State, Federal and Tribal Fishery Agencies
Joint Technical Staff Memorandum

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Colville Tribe
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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SUBJECT: Comments on draft report *Compliance monitoring of subyearling Chinook salmon survival and passage at John Day Dam, 2014*

DATE: February 20, 2015

The purpose of this memorandum is to request additional information be included in the final version of *Compliance monitoring of subyearling Chinook salmon survival and passage at John Day Dam, 2014*. Reports on performance testing are used by fishery managers to determine the value of the studies conducted and the results presented, as well as determining whether a performance standard has been met at a specific project. To assure that these determinations can be made, we request the following information be added to the report:

- **Number of fish rejected due to size**

  Section 3.1, "Fish collection, rejection, and tagging," includes details of the number of fish handled and rejected due to condition. However, rejections due to size are not included in these tables. From the histogram in Figures 3.4, it is clear that the run of river smolts for subyearling Chinook included smolts below the 95 mm tagging threshold. The extent of this rejection rate should be clearly stated in the report.

- **Route-specific passage and survival estimates**

  The final reports for performance testing at John Day Dam in 2010 and 2011 included survival estimates for each route of passage. These data provide important information for managers, as they can indicate areas requiring improvement and monitor the effects of dam modifications. We request that route-specific survival estimates be included in the final version of *Compliance monitoring of subyearling Chinook salmon survival and passage at John Day Dam, 2014*.

- **Power analysis for comparisons between 30% and 40% spill**

  Performance testing at John Day in 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2014 have tested both 30% and 40% spill. It should be explicitly stated in the report that these metrics from these two operations cannot be statistically compared due to the low power of the test.

- **Details of Dead Fish Releases**

  In the draft report for performance testing at McNary Dam in 2014, the numbers of dead fish released were included as part of the "Test of assumptions," Section 2.4.3.5. However, this section is not included in the draft version of *Compliance monitoring of subyearling Chinook salmon survival and passage at John Day Dam, 2014*. If tagged dead fish were released during the summer study at John Day in 2014, a full description should be included, as requested in the Joint Technical Staff Memo (January 27, 2015). If tagged dead fish were not a part of the John Day study, a justification for this exclusion must be included.

- **Detail of survival estimates across season**

  The survival of the dam passage group was low (0.9108) compared to the control groups (0.9861 and 0.9927). Survival estimates of the V1 group across the season, potentially in groupings by week, could potentially show correlations between survival of the dam passage group and flow, operations, temperature, or other variables. This analysis could provide important information regarding steps to take to improve dam passage survival.

In conclusion, it is our opinion that more information about route-specific survival estimates, dead fish detections, and an analysis of survivals across the season are essential for a more thorough assessment of performance testing at John Day Dam during the 2014 passage season. The inclusion of these data in the final report will provide managers with the information necessary to evaluate the current test results and better shape the discussion for potential remedies and future operations.