

Jennifer Anders
Chair
Montana

Bo Downen
Montana

Guy Norman
Washington

Patrick Oshie
Washington



Northwest Power and Conservation Council

Richard Devlin
Vice Chair
Oregon

Ted Ferrioli
Oregon

Jim Yost
Idaho

Jeffery C. Allen
Idaho

September 10, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council members

FROM: Patty O'Toole

SUBJECT: (1) ISAB FY 2020 budget
(2) Possible use of funds represented by reduced ISAB budget

(1) ISAB FY 2020 budget

Bonneville has proposed that the ISAB's budget for FY 2020 be set at \$350,000. This would be a substantial reduction from the nearly \$550,000 ISAB budget in FY 2019 and prior years. The \$350,000 budget is, however, in line with what actual spending has been over those years. An attached memo from the ISAB Coordinator, Erik Merrill, explains the proposal, the ISAB's budget and spending history, and the expectation that the proposed \$350,000 budget should be adequate for the ISAB in FY 2020.

The proposal to reduce the ISAB budget to \$350,000 in the coming fiscal year comes with two caveats, which we have discussed with Bonneville. One is that we will revisit this budget amount with Bonneville before setting the start-of-year budget for FY 2021 and other years, to ensure that this amount is adequate. A \$350,000 ISAB budget in FY 2020 does not simply become the default amount in future years. Second, if the estimated reduced budget of \$350,000 is not adequate for the ISAB's activities in FY 2020, we will have access to mechanisms to supplement that budget, including, for example, the BOG process.

The staff requests that the Council support this budget amount for the ISAB, under the conditions noted. This is not a project review recommendation and does not need a formal Council decision and recommendation. Instead we are making the Council members aware of how Bonneville proposes to budget for ISAB activities in the coming fiscal year and why, and, in turn, checking to see if the members have concerns, objections or need further information.

(2) Possible use of funds represented by reduced ISAB budget

This memo also addresses a related matter, the \$197,000 represented by the difference in the ISAB budget last year and this year. Staff understands that Bonneville may be interested in using funds in this amount to support northern pike monitoring and suppression efforts.

On June 13, 2018 the Council recommended for funding and implementation a comprehensive northern pike suppression and monitoring project (Project #2017-004-00) jointly sponsored by the Spokane Tribe of Indians, the Colville Confederated Tribes, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Council's project review recommendation was conditioned on satisfying in contracting certain ISRP qualifications regarding methods, reporting and other matters. The budget for the project is slightly over \$900,000; Bonneville has yet to commit funds to this project.

As the Council has already reviewed and recommended this northern pike project, staff generally supports Bonneville applying funds to northern pike monitoring and suppression efforts provided the work to be implemented is consistent with the Council's recommended project. The staff asks Bonneville to work with the sponsors and inform the Council as to what activities would be implemented and at what amount and how that scope of work will be consistent with or related to the project recommended by the Council. We will continue to inform the Council about what we learn and will convey any concerns or questions the members have to Bonneville.

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September 10, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council members

FROM: Erik Merrill
Independent Science Manager

SUBJECT: Independent Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB) FY 2020 Budget Reduction

PROPOSED ACTION: Council support of a Bonneville Power Administration proposal to set the ISAB's Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 annual budget at \$350,000.

This budget represents a reduction of \$197,000 from the ISAB's FY 2019 budget.

The Council's support is conditioned on an agreement that Bonneville and the Council will revisit the ISAB budget each fiscal year during the Start of Year process to ensure anticipated ISAB services continue to be fully funded. In addition, both Bonneville and the Council agree that unexpected within-year budget shortfalls may be addressed through budget adjustment mechanisms, including the possible use of the Budget Oversight Group process and funds.

SIGNIFICANCE: The proposed ISAB budget reduction reflects expenditures over the past thirteen years, while maintaining adequate funds to cover anticipated assignments for FY 2020 and a buffer for unanticipated assignments. The ISAB and its services are critical to regional fish and wildlife program planning and implementation, and the ISAB's contribution should not be affected by this budget adjustment.

BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The ISAB is funded through the Bonneville Power Administration's fish and wildlife budget through project #1996-005-00. This decision will not impact the Council's budget. Impacts to the ISAB budget are summarized above and described below.

BACKGROUND

Independent scientific review is a critical part of fish and wildlife program and project development, implementation, and information sharing. Independent scientific review for the Fish and Wildlife Program is implemented by two groups: the ISAB and the Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP). Each group provides unique services to the Program. The ISAB serves the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and the Columbia River Indian Tribes by providing independent scientific advice regarding scientific issues that relate to the respective agencies' fish and wildlife programs. The ISAB is a standing body with general tasks, specified in a [Terms of Reference](#), that guide its work plan. ISAB reviews—such as the recent reviews of Predation Impacts and Management ([ISAB 2019-1](#)), the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program ([ISAB 2018-3](#)), and NOAA Fisheries' Life Cycle Models ([ISAB 2017-1](#))—improve and inform the continued development of Columbia Basin recovery and mitigation plans and projects.

The 1996 Amendment to the Northwest Power Act requires *ISRP* review of Fish and Wildlife Program projects and their results. We do not propose any change to the ISRP's annual budget of \$500,000. The ISRP's and ISAB's budgets ensure that the groups can fulfill their functions including completion of unanticipated and time-sensitive reviews.

ANALYSIS

Since FY 2006, the ISAB's annual budget has been approximately \$550,000.¹ This budget amount originally was developed and approved as part of the Fish and Wildlife Program's annual budgeting decisions. Like other projects in Bonneville's fish and wildlife portfolio, the ISAB's budget is negotiated and assigned during Bonneville's Start of Year process. For FY 2020, Bonneville requested that the ISAB's annual budget be reduced from approximately \$547,000 to \$350,000 to reflect expenditures over the past decade, with the understanding that adequate funding will be made available to maintain the ISAB's review functions, even if the ISAB needs more than \$350,000 in any particular year for that purpose.

¹ From FY 1997-2005 the ISAB's combined budget was over \$650,000 per year, annual expenditures averaged \$503,000, with four years over \$550,000. The Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority administered the ISAB's contract through FY 2004, and a member of the ISAB was paid through a separate \$100,000/year contract with BPA through FY 2005; the ISAB's FY 2005 primary contract budget was \$472,000, so the total ISAB-related FY 2005 budget was \$572,000. Overall ISAB project costs were reduced in 2005 when the Council began administering the ISAB, and costs were reduced further in 2006 when the member with the separate contract completed his terms.

The Council administers the ISAB's grant and member contracts. ISAB members are paid \$90 per hour for their work and are reimbursed for travel on approved reviews. Costs for the ISAB manager, annual audits, and some meetings are also covered under the contract. Annual ISAB work plans describe anticipated assignments and are approved by the ISAB's Administrative Oversight Panel² (see the [FY2020 Work Plan](#)). In addition, assignments are commonly generated within the fiscal year, often span fiscal years, and are sometimes unanticipated. Thus, estimating expenditures is complicated and imprecise. Consequently, two lines of inquiry are useful in evaluating potential ISAB budget adjustments: historical costs and cost estimates for anticipated future assignments.

Historical Costs

From FY 2006 through FY 2018, ISAB annual costs have averaged \$284,000; ranged from a low of \$162,000 in FY 2006 to a high of \$496,000 in FY 2010; and included five years with costs over \$300,000 (Table 1 below). Based on the average and range of historical ISAB costs, \$350,000 should be adequate to fund ISAB activities in FY 2020.

FY 2020 Assignments

Over the past 22 years, the ISAB has completed over 100 reports, about five per year. The ISAB's FY 2020 Work Plan includes two ongoing assignments and eight potential assignments. Table 2 (below) provides a low and high cost range for the ten assignments based on costs of similar past assignments. Only a subset of the eight potential assignments will be approved for ISAB review because many of the assignments depend on specific processes, such as NOAA's life-cycle modeling or the [Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force](#) effort, having scientifically reviewable products at a stage of completion that would benefit from an ISAB review. Considering the annual average of five ISAB assignments per year plus budget for unanticipated reviews, the ISAB's costs for FY 2020 will not likely exceed \$350,000.

Costs for FY 2021 and beyond will depend on future reviews defined in the Fish and Wildlife Program amendments and other comprehensive regional recovery and biological opinion planning processes. Budgets for future fiscal years will need to be negotiated and assigned during Bonneville's Start of Year process.

ALTERNATIVES

The Council could recommend the ISAB's budget remain at \$550,000, providing potential funds for an expanded ISAB role and ensuring funds are available for comprehensive reviews of large efforts such as analyses to inform recovery planning or the Environmental Impact Statement for Columbia River System Operations, if so requested.

² The ISAB Administrative Oversight Panel consists of Jennifer Anders, Council Chair; Kevin Werner, Science and Research Director, NOAA's Northwest Fisheries Science Center; and Jaime Pinkham, Executive Director, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC).

TABLES

Table 1. ISAB starting, spent, and unspent budgets for fiscal years 2006-2018

	Budget	Spent	Unspent
FY2006	\$550,000	\$161,765	\$388,235
FY2007	\$550,000	\$283,543	\$266,457
FY2008	\$550,000	\$250,110	\$299,890
FY2009	\$550,000	\$206,866	\$343,134
FY2010	\$550,000	\$496,369	\$53,631
FY2011	\$550,000	\$337,863	\$212,137
FY2012	\$550,000	\$215,615	\$334,385
FY2013	\$550,000	\$302,727	\$247,273
FY2014	\$550,000	\$340,751	\$209,249
FY2015	\$550,000	\$318,412	\$231,588
FY2016	\$550,000	\$263,638	\$286,362
FY2017	\$550,000	\$233,171	\$316,829
FY2018	\$546,938	\$276,256	\$270,682
Ave. 06-18	\$549,764	\$283,622	\$266,142

Table 2. ISAB FY 2020 - Costs of Potential Assignments

	Cost Range of Similar Past Projects		Cost Estimates for Likely FY2020 Projects	FY2019 Cost Estimates
	Low	High		
CSS Annual Report / FPC Reports	\$4,000	\$19,000	\$7,000	\$3,000
Blocked Area Reintroduction Assessments	\$30,000	\$60,000	\$15,000	\$25,000
FWP - MAFAC Objectives	\$40,000	\$120,000	\$60,000	
BPA-Council-NOAA Habitat RM&E Plan (ISRP?)	\$8,000	\$20,000	\$14,000	
NOAA Life-Cycle Model Follow-up	\$35,000	\$75,000	?	
Comparative Planning Document Review (NOAA Recovery, FWP, Tribal)	\$40,000	\$120,000	?	
Habitat Action Effectiveness	\$40,000	\$80,000	?	
Columbia Basin contributions to killer whales (marine mammals)	\$40,000	\$120,000	?	
Life history diversity	\$80,000	\$200,000	?	
Other (spill test, latent mortality, SAR comparison, etc.)	\$8,000	\$120,000	\$60,000	
Travel costs (5-8 meetings - ~\$5000 per meeting)	\$25,000	\$40,000	\$32,000	
ISAB Administration	\$68,000	\$71,500	\$70,000	
Total	\$418,000	\$1,045,500	\$258,000	