

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 29, 2005

Mr. Steven J. Wright, Administrator
Bonneville Power Administration
905 NE 11th Street
Portland, OR 97232

Ms. Melinda Eden, Chair
Northwest Power and Conservation Council
851 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1020
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Mr. Wright and Ms. Eden:

With the enactment of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2006 (H.R. 2419), we would like to offer guidance regarding language that appears in the final conference report (H. Rpt. 109-275). This language directs the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to cease funding of the Fish Passage Center (FPC) and directs BPA and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (the Council) to transfer the functions of the FPC in a way that ensures "seamless continuity of activities." We want to ensure that this transfer moves forward in a way that supports our region's need for sound science and meets the data analysis requirements of the state and tribal fishery managers for whom the FPC was originally established.

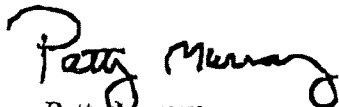
As you move forward with transferring the functions of the FPC to a new entity, we urge you to adhere to the following parameters:

- Ensure that all of the current responsibilities and functions of the FPC are transferred to a single independent entity, not divided among several existing entities;
- Ensure that state and tribal fishery managers play a central role in decisions and negotiations involving the future of the FPC's functions and services; and
- that the region's states and tribes that depend on accurate and timely salmon migration data and analysis in order to meet their salmon recovery planning responsibilities and obligations have a direct and defined role in the implementation and oversight of this new entity;
- Ensure that the new entity be housed independently of BPA, the Council, or any other existing agency, or university; but
- Ensure that BPA continues to provide funding support for the new entity's responsibilities and functions in a manner that guarantees no loss or interruption of services; and
- Ensure that the data and analyses generated and developed by this new entity be readily available to the public at no cost.

We are confident that if these factors are incorporated into BPA and the Council's implementation of the FY06 Energy and Water Appropriations report language it will allow our region to continue to rise to the challenge of Columbia Basin salmon recovery by meeting the scientific needs of all fishery co-managers.

As a first step, we request to be informed of the process you intend to use to identify the new entity and carry out a timely transfer of functions. We look forward to working with you as you move forward with transferring the functions of the FPC to a new entity.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
U.S. Senator



Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator



Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senator