

TO: State-Provincial Steering Committee

FROM: Steve Ellenbecker, WIEB Staff

DATE: June 11, 2010

SUBJECT: **Water and Wildlife Discussions at the June 17-18 Meeting of WECC/TEPPC Scenario Planning Steering Group (SPSG) Meeting**

This staff briefing is specifically intended to update you on the Environmental Data Task Force agenda topic scheduled for discussion at the SPSG meeting in Denver next week. As you know, several SPSC members are members of the SPSG, and this communication is also meant to facilitate their preparation for discussion of this agenda topic. Otherwise, it is intended to update SPSC members on a matter of mutual interest to SPSC and SPSG.

The SPSG is considering the formation of an Environmental Data Task Force (EDTF), and will be evaluating its structure, scope of work, and Task Force participants at the June 17-18 meeting. My understanding from the review of draft documents is that short-term objectives of the EDTF include the goal of identifying the immediate availability of wildlife and water data that can serve as input in the 2020 transmission model (the 10-year cases). Longer term objectives incorporate refinement of the type, quality and sources of data that can be effectively utilized in the 20-year transmission scenario planning process.

The proposed EDTF has understandably caught the attention of WGA staff supporting the Western Governors' Wildlife Council (WGWC) and Western States Water Council (WSWC) and providing input in the Regional Transmission Expansion Planning (RTEP) process under Topic B tasks. The emerging concept of the EDTF under Topic A has raised sensitivity over the proper source of wildlife and water data input into the TEPPC models.

WIEB staff has been working over the last week to support communications and cooperation between the Topic A and B interests in wildlife and water data, and to encourage consideration of the merit of a single stream of best available data as final inputs into the modeling process. We have supported a presentation now planned on the work of the Wildlife Council at the June 16-17 TEPPC meeting and a brief discussion on the water-energy nexus work by the WSWC at the SPSG meeting. Both of these presentations should contribute toward further cooperation.

The SPSG will appoint members to the EDTF. It is my understanding that the SPSG will consider the appointment of WGA WC and WSWC representatives to the EDTF. Doing so would serve to integrate the results of their respective work into the data evaluations that will be conducted by the EDTF.

Western Governors believe the RTEP process needs to account for wildlife and water sensitivities, so that the results produced provide information to decision makers in a manner that will assist them in balancing the competing regional needs of transmission expansion and wildlife and water resource protection.

WECC is interested in determining how to most efficiently acquire water and wildlife sensitivity data and integrate it into the modeling tools in a usable form.

It is my impression that real progress is being made to address and resolve the tensions over wildlife and water data analysis between Topic A and Topic B responsibilities in the RTEP initiative.

Information on the [TEPPC](#) and [SPSG](#) meetings being held next week in Denver is posted on the WECC website.

Please contact me (sellenbecker@westgov.org ; 303.573.8910) if you have any questions.