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MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairman Measure and Members of the Council

FROM: Tony Grover

SUBJECT: Briefing on supplementation with ISRP members, NOAA hatchery staff, tribal and state fish managers and others

The January 2012 Council meeting will include a discussion of the ISRP's retrospective report, which has a strong emphasis on supplementation. Following that report will be this agenda item, a conversation with the states, tribes and federal agencies about what aspects of supplementation, and the relevant issues important to scoping a Columbia River Hatchery Effects Evaluation Team (CRHEET), should be the subject of a science and policy panel discussion at the Council's March meeting. The Council also has guidance, under programmatic issue 4, for the CRHEET project in the Research Monitoring & Evaluation and Artificial Production Category Review of 2011.

Few dispute the importance of the influence of hatchery fish on natural spawning salmon and steelhead. The ISRP has long identified supplementation, along with other hatchery issues, as an important element of hatchery effects that must be better understood. The region has responded by adopting and implementing the recommendations of the Council's Ad Hoc Supplementation Work Group. The Council has followed the supplementation issue closely for many years as protocols were developed and has supported the deployment of those protocols throughout the region. Time will be required to get the results needed by the region to make an accurate determination of what effects hatchery fish do have on natural fish populations. The issue is important to tribes, states and the sport and commercial fishing communities, who do not have a viable alternative tool to support fish populations experiencing low abundance numbers.

Recent work by the Hatchery Scientific Work Group (HSRG) sought to explore how wild and hatchery fish could be integrated with minimal adverse effects. BPA and NOAA plan to work with the Council and the region between now and 2013 to develop the scope and work plan for CRHEET. While the scope and work plan is being developed, the Council can work with all parties, including the Science review teams, to ensure CRHEET meets the needs of the Council's program as well as the BiOps. Review of CRHEET by the ISRP and a broader look by the ISAB will be important to understanding the full range of relevant and important issues. We want to get the CRHEET project right before it is implemented.

