



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
West Coast Region
7600 Sand Point Way N.E.
Seattle, Washington 98115

June 30, 2016

Ms. Michelle Banonis
Area Manager
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region, Bay-Delta Office
801 I Street, Suite 140
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Proposed Modification to the Annual Review Schedule as Part of the Reasonable and Prudent Alternative in the National Marine Fisheries Service's 2009 Biological Opinion on the Coordinated Long-term Operation of the Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP)

Dear Ms. Banonis:

This letter is in response to your April 25, 2016, letter requesting a proposed modification to the annual review schedule as part of the Reasonable and Prudent Alternative (RPA) in the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS's) 2009 Biological Opinion on the coordinated long-term operation of the Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP). RPA section 11.2.1.2 states:

"Not later than November 30 of every year, in conjunction with the CALFED Science Program or other Science Peer Review process, Reclamation and NMFS shall host a workshop to review the prior water years' operations and to determine whether any measures prescribed in this RPA should be altered in light of information learned from prior years' operations or research. After completion of the annual review, NMFS may initiate a process to amend specific measures in this RPA to reflect new information, provided that the amendment is consistent with the Opinion's underlying analysis and conclusions and does not limit the effectiveness of the RPA in avoiding jeopardy to listed species or adverse modification of critical habitat."

Specifically, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is requesting a temporary modification to the RPA review frequency from annual to biennial and approval for the next long-term operations Biological Opinion (LOBO) review to be held in November 2017. Standard annual reports associated with the LOBO reviews would continue to be required annually, regardless of the frequency of the LOBO review. In addition, the modification to the review frequency would be implemented from 2016 through 2020. At that time, Reclamation and NMFS would evaluate whether to make this change permanent or consider additional changes. Continuation of the temporary review frequency would be conditioned on a good faith



effort on the part of Reclamation and NMFS to improve the LOBO review value for ongoing implementation of the RPA. If it is determined that the coordination and participation in the biennial LOBO review is not adequate or sufficient, NMFS may suspend the modification of the review frequency and require implementation of annual LOBO reviews in accordance with the original language in the 2009 RPA.

NMFS concurs with Reclamation's request and looks forward to working with Reclamation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Delta Science Program to finalize the details and logistics for biennial LOBO review, which is expected to result in comprehensive assessments that are more relevant and valuable to the all of the agencies involved.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Garwin Yip, of my staff, at (916) 930-3611, or via e-mail at garwin.yip@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,



William W. Stelle, Jr.
Regional Administrator

cc: Copy to file ARN: 151422SWR2006SA00268

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