



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, NORTHWESTERN DIVISION
PO BOX 2870
PORTLAND, OR 97208-2870

July 9, 2024

Ms. Leah Feldon, Director
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
811 S.W. Sixth Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97204-1390

Dear Ms. Feldon:

This letter is to request renewal of the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission's Order Approving a Modification to the Oregon's Water Quality Standard for Total Dissolved Gas in the Columbia River Mainstem for planned fish passage spill at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) four lower Columbia River dams. As you are aware, the current standard modification expires at the end of the 2024 calendar year. Following expiration of the current standard modification, the Corps expects to continue implementation of spill operations for fish passage as outlined in Appendix B of the U.S. Government Commitments in Support of the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative of the Resilient Columbia Basin Agreement (Agreement) (Attachment I). This Agreement, signed by the Department of the Army, Bonneville Power Administration, U.S. Department of the Interior, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the State of Oregon, the State of Washington, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation of Oregon and environmental advocacy groups led by National Wildlife Federation in December 2023, specifies that spill up to 125 percent total dissolved gas (TDG) will continue to be used as a tool for juvenile fish passage during the spring juvenile fish passage season (April 10 - June 15). The Agreement identifies spring spill operations that will remain in place for the duration and according to the term of the Agreement and associated Memorandum of Understanding.

Spring spill operations for juvenile salmonid passage up to 125 percent TDG have been implemented by the Corps since 2020 and are consistent with the previous TDG standard modification request submitted to Oregon DEQ by the Corps in 2019. As signatories to the Agreement, the Corps and the State of Oregon have agreed to spring spill operations that include juvenile fish passage spill targeting the maximum level that meets, but does not exceed, the gas cap of 125 percent TDG in the tailrace of the applicable dam. Summer spill operations (June 16 – August 31) for juvenile salmonid passage will adhere to previous TDG standard modifications not to exceed 120 percent TDG in the tailrace of each dam.

Pursuant to the Agreement and the Proposed Action consulted upon in the 2020 Columbia River System biological opinions, fish passage spill operations at the Corps'

eight lower Snake River and Columbia River dams will begin on March 1, 2025. The Corps requests an updated standard modification by January 1, 2025, to allow for planning and initiation of the fish passage spill season. We look forward to working with you and your staff to acquire an order with the TDG standard modification for implementation of spill operations for juvenile fish passage in 2025. Please contact Dan Feil, at (503) 970-1837, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Frances E. Coffey, SES
Director, Programs

Enclosure