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January 4, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Lynn Palensky and Patty O'Toole

SUBJECT: Update on Fish and Wildlife Program Amendments

The February 1st deadline for submitting recommendations for program amendments is just around the corner. Staff is engaged in logistical planning for reviewing submitted recommendations and preparing draft amendments. Working through the program amendment process will require considerable effort and time by central and state fish and wildlife staff, and the Council members over several months – some months requiring more time/effort than others. Staff will continue to provide a clear schedule of important dates, planning and meeting needs through our usual means for communication.

Two important items we would like to discuss in January are 1) the public hearings schedule, and 2) the identification and formation of a subgroup of Council members to advise staff on amendment issues.

Public hearing schedule:

We would like to set a schedule in advance for public hearings in each state during the Public Comment and Hearings on Draft Amendment period between June and August. Staff recommends that Council members approve a tentative schedule at the February meeting. Prior to that, Council members would need to identify how many hearings they propose in their state and the locations for each.

Council subgroup for program amendments

Staff anticipates the need to communicate frequently with Council members on issues that arise through the amendment process over the next several months. One alternative is to utilize a subgroup of Council members who would provide frequent input to staff in preparing draft amendments. The concept for this group will be discussed in more detail at the January meeting.

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