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02-April-2008

Ms. Valerie Termini
Ocean Protection Council
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Letter for Support for CEMAR Grant Proposal

Ms. Termini:

I am writing to express my support for the Southern Steelhead Resources Project, a proposal before the Ocean Protection Council on May 15, 2008. The Center for Ecosystem Management and Restoration (CEMAR) started the Southern Steelhead Resources Project (SSRP) in 2004 to ensure that all stakeholders have access to a well-documented and authoritative scientific foundation for decision-making regarding restoration of steelhead trout in central and southern California. Through earlier phases of the SSRP, CEMAR has prepared for the first time an authoritative and accessible analysis of the historical distribution and current status of steelhead/rainbow trout in the region south of the Golden Gate. The results of the SSRP have been utilized by government, non-governmental organizations (including private consultants), and private citizens.

The existence of this publicly-vetted analysis creates an opportunity to consider steelhead restoration activities in central and southern California at a scale never before possible. Further, the existence of a steelhead resources information database (with over 5,000 references) allows the opportunity to evaluate the relative importance of certain watersheds and their tributary streams to the overall process of restoring the species. Key factors that affect the potential contribution include the existence of reproducing *O. mykiss* populations and key habitat resources, as well as the existence of long-term passage barriers, the condition of the watershed, and the commitment to restoration by local stakeholders.

CEMAR now proposes to prepare a habitat study for the region, using the approach they pioneered with such success in the San Francisco Bay Area. Their Bay Area analysis (*San Francisco Estuary Watersheds Evaluation*) has been very helpful in bringing initial focus to restoration planning by determining that work on just 18 of the almost 200 historical steelhead streams in the Bay Area will protect over one-half of the regional rearing habitat. I believe that by applying this analysis method to the study area of the SSRP they will provide a valuable service to the stakeholders in the region.

In particular, I wish to note that CEMAR's scientific, non-adversarial approach to these issues is particularly useful for building constructive dialogue among the diverse parties with an interest in steelhead restoration. CEMAR's willingness to communicate with the broad stakeholder community while preparing their reports, and their commitment to peer review, ensures that their final product will be considered highly credible. In addition, their focus on identifying specific projects that should be undertaken in key watersheds is a valuable complement to the activities of the resource management and recovery planning agencies (i.e., the California Department of Fish and Game and the National Marine Fisheries Service).

I urge the Ocean Protection Council to support the SSRP as proposed by CEMAR. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can provide you with any additional information.

Sincerely,



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