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**From:** James Dixon - NOAA Federal <james.dixon@noaa.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 19, 2021 10:02 AM  
**To:** randy harder  
**Cc:** Scott Bass; Aaron Brooks; Abigail Welch  
**Subject:** Language for this year's Council guidance letter

Good morning,

I understand that there are still discussions going on with regard to the Mid-HC objective and we certainly don't want to impact and progress on that front. That said, we are needing to finalize our guidance language for the March Council meeting. We had discussed, on our call with you recently, that we could roll over the language from last year, if it would provide the room the co-managers needed to continue their discussions. Here is that language with some suggested updates:

1. For the Mid-Hood Canal Chinook population, the 2021 forecast is for very low abundance, as has been the case for recent years. The discontinuation of a small supplementation program for the population has resulted in a marked decrease in total terminal run size for this population. As part of the long-term RMP development, the co-managers are continuing to work toward agreement on a Mid-Hood Canal exploitation rate for SUS fisheries. Understanding that these discussions are ongoing between the co-managers, for the 2021 fishery, NMFS' guidance for the Mid-Hood Canal Chinook population is that fisheries limit their impacts such that the reduction in preseason estimated escapement of natural-origin fish, as a result of Puget Sound fisheries, is similar to the **most recent two years** of preseason estimates. We anticipate that an objective that meets this escapement goal will meet the conservation needs of the population.

**removed the specific year reference.**

If you could confirm that this language would give the co-managers the necessary space to continue the discussion, we would appreciate it.

The letter is scheduled to go to the COuncil on Feb 23rd, so we would appreciate a prompt response if possible.

Thank you,

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