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August 8, 2017

### MEMORANDUM

**TO: Committee Members**

**FROM: Leslie Bach**

**SUBJECT: Presentation on effects of Toxic contaminants on fish**

#### **BACKGROUND:**

**Presenter:** Nat Scholz and Jessica Lundin, NOAA Fisheries

**Summary:** Toxic chemical contaminants are a form of habitat degradation, and thus a limiting factor for salmon recovery in many areas of the Columbia River Basin. This presentation will briefly discuss major threats to salmon health and survival, ongoing efforts to improve water and sediment quality, likely benefits for threatened and endangered populations, and key information gaps. The discussion will also identify situations in which toxics, if unaddressed, can undermine the recovery goals of conventional physical habitat restoration efforts.

**Relevance:** The Fish and Wildlife Program Water Quality sub-strategy includes a provision for the Council to "...assist regional parties in advancing public education and information on toxics issues" (page 55, Water Quality Strategy). The emerging program priorities section calls for the Council to preserve program effectiveness by supporting "mapping and determining hotspots for toxic contaminants" (page 116, Investment Strategy – Emerging Program Priorities).

**Background:** Council staff have been hosting a regional workgroup consisting of staff from NOAA, CRITFC, Washington Ecology, ODEQ, LCEP, UCUTs, Yakama Nation, USGS, EPA and others. The basis for the group is to raise

awareness of the issue of toxic contaminant impacts on native fish and wildlife. This presentation is part of that effort, along with a pilot mapping exercise to demonstrate tools for identifying and displaying toxic contaminant issues in the Columbia River Basin.