

"The New Voice of Salmon"

March 7, 2016

Pacific Fisheries Management Council
770 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, OR 97220

RE: Agenda Item D.1

Dear Councilmembers,

This letter is written on behalf of thousands of members represented by the Golden Gate Salmon Association, a coalition representing both sport and commercial salmon fishermen and women and related businesses.

These comments pertain to habitat conditions for a subset of California Central Valley runs in the Feather River. California Central Valley fall run salmon are the mainstay of the salmon fishery that supports ocean and inland fishing in California and provides about 60 percent of the ocean harvest off Oregon south of Cape Falcon.

We seek support from the Council calling for swift action to fix structural and operational problems identified by the recently issued [biological opinion](#) (biop) for operation and relicensing of Oroville Dam. Specifically we are interested in those requirements that improve conditions for salmon in the Feather River.

The thermal pollution emanating from the Thermalito Complex destroys the Feather River for spawning salmon downstream of the Thermalito Outlet in many years. It is the biggest current problem and warrants immediate remedy. As identified in a 2006 study¹, and cited in the biop, several possible ways to fix this problem have been identified.

We're asking the Council to send a letter to the California Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) with copies to the State Water Contractors and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) seeking implementation of one of these alternative engineering fixes as soon as possible.

The biop envisions this issue will be corrected within ten years of license renewal with a five year trial period built in. Stalling this will greatly increase costs, could threaten the license to operate, (since NMFS threatens to pull the take permit if this isn't expeditiously addressed) and cost all Californians potentially hundreds of thousands of adult salmon.

Failure to fix the thermal pollution problem while complying with a separate requirement to put a segregation weir in the low flow channel is likely to have extremely negative consequences for the fall

¹ Reconnaissance study of potential future facilities modifications, Oroville facilities settlement agreement implementation

run salmon which currently spawn in the low flow channel. A segregation weir will limit fall run spawning to a very small section of the low flow channel. Any spawning below the Thermalito Outlet, where river temperatures regularly exceed 56 degrees, the lethal threshold for salmon, will fail.

Salmon fishermen understand the reasons for giving the listed spring run their own section of river in the Low Flow Channel to spawn in free of superimposition by fall run but the fall run have to first be provided other suitable spawning habitat before a segregation weir is installed.

DWR's license to operate Oroville Dam has not been renewed and may now be complicated by the recent failure of the main and emergency spillways. The spillway failure has brought to light other deficiencies including structural problems in a smaller spillway downstream in the Thermalito Complex. All of these structural problems should be fixed as soon as possible and now is the time to add in the structural fix needed to stop the thermal pollution problem stemming from Thermalito.

Many would greatly benefit from restored salmon runs in the Feather River including ocean, Delta, and river salmon fishermen as well as businesses in and around Oroville.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John McManus". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of a vertical line that separates it from the typed name below.

John McManus, Executive Director
Golden Gate Salmon Association