

## **EXHIBIT 2-A**

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John,

### **Introduction**

On December 1, 2017 you transmitted the Draft Alternative Descriptions Technical Memorandum for the Los Padres Dam and Reservoir Alternatives and Sediment Management Study (TM) to the Technical Review Committee (TRC) with a request for comments by Jan 3, 2018 in preparation for TRC meeting on the same later in January. Due to the holidays, CDFW committee members requested a revised comment date of January 12. The focus of the request and upcoming meeting is to narrow the field of alternatives for the project to about five alternatives.

Therefore, the focus of the below is CDFW committee members comments are what alternatives we feel should remain in the field and why. In naming these alternatives, we will refer to Table 4.1 near the end of the TM. While we have more detailed comments on many sections of the TM, it is inefficient to bring them up at this time as, though the winnow of alternatives, they may become moot. At this point, we are also compelled to comment on the overall decision-making process for the future operation and configuration of the Los Padres Dam site.

The comments below represent the combined input of CDFW staff reviewing this document.

### **Preferred Alternatives for Los Padres Dam Site**

General - The planning horizon for choosing between alternatives was 60 years. While this may have already been explained, please (re)state the rationale for that planning timeframe.

#### Preferred Alternatives (no preferential order):

Alternative 4b Rubber Dam in LPD Spillway with SM2/SM3 - CDFW staff see this alternative as a possibility for providing adequate in-stream flow insurance for steelhead below LPD while also providing for utilization of the habitat upstream of the dam for appropriate lifestages at a low cost and level of effort. CDFW also notes that this configuration imposes several hardships on the resource that need to be mitigated.

#### **Caveats:**

1. The increased water supply provided by raising the dam crest and/or dredging must be managed for the benefit of the fisheries and other natural resources. It is acknowledged that municipal water uses, may, at times, be appended to this operation but natural resources must have primacy.
2. The increased water supply will be targeted at optimal, not minimal, flows for the fishery.
3. Upstream and downstream fish passage for all appropriate lifestages will be upgraded to current standard facilities and practices for new dam facilities. It is noted that some of this fish passage

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upgrade could proceed on an accelerated timeline while DSOD permits for the dam modifications are in process.

4. Removed sediment will be separated and the coarser fraction staged for replenishing the sediment supply downstream.

### **Data Gaps:**

1. What is the frequency, spacial and temporal extent of the flow releases for the benefit of steelhead currently and how would that improve with the added reservoir capacity?
2. What is the optimal flow release schedule over the course of various water year types and what is the best initial operation schedule for the inflatable dam crest? How might this improve with the knowledge base of on-going operations and improved hydrologic record?
3. Where will the usable fraction of the sediment be staged?

Alternative 2b with SM3 Partial Dam Removal and Sluicing Tunnel - CDFW staff see this alternative as returning the fisheries, stream processes and watershed to its most natural state. It would relieve all concerned parties of ongoing management and operations while restoring natural flow and sediment transport and reverting the reservoir area to its original condition for a moderate initial cost. CDFW recognizes that other actions may be needed outside of the LPD footprint to compensate for the flows now afforded by the dam for low water conditions.

### **Caveat:**

1. Impacts from water diversion downstream of the dam will be fully mitigated. This will likely require the authority and action of agencies beyond CDFW.

### **Data Gaps:**

1. What is the frequency, spacial and temporal extent of the flow releases for the benefit of steelhead from current operations? How is that likely to change during the time between now and project implementation?
2. Of the benefits provided by the current flow releases, what proportion of them are mitigating for other diversions in the watershed and what proportion are in response to natural surface and subsurface flows? In the subset countering natural flows, how would removing those benefits be different from conditions that the steelhead co-evolved with?

Eliminated options – CDFW recommends removal the following options in the current task of narrowing the field.

Alternative 4a – this causes a sustained loss of upstream habitat, has less operational flexibility, is likely to have greater fish passage difficulties and is more expensive.

Alternative 4c & 4d – These eliminate additional spawning and rearing habitat, cause additional downstream and upstream passage problems and come at a high cost. Department will not permit nor contribute funds to a new dam.

### **Decision Making Process for LPD site**

For several months, CDFW has been concerned that the decision-making process for the long-term future of the LPD site is flawed and could be leading to a suboptimal conclusion. We realize that many of

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the contributing factors are not the result of AECOM, or even the larger TRC actions, but we are compelled to raise them so that this effort meets its ultimate goal.

There are several on-going studies in the watershed as has been reviewed, at times, by MPWMD and others. Some of these studies, within the next year or two, will be providing valuable pieces of information that could have a profound influence on Department's view of the field of alternatives under consideration. In that regard, the current suite of studies is mistimed and miscoordinated. CDFW is willing to discuss the particulars of these malfunctions in the appropriate venue.

In addition, splitting the fish passage alternatives study and the dam and reservoir alternative studies into two different efforts is not working well. While we appreciate the appeal of this reductionist approach to a complicated problem, the matters are inextricably linked, as indicated in our comments above. It is unclear to us how these two studies will be brought together at the end of this process. In the meantime, the current course leaves us without a means to fairly and clearly compare future configurations of the dam site to each other. We are concerned that this will lead to erroneous judgements and conclusions. Again, CDFW stands ready to discuss particular examples and work with the Committee to improve this decision making process.