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February 23, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairman Rockefeller and members of the Fish and Wildlife Committee

FROM: Tony Grover, Fish and Wildlife Division Director

SUBJECT: Briefing on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to Inform Columbia River Hatchery Operations and the Funding of Mitchell Act Hatchery Programs

In August 2010, NMFS released a draft EIS on funding and operation of hatchery programs in the Columbia River basin. NMFS will use the EIS to develop a policy direction that will 1) guide NMFS distribution of Mitchell Act hatchery funds and 2) inform NMFS' future review of individual hatchery programs under the Endangered Species Act.

Allison Purcell, NMFS, will update the Committee on the EIS process. NMFS's presentation to the Committee on March 6, 2012, will include an overview of the following:

- Purpose of the EIS.
- Alternatives evaluated in the draft EIS.
- Public response to the EIS.
- Next steps.