MEMORANDUM FOR: Chris Oliver
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

FROM: Erika Feller
Chair, Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee

SUBJECT: Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee Endorsement of the final Phase 2 Report of the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force

On behalf of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC), I am very pleased to transmit the final Phase 2 Report of the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force. This report, *A Vision for Salmon and Steelhead; Goals to Restore Thriving Salmon and Steelhead to the Columbia River Basin*, is the culmination of an extensive, collaborative 4-year process that identifies shared qualitative and quantitative goals for Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead identified by the 31-member Partnership.

As the Phase 2 Report describes, salmon and steelhead are cultural icons for the region and are woven into fabric of many communities throughout the Columbia River Basin. Salmon and steelhead and the Columbia Basin ecosystem have been central to tribal culture, ceremony, and subsistence for thousands of years, and their abundance was a key factor for the region’s settlers hundreds of years ago. Now greatly diminished from massive runs and historical abundances, we urgently need to recover salmon to healthy and harvestable levels for social, cultural, economic, and ecological reasons.

This Partnership represents a diversity of stakeholders and sovereigns from across the Columbia Basin. The qualitative and quantitative goals in this report reflect their collaborative, unprecedented effort to provide future generations with healthy and abundant salmon runs across the Columbia Basin landscape. Their vision is:

*A healthy Columbia River basin ecosystem with thriving salmon and steelhead that are indicators of clean and abundant water, reliable and clean energy, a robust regional economy, and vibrant cultural and spiritual traditions, all interdependent and existing in harmony.*

The Phase 2 Report reflects the sense of urgency to help the Columbia Basin’s people, salmon, communities, and wildlife felt by Partnership members. This urgency is articulated clearly in the report’s 10 Key Messages and heard throughout the authentic, personal stories and perspectives they share in the Social, Cultural, Economic and Ecological Considerations chapter.
Furthermore, the Phase 2 Report describes different scenarios with alternative biological, physical, and other strategies that could be used to achieve the Goals. Over the course of this work, it was deemed more valuable to put forward a suite of scenarios that represent a range of options or viewpoints, rather than just a few. These scenarios and strategies should help set the stage for future conversations about how to move forward. It is our hope that future conversations can build on this work and consider the social, cultural, economic, and ecological topics that Partnership members have raised.

MAFAC members are supportive and extremely pleased with both the Phase 1 and Phase 2 work. We have also been very pleased with the collaborative process established by the West Coast Region to support all Partnership work. The momentum, trust, and working relationships established in Phase 1 carried the difficult work to successful completion in Phase 2. It will be foundational for carrying the vision forward by Partners, as they use the Goals to guide and align future decision-making.

We recommend that NOAA Fisheries accept this Phase 2 Report and continue to support this important work going forward. We wish the members of the Partnership all the best as they continue their work to realize their vision and to implement these Goals.

MAFAC also wishes to thank NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region leaders for having the wisdom to be creative and aspirational, for the work of their dedicated staff, and for making the initial request to bring together the diverse parties throughout the Basin for this important, unprecedented work.