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## MEMORANDUM

**September 12, 2024**

**TO:** TFW Policy Committee

**FROM:** Lori Clark, Adaptive Management Program Administrator (AMPA)  
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**SUBJECT:** Office of Washington State Auditor's (SAO) Recommendations for CMER Reform

In January 2021, the SAO completed a performance audit of the AMP<sup>1</sup>. The audit provided 13 recommendations for improvements to decision making, accountability, and transparency. Eleven of these recommendations were assigned to the Board. In May 2021, the Board approved priorities among the recommendations in the form of a response plan. In October 2022, the Board approved the TFW Policy workgroup & AMPA recommendations in support of the SAO Recommendation #05, adopting a Net Gains model for TFW Policy. One of those options is for Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Committee (CMER) to initiate dialogue with TFW Policy on CMER reform options on potential reforms and changes for Adaptive Management Program (AMP) efficiency and reform, including CMER membership, process improvements, and other relevant topics.

In 2023, per the request of Policy, the AMPA met with each Policy caucus representative individually to collect input on areas in need of CMER reform and potential improvements. A memo was delivered to TFW Policy summarizing the input and highlighting areas of shared agreement on options to be considered for improvements to support a more efficient and science centered CMER. There was no consensus at TFW Policy to advance any of the options that were identified to address the SAO recommendation. Therefore, the AMPA worked with CMER to make improvements to the Protocol & Standards Manual (PSM) to address this recommendation and support better meeting management and improved decision making, accountability, and transparency.

Despite these changes, CMER continues to experience issues that result in meeting management issues, a breakdown of relationships and respect, and delays with AMP priorities. It is my recommendation that TFW Policy pick back up this issue and make a recommendation to the Board, including considering, among other options, the following two from the TFW Policy and AMPA net gains recommendation to the Board:

1. "A diverse and well-seated CMER committee will improve the AMP. Revising membership in the committee is probably a net gains option for the program as a whole and not necessarily a net gains option for TFW Policy alone. This option would require limiting voting membership in CMER to one member per caucus. The broader scientific community can continue to participate in CMER and its associated Scientific Advisory Groups (SAGs). The intent is to allow CMER to sharply focus on science and not engage in policy issues in that committee. Revising membership may lead to such an outcome including exploring minimum experience/skill requirements and setting high standards for CMER members. Implementing this option is largely dependent on consensus among AMP participants (CMER

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<sup>1</sup> [Performance Audit of the Adaptive Management Program](#)

<sup>1</sup> **SAO Recommendation 5:** Implement a "net gains" approach to each proposal, project, and decision that benefits more than one caucus by considering packages of projects instead of individual projects. 5 Net Gains Options were approved.

- and TFW Policy Committee). Neither the BM22 nor WAC 222.12.045 limit the number of participants for CMER. Adjustments to CMER membership can, therefore, happen voluntarily.
2. Modify the science function to be carried out independently by a research organization. The stakeholder or cooperative nature of doing science would no longer function in its current form. This is a fundamental change to the AMP. It most certainly would require a consensus process leading to Policy recommendation to the Board.”

We all have the same desire to see the AMP improve its performance, increase its relevancy and be successful over the long term. Thank you for your attention to this matter and feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments.