

Tom Karier
Chair
Washington

Frank L. Cassidy Jr.
"Larry"
Washington

Jim Kempton
Idaho

Judi Danielson
Idaho



Joan M. Dukes
Vice-Chair
Oregon

Melinda S. Eden
Oregon

Bruce A. Measure
Montana

Rhonda Whiting
Montana

January 5, 2007

DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: Council members

FROM: Terry Morlan

SUBJECT: Council Approval of IEAB Task 116 on Wildlife O&M Costs

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Council approve IEAB Task Order 116 to do additional analysis on wildlife O&M costs.

SIGNIFICANCE

The fish and wildlife program (Program) expends most of its funds for programs and projects that were initiated in prior years. Operations and maintenance (O&M), research and monitoring (R&M) and other ongoing costs account for an increasingly large share of the fish and wildlife program budget. These ongoing costs leave fewer funds available for new projects and reduce the flexibility of the Program. A better understanding of ongoing costs might help the Program better manage committed project funds, reduce their share of the Program budget, and develop new funding mechanisms.

BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The estimated cost of this task is \$ 21,600

BACKGROUND

Task 116 approval was removed from the December Council agenda partly due to concerns raised by wildlife managers. Council requested that the IEAB meet with wildlife managers before bringing the task back to the Council. I have talked with Brian Lipscomb about this project, and Roger Mann, IEAB Chair, and I will meet with wildlife managers on January 11th. That meeting may result in changes to the task, and I will revise it if necessary and send it out to the Council following our meeting.

ANALYSIS

Task 116, Investigation of Wildlife O&M Costs, has been proposed by the IEAB as follow-on to an earlier task called Scoping Investigation of Available Project Information. The ability to fulfill Council obligations for ensuring cost effectiveness of fish and wildlife projects has always been limited by available information about project costs, objectives, and accomplishments. The IEAB has been working with Bonneville to improve the usability of Pisces data for cost-effectiveness analysis. The IEAB has also begun investigating other available sources of data.

One question has always been, how can we judge whether the costs of a proposed project are reasonable? This task would look at the level and variability of wildlife O&M costs for different projects and attempt to explain what causes variation among similar cost categories for different projects. Projects may have different O&M costs for many reasons and gaining some understanding of those differences will provide useful information that may help predict and assess the cost of proposed projects. The analysis may also point out needed changes in the collection of project data.

ALTERNATIVES

The Council can choose to approve IEAB Task 116, or not. The Council could also request modifications to the scope and cost of the task.

ATTACHMENTS

The original draft Task Order 116 is attached. A revised task order may be developed following the meeting with wildlife managers. If so, I will send it to Council members.