STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
15 W. Yakima Ave. Ste 200 • Yakima, WA 98902-3452 • (509) 575-2490

June 1, 2015

Dear Icicle Working Group Members:

As funder and steering committee chair of the of the IWG process over the last two years, I am writing to both compliment the substantial progress we have made to date and to describe the Office of Columbia River expectations regarding future group deliberations. Changes are necessary for the continued success of this effort. I have come to this position through observation of work group progress and direct input from the recent survey conducted by the IWG Facilitator.

As most of you know, the Office of the Columbia River (OCR) funds a large number of projects across the basin every biennium. OCR receives far more applications for funding than it has funding to distribute. It is a very competitive process. I know that Chelan County intends to apply for additional funding for the Icicle Working Group (IWG) as it finalizes its project list and moves into the implementation phase. OCR intends to fund the IWG, but I will describe here the program's expectations regarding the IWG deliberations. If these expectations are not met, funding for the IWG and the projects that it will presumably agree to will be jeopardized.

1. IWG members need to commit to work collaboratively in a non-litigious manner to accomplish the vision of the IWG. One of the foundational purposes in convening this body was to provide a non-litigation pathway for conflict resolution. Many IWG members agreed to stay their litigation to pursue this alternate pathway, and we were disappointed when earlier this year one IWG member sued another on some of the very issues under discussion. As important as group cohesion is at the current stage of IWG deliberations, it will be even more important as we move collectively into the implementation phase of the project. Support does not exist in the Legislature for a process or the projects coming out of such a process where members are actively litigating to achieve goals they have agreed to resolve collaboratively through the IWG process.
2. The IWG steering committee needs to play a more active role in coordinating requests for funding for studies related to the many projects that are being discussed. Confusion exists among funding entities about this process, when endorsements are provided, who is championing projects, and what benefits will be accomplished.

3. IWG members need to work within the framework of the IWG to resolve internal disputes, differences of opinion, or alternate viewpoints. If this process is to be successful, a singular vision must come out of the IWG.
4. External messaging from IWG members should reflect the vision of the IWG. If you do not support one another when communicating with external audiences, it is challenging and perhaps inaccurate to publicly state that a coalition exists. The relationships and trust you have forged over the last 2 years need to be shown publicly if this process is to succeed.

I believe these expectations are reasonable and fundamental to continued success and continued funding of the IWG. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these expectations, please contact the OCR no later than June 15, 2015.

Many of you have likely heard that Derek Sandison has been appointed as Director of the Department of Agriculture. As such, the June 4 meeting will likely be our last meeting with Derek participating with the IWG. Derek and I both believe that the IWG is on the cusp of reaching agreement on an important and implementable set of projects that will fundamentally improve Icicle Creek and water supplies in the basin. The OCR looks forward to working with the IWG as it reaches agreement on an integrated project list and moves into making those projects a reality.

Sincerely,

G. Thomas Tebb, L.Hg. L.E.G.
Central Regional Director

GT:cmr (130603)

cc: Derek Sandison, Director – OCR