



Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621



February 27, 2026

In reply refer to: ECF-4

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

Bonneville Power Administration (Bonneville) finalized the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Select Area Fisheries Enhancement (SAFE) Program. Based on the final EA, Bonneville is issuing a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). This letter describes Bonneville's proposed action, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, and how to obtain additional information.

Background: Under the Proposed Action, Bonneville would continue to provide partial funding to three fishery co-managers (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Clatsop County Fisheries) to implement the SAFE Program. The SAFE Program includes the acclimation, transport, and release of juvenile salmonids (spring Chinook and coho smolts), in addition to monitoring and evaluation, and the operations and maintenance of SAFE hatchery facilities and net pen sites (SAFE Facilities).

Juvenile salmonids would be collected and reared at various SAFE hatcheries in the Lower Columbia River Estuary and its tributaries, then acclimated and released from SAFE Facilities in off-channel areas (Select Areas). As adults, these fish return to the Select Areas, where they support commercial and recreational fisheries (Select Area Fisheries). By funding the SAFE Program, Bonneville seeks to minimize harm to weak stocks of natural origin ESA-listed salmon and steelhead by providing harvest opportunities from Select Area Fisheries.

Bonneville prepared an EA to determine if either a no action alternative or continuing to partially fund the SAFE Program would result in significant environmental impacts requiring preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A draft EA was released for public review and comment in September 2024, and four comment letters were received. Bonneville reviewed and responded to all substantive comments in the final EA. Based on the analysis in the final EA and the identified mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts, Bonneville has found that neither a no action alternative nor continued partial funding of the SAFE Program would result in significant impacts; therefore, an EIS will not be prepared.

For More Information: The final EA, FONSI, and Mitigation Action Plan are available on Bonneville's website at: www.bpa.gov/nepa/SAFE. If you previously requested a copy of the documents, they are enclosed. If you would like to obtain paper copies of these documents, please call our toll-free document request line at 1.800.622.4520; leave a request naming this project and giving your name and complete mailing address.

If you have questions regarding the environmental process, please contact me at 503.230.3493 or by e-mail at dagambetta@bpa.gov. You can also reach us toll free at 1.800.622.4519. Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

Daniel Gambetta
Senior Environmental Protection Specialist

Enclosures:

Final EA (if requested)

FONSI and Mitigation Action Plan