

October 6, 2006

Mark Walker
Director of Public Affairs
Northwest Power & Conservation Council
851 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1100
Portland, Oregon 97204-1348

Dear Mr. Walker:

I am writing to encourage the Northwest Power & Conservation Council to reconsider funding the Juvenile Fish Screen Evaluation in Columbia Plateau project 198506200.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has been actively involved in fish protection throughout the Yakima Basin portion of the Columbia Plateau Province for the last 18 years. Our largest screening effort has been through BPA's Phase I and II Fish Screening and Passage Program. Our involvement with these screening activities has evolved submitting proposals to BPA and going through the review process to secure funding. During these review processes the question of how these projects would be monitored has always been asked. The latest example is the 2007-2009 ISRP comments for WDFW's Yakima Phase II/Huntsville Screen Operation & Maintenance proposal (199200900) that states, "could be improved by giving reviewers some detail on how many fish and what species are being saved from entrainment by the screening program". Our response to these questions have always been to explain that these activities are being completed by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory's (PNNL) BPA funded Juvenile Fish Screen Evaluation Program. This ongoing project has been funded by BPA since 1985. This program works closely with WDFW and the Bureau of Reclamations (BOR) who jointly provides operation and maintenance on over 34 BPA funded fish screen facilities to ensure ongoing facility reliability that optimizes fish protection. The Yakima Basin Phase I & II Fish Screening Program are now complete as evidenced by a completion ceremony held September 22, 2006. BPA has invested approximately \$ 34 million dollars in Yakima Basin fish protection and PNNL's monitoring efforts will help to ensue years of optimal operation thereby protection BPA's investment. PNNL's specialized monitoring activities if eliminated are not something that WDFW or the BOR can perform. We strongly urge the Council to support this important monitoring program to insure continued fish protection provide by these facilities.

Sincerely,

Pat Schille
WDFW
Fish Screen Technical Assistance