

Principles for Prioritizing Deferrals in Program Implementation

The Council applied a set of considerations for prioritizing fish and wildlife projects during the provincial review process. These principles were used first in the Columbia Plateau, and in all provinces thereafter, once province-by-province funding allocations were established.

The staff believes that this emergency funding reduction exercise must be guided by an overarching set of principles, as was the case in the provincial review process. The staff believes that the principles used during the provincial review process remain generally applicable. However, there are some significant changes that we propose. In Section I. below we list principles A through G that would apply to the current emergency funding reduction. Following those proposed principles, in Section II, we set out the prioritization principles that were adopted by the Council and used in the provincial review process. Following each of those provincial review principles, we provide an annotation that explains how applying the principles proposed for this emergency process (A through G) would modify it.

Section I. Proposed principles

- A. Maintain critical elements for the FCRPS Biological Opinion 2003 and 2005 “check-in” requirements.
- B. Maintain past investments in tributary passage and protection of currently productive habitat (O&M and M&E).
- C. Maintain current production programs as approved by the Council (O&M and M&E).
- D. Balance other habitat investments within the province allocations that remain.
- E. Projects that are research, investigation, or status review focused, and not defined as critical for FCRPS check-ins, are disfavored and deferred.
- F. Projects that do not immediately contribute to the productivity of a species affected by the hydrosystem are disfavored and deferred.
- G. Projects that were not reviewed by the ISRP and/or explicitly approved by the Council in a formal funding recommendation decision will be presumptively terminated (if ongoing) or deferred (if new) unless specifically designated as critical for FCRPS BiOp 2003 or 2005 check-in.

Section II. Illustrating how principles proposed for the emergency reduction compares with those that were used in the provincial reviews

Items 1 through 7 below are the prioritization principles that were used during the provincial review process. The annotations in bold italics explain how applying the proposed principles for this emergency cost reduction exercise would change each of those considerations.

Provincial Review Principle 1: As a matter of first priority, maintain adequate funding for the operation, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of ongoing projects.

- ***This consideration would continue to apply. The group of ongoing projects that would be protected under principle B. above are, specifically, currently existing tributary passage projects and projects that protect currently productive habitat. Budgets recommended during the provincial review would be scrutinized and reduced to provide a maintenance-level of funding for these projects (O&M and M&E).***

- ***Maintenance-level funding for Council approved production programs would be protected under principle C. above.. Budgets recommended during the provincial review would be scrutinized and reduced to provide a maintenance-level of funding for these projects (O&M and M&E).***

Provincial Review Principle 2: As a second-level priority, provide funding to multi-step or phased ongoing projects that are prepared to take the next anticipated and logical step in their development.

- ***This emergency budget reduction exercise would not prioritize these projects. Planned expansions that have been anticipated and invited by the Council to date as “next steps” in a multi-step project would be deferred.***

Provincial Review Principle 3: As a second-level priority (co-equal with 2 above), provide funds to new and ongoing projects that protect currently productive, high quality habitat, and/or provide connections to historic habitat.

- ***Ongoing habitat protection projects are addressed by principle B, and in 1. above.***
- ***This emergency budget reduction exercise would not prioritize new habitat protection projects unless they are identified by Bonneville as critical for the Action Agency 2003 or 2005 FCRPS Biological Opinion “check-in”. Those not so identified would be deferred or terminated..***

Provincial Review Principle 4: Also as a second-level priority, provide funds to those new and ongoing projects that can be shown to respond to Reasonable and Prudent Alternative action items in the 2000 Biological Opinion on Hydrosystem Operations for which Bonneville has been assigned responsibility.

- ***Biological Opinion implementation would continue to be a priority under principle A. above. However, because of funding constraints, the pool of projects that would be protected under this emergency budget reduction would be narrowed. For this exercise, a project would not only need to respond to an RPA, it would also have to be designated as a critical project for the 2003 or 2005 Biological Opinion “check-in”.***
- ***Funding these projects would be a matter of first priority under the principles proposed for this emergency cost reduction process.***

Provincial Review Principle 5: As a second-level priority (co-equal with 2, 3 and 4 above) where there are new projects that have been developed and coordinated with a broad coalition of local interests including, for example, local governments, tribes, state agencies, agriculture interests and others, and there is consensus support, fund the projects.

- ***This consideration would be de-emphasized, and would apply only after projects meeting principles A, B, and C are protected. It would only become important while applying principle D – balancing other habitat investments if funds remain in the province allocation.***

Provincial Review Principle 6: As a third-level priority, provide funding for proposed new projects that present an opportunity to protect, mitigate or enhance fish and wildlife that will be lost if delayed until after subbasin plans are completed (next 1-4 years);

- ***This consideration would not apply in this emergency exercise. New opportunities to meet fish and wildlife program objectives that do not fit under one of the considerations above will be foregone.***

Provincial Review Principle 7: Finally, the Council likely will not support funding new or expanded research initiatives.

- ***This consideration would continue to apply and is reflected in principles E and F above.***
- ***This category is meant to apply to any research, investigation, or status review that is not designated as critical to the 2003 or 2005 Biological Opinion check-in.***

So what was the purpose
of a rate case if all
borrowing authority will
be used in 2 years?