



## Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration  
P.O. Box 3621  
Portland, OR 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH & WILDLIFE

January 2, 2024

In reply refer to: ECF-4

### To: People interested in the Select Area Fisheries Enhancement (SAFE) Program

Bonneville Power Administration (Bonneville) is proposing to fund the SAFE Program. This letter explains what is being proposed, outlines our anticipated environmental review process and schedule, and requests your comments.

**Proposal:** Bonneville is proposing to fund the SAFE Program to achieve maximum production levels of Chinook and coho salmon as proposed from three fishery co-managers (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Clatsop County Fisheries) and as authorized by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The SAFE Program would rear, acclimate, and release up to 4.25 million spring Chinook salmon smolts and 4.3 million coho salmon at four in-water net pen sites in off-channel areas (Select Areas) in the Lower Columbia River estuary located between river miles 10.0 and 27.0 (Figure 1). Eventually, these fish would return to these Select Areas for commercial and recreational harvest. Thus, the SAFE Program's overall objective would be protection of natural origin salmon through reduced harvest pressure.



Figure 1: SAFE Net Pen Sites and Select Area Fisheries Location

**Environmental Review:** To understand the potential environmental impacts of this proposal, BPA may prepare an environmental assessment (EA). If BPA determines that an EA should be prepared, the EA will describe anticipated impacts to natural and human resources and include mitigation measures that would help avoid or minimize impacts. We are asking for your comments to help determine the issues that should be addressed in the environmental review. During this process, BPA will work with Federal, state, and local agencies; Tribes; and other interest groups. The proposed schedule for the environmental review process is as follows:

Scoping comment period	January 2 – February 2, 2024
EA determination (if warranted)	February 2024
Draft EA available for public comment (if warranted)	March 2024
Final EA (if warranted)	May 2024
Finding of No Significant Impact (if warranted)	June 2024
If decision to implement, start	July 2024

**How to Comment:** Please send your comments by **February 2, 2024**, and reference the *SAFE Program*. All comments will be available on the project website at [www.bpa.gov/nepa/safe](http://www.bpa.gov/nepa/safe). There are several ways to comment:

<b>Mail:</b> Bonneville Power Administration Public Affairs – DKE-7 P.O. Box 14428 Portland, OR 97291-4428	<b>Toll-free:</b> 800-622-4519 <b>FAX:</b> 503-230-4019
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**For More Information:** If you have questions regarding the environmental process, please contact me at 503-230-3493, or by e-mail at [dagambetta@bpa.gov](mailto:dagambetta@bpa.gov). You can also reach us toll free at 1-800-622-4519.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

/s/ Dan Gambetta  
Dan Gambetta  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Enclosures:  
Comment Form  
Return Envelope