

**To: RMP Fish Committee**  
**From: Ben Greenfield, SFEI**  
**Subject: Summary of September 25 Fish Committee Meeting Decisions and Consequent Developments**

In attendance at the meeting: Robert Brodberg (OEHHA); Bill Walker (Environmental Working Group); Rusty Fairey, Cassandra Roberts, and Marco Sigala (Moss Landing Marine Labs); Alyce Ujihara, Samir, and Penny (CDHS); Andy Jahn (Port of Oakland); Dan Watson (City of San Jose); Terry Fleming (U.S. EPA), Karen Taberski (SFBRWQCB); Kathy Hieb (CDFG); Ben Greenfield, Jay Davis, and Jennifer Hunt (SFEI)

The major decisions made in the September 25th meeting focused on sampling components to be removed from or added to the 2003 sampling period, given budgetary constraints. This included an analysis of the budget and of the fiscal and technical impact of removing different components. This also included a discussion of a proposal presented by OEHHA to sample additional fish species that are consumed by humans.

### **Budget Planning**

#### *Meeting Summary*

I presented the essential funding dilemma that required Committee decision. Specifically, analytical and sampling costs have increased due to inflation but the budget for this program has not increased in six years. This would cause a budgetary shortfall of \$32,000 for the 2003 monitoring year, assuming no changes in the monitoring and no species additions or other special studies. I presented a number of ways of reducing cost and the Committee decided on what could be cut.

The Committee members reached consensus regarding three ways that the sampling program could be trimmed in order to stay within the budget and render additional funds available for collection and analysis of additional species:

1. Halibut and jacksmelt could be reduced in sampling effort from three composite samples per site to one composite sample per site (saving \$29,000)
2. Dioxins analysis could be skipped in 2003 (saving \$14,000).
3. PBDEs could be analyzed in 10-20 fish samples, rather than all fish samples (saving between \$15,000 and \$17,000).

Additionally, Karen Taberski expressed the sentiment that the stable isotope analysis should be dropped. Kathy Hieb strongly recommended obtaining external review of the isotope report. The isotope analysis would cost between \$5,000 and \$9,000.

### *Recent Developments*

Three developments occurred since the meeting that are worth indicating. First of all, Karen Taberski indicated that getting data on the PBDEs should be a relatively high priority and probably should include more than the 10-20 samples earmarked. Second, Robin Stewart, an expert on stable isotope analysis USGS, has agreed to provide peer review of the isotope chapter and guidance on the relative usefulness of isotope sampling for the local scientific and management community. Third, Terry Fleming indicated to me that EPA probably won't provide matching funds for Dioxins analysis, so that component will not be conducted in 2003.

### **Special Study To Sample Additional Species**

#### *Meeting Summary*

The other major topic of discussion was OEHHA's request that additional sport fish species also be sampled. This request was sent in the form of a memorandum prepared by Margy Gassel and e-mailed to the Committee shortly before the meeting.

I asked the committee for technical guidance on what species should be sampled if funds are available for sampling additional species. The target species that were settled on during the meeting were the following five species:

- brown smoothhound shark
- brown rockfish
- walleye surfperch
- black surfperch
- chinook salmon

Most of the additional species require sampling methods that are both distinct from each other and the current methods used. (for example, walleye surfperch are only in the open waters of the Bay and only present two months of the year, black surfperch and brown rockfish generally reside close to piers and structure, and chinook salmon have to be captured during migration using a less destructive method such as trammel nets). There is no certainty that it will be possible to catch representative samples of all of the listed species.

During the meeting, and in discussions afterwards, Kathy Hieb indicated that a number of the species are extremely low in abundance in the Bay and would be unrealistic to capture in sufficient numbers. These were not among the species recommended by the Committee. Kathy indicated that successful capture would be unlikely for the following species: Pacific sardine, Pacific sanddab, starry flounder, and most of the Embiotocidae species not listed above (rubberlip seaperch, silver surfperch, pile perch, striped seaperch, rainbow surfperch, white seaperch, and barred surfperch).

### *Recent Developments*

After the meeting, Rusty Fairey of MLML provided the following cost calculations for sampling these fish. Rusty indicated that if the actual cost turned out to be less, then the remainder would be returned to RMP.

Brown Smoothhound and Chinook Salmon – \$1247 per composite; this is the same as the seven species that the RMP currently targets

Walleye Surfperch, Black Surfperch, and Rockfish – \$1870 per composite (more expensive because of anticipated difficulty of capture)

Anchovy – free (captured as bycatch)

### **Revised Budget**

Based on committee feedback during the meeting and discussion with Karen Taberski, Rusty Fairey, and Jay Davis afterwards, I have revised the budget and present it for the Committee to consider. The budget includes the following changes from the 2000 sampling:

- halibut and jacksmelt sampling have been reduced to one replicate sample each per site (total savings \$29,000)
- Dioxins analysis has been removed (total savings \$14,000)
- isotope analysis has been removed (total savings \$9,000)
- PBDEs will be analyzed in all fish samples analyzed for trace organics (additional cost \$21,000)
- Multiple composite samples will be collected for the five fish species recommended by the committee, and also for anchovies (which are caught for free as by catch and which were on the list recommended by Margy Gassel). Funds have been allocated to collect and analyze 3 composites of each species (2 composites of walleye surfperch). These additional species will be analyzed for mercury and PCBs. (additional cost \$34,000).
- Additional species on Margy's list will be kept as bycatch. (no additional cost)

The revised budget (attached) comes to a total of \$209,000 which is on target for the \$210,000 available.

### **Recommended Future Actions**

Jay Davis and Karen Taberski– incorporate inflation adjustment into fish program so budgetary reductions don't continue to be necessary

Rusty Fairey and Cassandra Roberts– contact Kathy Hieb regarding best ways, dates, and methods to capture the new target fish species

**In the interest of saving everyone's valuable time, we are not planning on having another Fish Committee meeting prior to the 2003 sampling. However, I welcome feedback from the Committee on the budgetary changes, other developments, or related opinions. If you have feedback, please call me, e-mail me, or e-mail the whole Committee, as you prefer.**

**We are particularly interested in feedback on what you view the next highest priority would be for the Fish Program, if additional funds become available (e.g. if some of the species aren't successfully captured).**

Thanks to everyone who attended this very productive and constructive meeting.