



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE**  
West Coast Region  
1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97232-1274

June 1, 2015

Erick Van Dyke  
ODFW  
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Clackamas, OR 97015

Dave Statler  
Nez Perce Tribe  
45559 Hwy 12  
Orofino, ID 83544

Joe Skalicky  
USFWS  
1211 SE Cardinal Ct, Ste 100  
Vancouver, WA 98683

Dear Messrs. Van Dyke, Statler, Skalicky:

Thank you for your recent memo regarding adaptive management considerations to improve survival in a low flow year. We appreciate your concern for the welfare of juvenile salmon and steelhead migrating through the lower Snake and Columbia Rivers.

As you know, under the 2014 Supplemental Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) biological opinion, the Army Corps of Engineers, Bonneville Power Administration, and Bureau of Reclamation (Action Agencies) are currently operating the FCRPS under the adaptive management framework recommended by the Independent Science Advisory Board regarding spill and juvenile fish transportation. Specifically, the Action Agencies are providing both spill and transportation in all years and the effects of the relative operations under a range of environmental conditions – including low flow conditions like those occurring in 2015 – are being updated and evaluated annually.

The Action Agencies, in consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and other co-managers, have implemented several low water year provisions of the FCRPS biological opinion that were developed to reduce negative effects to fish during flow conditions like we are experiencing this year. Spill rates are expected to be relatively high and the proportion of fish transported at the Snake River collector projects are likely to be relatively low (much less than 50%), which, as you note in your memo, is a different operation than the maximum transport operation that was implemented in 2001.

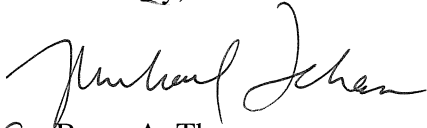
The spill and transport operations currently in place are sufficient to meet the objectives of the 2014 FCRPS biological opinion, and will help inform long term decisions on how to best manage for juvenile migrants in future low flow years. Should you continue to have concerns, I recommend you use the available regional forum processes [e.g., Studies Review Work Group (SRWG), Technical Management Team (TMT), or Regional Implementation Oversight Group (RIOG)] to raise technical issues and gain a broader regional perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of the information you provided, the conclusions you have drawn, and the soundness of your management approach for future consideration. NMFS and regional co-managers evaluate the available fish passage and transportation information each year following the



juvenile migration season and discuss whether operational changes should be incorporated into the Army Corps of Engineer's Fish Passage Plan for the following year. The final fish Passage Plan is also vetted through the Regional Implementation Oversight Group before finalization.

Thank you again for your memo. Should you have further questions for NMFS, please contact Michael Tehan, Assistant Regional Administrator for the Interior Columbia Basin Office ([Michael.Tehan@noaa.gov](mailto:Michael.Tehan@noaa.gov)).

Sincerely,

  
for Barry A. Thom  
Deputy Regional Administrator

cc: Ritchie Graves  
Michael Tehan