

WDAFS Resource Policy & Environmental Concerns Committee:

Environmental Concerns Letter Guidelines & Process

An environmental concerns letter is a formal expression of views of the Western Division of the American Fisheries Society (WDAFS) membership as represented by its Executive Committee (ExCom) or Officers. The purpose of such a statement is to call attention to an issue of environmental concern and place the WDAFS on record as recognizing the need for action or a change in perspective by appropriate institutions. Unlike policy statements, environmental concerns letters typically must be developed quickly and be relatively succinct. Unlike resolutions, they do not require membership approval.

Environmental Concerns Letter Criteria: 1) The issue should be pertinent to AFS Objective-a (“promote the conservation, development and wise use of fisheries”). For examples of AFS letters, see: <https://fisheries.org/policy-media/policy-letters/>. For the AFS advocacy policy, see: <https://fisheries.org/policy-media/advocacy-guidelines/>. 2) The issue should be relevant to the WDAFS mission to “Improve the conservation and sustainability of . . . fishery resources and aquatic ecosystems in western North America by advancing fisheries and aquatic science. 3) The potential consequences of the issue should make it appropriate for WDAFS action, including Identifying when science is being misinterpreted, suppressed or altered. 4) Appropriate peer-reviewed technical information should be available for supporting the statements made in the letter. 5) The letter should represent the diversity of the WDAFS membership as indicated by its leadership and amplify the importance of sound science in decision making.

Environmental Concerns Letter Prioritization: WDAFS cannot comment on all environmental concerns arising in western North America; therefore, the following factors should be used to set priorities: 1) environmental consequences of a proposed action, 2) likelihood of an action setting a precedent, 3) proposed action crosses multiple WDAFS Chapter borders, and 4) potential effects on science budgets or science purity.

Environmental Concerns Letter Process: The Resource Policy and Environmental Concerns Committee (RPECC) shall follow 6 steps with its letters: 1) RPECC raises a concern; 2) RPECC seeks approval from Officers to proceed; 3) if approved to proceed, RPECC develops the letter; 4) RPECC submits the draft letter to the ExCom and/or Officers and the AFS Policy Director for review and comment; 5) RPECC revises the letter in response to the review and comments; and 6) RPECC returns the revised letter to the president for a final review, signature, and submission to the appropriate institution.