for Biological Opinion implementation and plans to include the proposal in its final funding list, subject to the ISRP’s comments. The ISRP’s final report reiterated its lack of support for the proposed approach.

The proposal was submitted following a negotiation of treatment of surplus hatchery-origin adults this year. It was developed in consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service. The Council decided to support funding assistance for implementing the agreement in concert with the monitoring and evaluation provided by Proposal 26019. The Council believes

the provision of monitoring addresses a portion of the ISRP’s technical concerns while recognizing that funding of the outplanting itself is not supported by the ISRP.

ISRP finds “not fundable, defer to Provincial Review”; Council recommends funding:

26026	Transfer Lemhi Water Users (L-6 to Salmon River (S-14)	State of Idaho Office of Species Conservation	Mountain Snake	Salmon	\$2,860,000	Not fundable; defer to Mountain Snake Review.
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The Council recommended this proposal in the first list of Action Plan recommendations, contingent on additional ISRP review. Bonneville included it on its list of fundable proposals, also contingent on the ISRP’s review. While the ISRP continues to find the proposal “not fundable” in this solicitation, the Council considered the criticisms to be based in management concerns and not scientific merit. The central criticism in the ISRP’s report concerns the significance of the water to be gained from this proposal towards resolving the passage problems in the Lemhi River:

The response notes that the 13 cfs gained by the proposed actions would amount to one-third of the needed 39 cfs for summer passage into the Lemhi River by returning adult salmon. The response notes that this project coupled with other undefined actions would yield the requisite 39 cfs. Yet, the response also notes that summer flows have often been less than 1.0 cfs and were ~20 cfs in July and August 2000 (a reasonable water year). This means that the “undefined” actions will be required to provide somewhere between 13 cfs (as in 2000, for example) to 25 cfs during a low water year. Thus, the success of the project (passage for salmon) depends on these other undefined actions. These undefined actions may be described in the upcoming provincial review... (ISRP; August 3, 2001; p. 8)

The State of Idaho has implemented new measures in 2001 to provide more water in low streamflow conditions. These measures are quickly evolving and the Idaho Governor’s Office assures the Council that companion measures can provide a total of the requisite flows in the Lemhi if this proposal is funded as a partial achievement of the flow objectives. The Council agrees that securing a significant portion of the required volume would be worthwhile and again recommends that Bonneville fund this project.

Land acquisition projects:

23026	Klickitat Basin Key Habitat Acquisition	YN	Columbia Gorge	Klickitat	\$3,000,000	Does not fit solicitation but scientifically justified.
26034	Kittitas Valley Reach Acquisitions	WDFW	Columbia Plateau	Yakima	\$2,000,000	Not fundable

In Bonneville’s letter of July 12, Robert Austin informed the Council that Bonneville determined that land acquisition proposals do not fit the Action Plan solicitation and should be

reviewed in the appropriate provincial review. With that position taken, the Council did not review these proposals further. The Council did review a similar proposal; 23084, Acquisition of Lower Desolation Creek, John Day Basin. The Council recommended the proposal for funding. The distinction found by the Council is that the proposal carries water quantity benefits that were sought by the Action Plan solicitation.

ISRP finds “not fundable and the Council does not recommend for funding in the Action Plan process:

26035	Taneum Creek Water Rights & Restoration	WDFW	Columbia Plateau	Yakima	\$530,000	Not fundable
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The Council also considered three Action Plan proposals which were not recommended in the first round of proposal consideration. Although the proposal sponsors did not respond to the initial ISRP comments in time for this review process, they have since done so. The Council agreed to seek the ISRP’s review of these responses for an additional consideration for funding under the Action Plan solicitation. The proposals are:

26016 Entiat Subbasin - Stream Gaging Installation and Operations

26017 Okanogan Subbasin - Stream Gaging Installation and Operations

26029 Wenatchee Subbasin - Stream Gaging Installation and Operations

These proposals address water quantity measures in important water quantity-limited tributaries. New proposals in these tributaries will not be considered until the completion of the Columbia Cascade provincial review next summer, which means that their benefits could not be realized until 2003. For that reason, the Council agreed to accept the sponsor’s responses and to seek additional ISRP review. We will forward to you further recommendations for these proposals once the ISRP review is completed.

Sincerely,

Stephen L. Crow
Executive Director