



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Columbia-Cascades Area Office
1917 Marsh Road
Yakima, Washington 98901-2058



IN REPLY REFER TO:

CCA-1100
PRJ-3.00

APR 28 2010

Mr. Max Benitz, Jr.
Benton County Commissioner
P.O. Box 190
Prosser, WA 99350-0190

Subject: March 22, 2010 Benton County Commissioner Letter Requesting Clarification of the Washington State Department of Ecology Letter Dated March 22, 2010

Dear Commissioner Benitz:

Thank you for your letter of March 29, 2010 requesting the Bureau of Reclamation's responses to questions from the Board of Benton County Commissioners that pertain to the *Preliminary Integrated Water Resource Management Plan for the Yakima Basin*. I will respond to your questions in the order in which they occurred in your letter.

Number 1. The Board's first question concerned Reclamation's pumping power rates across projects and the actual costs to the users. Power rates vary across projects and are influenced by such factors as the original congressional authorization, industrial/agricultural power rates for that time period, demand charges, and the type and location of the facility. For the Umatilla Project, average annual pumping power rates varied from 48 to 58 mils for years 2005-2009. Pumping power costs associated with the Umatilla River-Columbia River water exchange are paid for by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) as stipulated in the Umatilla Basin Project Act of 1988 authorized by Congress. On the Columbia Basin Project reserved energy is in the range of 2.5 mils plus transmission depending on the point of delivery and is paid by the water users.

The area being evaluated under the Odessa Special study is part of the authorized Columbia Basin Project and if developed would receive the same reserved energy rate. Though not specified in your question, I have included the Klamath Basin as an example where the irrigation customer's power rates were renegotiated with PacificCorp when the 50-year-old power rate contract expired in 2006. Over an adjustment period of 7 years (2006-2013), on-project power rates are proposed to increase to 80 mils in 2013, excluding credit adjustments. It would be speculative—based on all the factors that determine power rates—to predict the possible power rates for any proposed Columbia River-Yakima River water exchange. However, based on the information I have received, power rates will likely follow the BPA Tier 2 rates which are currently about 40-50 mils, excluding transmission costs.

Number 2. As stated in Ecology's response to your letter, Reclamation will conduct additional benefit-cost ratio analyses of individual components of the plan that seek Federal funding. Synergistic benefits that may be derived from the interactions between the plan components will be considered an additive to the benefits of the individual components.

Number 3. Table 2.18 from the *Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study Final EIS* has been discussed in the YRBWEP Workgroup meetings. Figure 2.11 from the Final EIS showing target flows on the Columbia River and water availability above target flows was included in a PowerPoint presentation given during the Workgroup meeting on July 29, 2009, on direct pumping from the Columbia River. At the November 23, 2009 Workgroup meeting, a PowerPoint slide on Wymer Dam and Reservoir configurations showed taking water out of the Columbia River and again, water availability was discussed and reference was made to Table 2.18. Reclamation agrees that water availability on the Columbia River is important in the analysis of the Basin Study and that we should verify the information and assumptions used.

Number 4. As discussed with the Workgroup at the last meeting on December 17, 2009, and as stated on page six of the *Preliminary Integrated Water Resource Management Plan*, "This will be accomplished through a peer-reviewed demand analysis performed by Washington State University in conjunction with a larger analysis they are conducting for Ecology's Office of Columbia River."

Sincerely,



Wendy Christensen
Technical Projects Program Manager

Enclosure

cc: Derek Sandison
Director
Washington Department of Ecology
Office of the Columbia River
303 S. Mission Street, Suite 200
Wenatchee, WA 98801