UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northwest Region
7600 Sand Point Way N.E., Bldg. 1
Seattle, WA 98115

January 22, 2004

The Honorable Gary Locke
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, Washington 98504

Dear Governor Locke:

I am delighted to provide NOAA Fisheries' endorsement of the State of Washington's *An Outline for Salmon Recovery Plans* that you transmitted on December 15, 2003. The outline provides an excellent framework for recovery planning. It endorses and relies on local efforts and also addresses threats and actions across all life cycle stages of salmon and steelhead. If recovery planners follow this outline, they would meet the recovery planning requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead.

NOAA supports Washington's initiative to take the lead in recovery planning for salmon and steelhead that spawn in the state. While NOAA ultimately has a statutory obligation to formally adopt recovery plans under the ESA, it is within our discretion to incorporate, in whole or in part, plans developed through state and local efforts. Successful regional recovery plans in Washington are a high priority for NOAA. Accordingly, I have directed my staff to work hard to support Washington's recovery planning and implementation efforts. I look forward to a strong partnership in the achievement of salmon and steelhead recovery.

Sincerely,

D. Robert Lohn
Regional Administrator

cc: Governor Dirk Kempthorne, State of Idaho
Governor Judy Martz, State of Montana
Governor Ted Kulongoski, State of Oregon
Jeff Koenings, Director, WDFW