

# EAST COLUMBIA BASIN IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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January 23, 2008

Northwest Power and Conservation Council  
851 SW Sixth Ave, Suite 1100  
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2008003913

RE: Request for Recommendation – Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program

Dear Council Members:

The East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (ECBID) is one of three irrigation districts receiving water and power from Grand Coulee for agricultural purposes in the Columbia Basin Project. The District and its landowners are directly affected by the successes and failures of the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. ECBID's elected Board would like to offer the following comments for your consideration in response to the Council's request for recommendations to amend the Fish and Wildlife Program:

- We encourage the Council to modify the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to clearly establish the objectives of the Program. The framework should be used as a tool to evaluate the various projects to assure that the Program achieves its biological objectives while continuing to provide the region a low-cost, reliable supply of electric power.
- It is our opinion that while a great deal of benefit has been achieved by the Council's Program to date, significantly more effort needs to be devoted to research involving the ocean environment for listed fish stocks and less effort expended on projects within the Columbia-Snake River basin. We believe there is a larger benefit available for ocean projects and encourage the Council to move in this direction. Rather than increasing both the cost and scope of the Program, we believe a new focus can be funded by reducing costly projects in the Basin that have low or marginal biological benefits.
- We recognize that complex, multi-year projects need to be developed in the Council's plan; however, we encourage you to provide simple program descriptions including milestones, estimated costs and objectives so progress can be easily measured and accountability assigned for achieving program objectives.
- We encourage the Council to adjust river operations to minimize air entrainment and spills. The removable spillway weirs installed at a number of Columbia-Snake River dams have proven to be more successful in smolt transport than mandated spills that reduce flows for needed electrical production.
- ECBID suggests that the Council increase efforts to inform and educate the public on the Fish and Wildlife Program. The information should summarize the Program's objectives, progress, results and costs for projects. We believe that the public would prefer to be informed from the Council rather than other sources.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,



Craig N. Simpson  
Secretary-Manager

CNS:ll

cc: Directors  
Attorney