



## **RE: The Proposed Chehalis River Flood Retention Facility**

Oct 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to share our thoughts with you on the ongoing Chehalis Basin Strategy, particularly on the proposed Chehalis River Flood Retention Expandable facility (FRE). While we appreciate the effort that went into developing the plans for the FRE, both SEPA and NEPA analyses suggest there are too many negative environmental impacts and not enough obvious benefits from flood reductions to support such a project at this time. However, we do support the recent letters from the Governor asking the Chehalis Basin Board to seek viable local action alternatives to the FRE.

We encourage you to support the development of the local action alternatives and to support future efforts that seek alternatives to the FRE. Developing a new robust local actions alternative has not only been a preferred path forward for the local Indigenous peoples of the Chehalis Basin, but it is also supported by other residents of the Chehalis Basin, as well as conservation and recreation groups throughout the region. Furthermore, many of the aforementioned groups have voiced concerns that the proposed FRE will adversely impact one of our state's greatest remaining salmon rivers and a habitat corridor critical for wildlife in southwest Washington.

Washingtonians depend on healthy watersheds throughout the state and in the Chehalis Basin for livelihoods, safety, sustenance, and culture. We are concerned that the FRE will permanently diminish the connection between the watershed and residents. Furthermore, there is evidence that the FRE will partially protect some residents from certain flood events, while not protecting others. Considering the inequitable outcomes of such a facility, the uncertainty over actual future costs of both construction and the significant mitigation that would be required, we feel the only way to evenly distribute costs and benefits is to seek a basin-wide solution. We believe that the local actions alternative that the Governor has requested to be developed is a pathway to a more equitable long-term strategy, and one that will address recovery of salmon and restoration of key watershed ecological functions which people, fish and wildlife depend on.

We welcome your support on solutions to the increasing flooding in the Basin that protect residents, natural resources, and the cultural integrity of the Chehalis Basin, without adversely impacting citizens and the region's unique natural resources via the FRE.

Thank you for your time.

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