



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

September 9, 2024

In reply refer to: ECF-4

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DETERMINATION

Proposed Action: The Select Area Fisheries Enhancement (SAFE) Program, which consists of three hatchery programs involved in acclimation, transport, and release of juvenile salmon (spring Chinook and coho smolts), including monitoring and evaluation and operations and maintenance of Select Area Fisheries net pen sites and associated facilities (SAFE Facilities).

Environmental Project Manager: Daniel Gambetta, ECF-4, dagambetta@bpa.gov

Location: The Bonneville-funded portion of the SAFE Program would consist of four main project areas (net pen sites) in the off-channel areas in the Lower Columbia River Estuary (LCRE) located between river miles 10.0 and 27.0, nearest to the town of Astoria, Oregon.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (Bonneville), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Clatsop County Fisheries.

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville is proposing to fund the SAFE Program to achieve maximum production levels of Chinook and coho salmon as proposed from three fishery co-managers (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Clatsop County Fisheries) and as authorized by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The SAFE Program would rear, acclimate, and release up to 4.25 million spring Chinook salmon smolts and 4.3 million coho salmon at several in-water net pen sites and release areas in off-channel areas (Select Areas) in LCRE located between river miles 10.0 and 27.0. Eventually, these fish would return to these Select Areas for commercial and recreational harvest. Thus, the SAFE Program's overall objective would be protection of natural origin salmon through reduced harvest pressure.

Class of Action to be Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): C8: Protection of Cultural Resources and Fish and Wildlife Habitat

We have determined that the proposed action is within the class of actions normally requiring an environmental assessment (EA), but not necessarily requiring an environmental impact statement (EIS) as listed in Subpart D of 10 C.F.R. Part 1021. Therefore, we have determined that an EA will be prepared to assess the impacts of the proposed action. On the basis of the

analysis in the EA, BPA will prepare a finding of no significant impact and proceed with the action, or will prepare an EIS if the EA reveals the potential for significant environmental impacts.

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date