

*Testimony of
James J. Anderson
Associate Professor
School of Fisheries, University of Washington, Seattle Washington*

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My name is James J. Anderson, I am an Associate Professor in the School of Fisheries at the University of Washington. I have studied Columbia and Snake River salmon for fifteen years and my research group, is engaged in quantitative analyses of the environmental and policy factors affecting the decline of salmon and the actions being taken to recover the runs. I am a member of the PATH group (Plan for Analyzing and Testing Hypotheses) which was formed by the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Northwest Power Planning Council to evaluate, in detail, the scientific issues involving salmon recovery. In my testimony I will discuss my opinions on the project review and prioritization process and offer two thoughts on how it can be further improved.

Assuring adequate peer review and accountability of the projects in the Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program is monumental task. From my fifteen years of experience with the river, the current program is significantly improved over anything that existed in the past. For the first time there is a process in place to review the science and the projects. In general I agree with the finding of the Moss-Adams Review of the Contracting Processes published in December of 1997. This is an excellent report with many good recommendations.

I want to empathize two points that complement the report: First there is a need to improve the information management system to assist in setting project priority measures and in project evaluation; Second, many fish management actions and policies are outside the current review process which largely deals with funding of projects. Policies, especially in regards to the operations of the hydrosystem, hatcheries, harvest, need to be integrated into the review process and subjected to scientific review and evaluation.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

As the Moss-Adams report points out in finding B4, the Program appears to provide little guidance regarding the setting of the relative priority of measures. CBFWA now prioritizes projects after the proposals have been received. They do so in a subjective manner which is potentially biased because they prioritize their own proposals and that of their potential competitors. Although the ISAB and ISRP can evaluate general methodology of projects, these bodies are not equipped to evaluate quantitatively the potential impacts of the projects on a basin-wide scale. Such a capability is especially essential to develop since the area under an endangered species designation is expanding to the entire Columbia/