

DELTA COUNCIL
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
West Coast Region
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 5-100
Sacramento, California 95814-4700

MAR 18 2016

Dr. Clifford Dahm
Delta Science Program
Delta Stewardship Council
980 Ninth Street, Suite 1450
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Dr. Dahm:

On behalf of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), we would like to request a second phase of peer review by the Delta Science Program (DSP). Specifically, we would like a review of the draft joint NMFS and USFWS California Water Fix (CWF) Biological Opinion (BO) and potentially updated information related to the Longfin Smelt analysis for the California Endangered Species Act (ESA) permit application, which we anticipate being available early this summer. It is our hope that the existing panel currently reviewing the draft analytical approach for the BO and aquatic species effects analysis in the Biological Assessment (BA) would be able to do this review as well.

As part of the CWF ESA consultation, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and California Department of Water Resources have prepared a BA that summarizes the effects of the action on ESA-listed species and their designated critical habitats. NMFS and the USFWS are evaluating the effects of the proposed CWF on listed species and their designated critical habitats and are working towards the development of this joint BO.

The focus of this second requested phase of independent review by the DSP would be to obtain the views of the panel experts on whether the BO is scientifically sound and the conclusions are scientifically defensible. The scope would mainly be specific questions related to the analysis in the Effects of the Proposed Action section and how those analyses are carried through the Integration and Synthesis section into scientifically supported conclusions. We expect the planning committee will be able to create a more detailed charge once the draft BO is closer to completion. In addition, the first phase of peer review includes review of the longfin smelt analytical approach associated with a California ESA permit for the CWF, and the CDFW may request reviewers in the second phase to review the longfin smelt effects analysis prepared for that permitting process. CDFW will coordinate with the planning committee to request and prepare a specific charge for this review.



If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Ryan Wulff (NMFS) at (916) 930-3733, or via e-mail at ryan.wulff@noaa.gov; Kim Turner (USFWS) at (916) 930-5604, or via email at kim_s_turner@fws.gov; and Carl Wilcox (CDFW) 707-738-4134, or via email at carl.wilcox@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Maria Rea
Assistant Regional Administrator
California Central Valley Office

CC: Chron File: ARN1514222016SA00204

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