



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10**

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 155
Seattle, WA 98101-3188

WATER
DIVISION

December 7, 2020

Mr. Michael Tehan and Mr. Kim Kratz
National Marine Fisheries Service
1201 Northeast Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100
Portland, Oregon 97232

Dear Mr. Tehan and Mr. Kratz:

Please find enclosed a pre-publication final version of EPA's Columbia River Cold Water Refuge Plan. The purpose of this letter is to confirm that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's issuance of the plan complies with the reasonable and prudent alternative (RPA) contained in NOAA's 2015 Biological Opinion (NMFS No.: WCR-2013-76) on EPA's approval of Oregon's temperature water quality standards.

EPA appreciates NOAA's ongoing involvement and assistance in developing the plan. We have revised the plan based on input received on the October, 2019 draft plan and believe the plan, together with the Lower Willamette River Cold Water Refuge Report, submitted to NOAA by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality on March 18, 2020, has satisfied the requirements of the RPA.

Although not required by the RPA, EPA elected to issue a draft plan for feedback from interested stakeholders. While this process has extended the timeframe for completing the plan, we received valuable input that resulted in overall improvements to the plan.

This plan has advanced the understanding of how cold water refuges serve to protect salmonid species consistent with Oregon's water quality standards. We hope you find it valuable for aiding in the recovery of salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River basin. Thank you for your continued collaboration on this work effort. If you have any questions, please contact me at (206) 553-1855 or John Palmer of my staff at (206) 553-6521.

Sincerely,

Daniel D. Opalski
Director

Enclosure