



STATE OF WASHINGTON
Office of the Governor

July 22, 2020

Dear Members of the Chehalis Basin Board:

I value the important work that you do to advance consensus-based, win-win solutions for flooding and fish in the Chehalis Basin. The complex challenges facing our communities require science, collaboration, and innovative thinking to forge lasting solutions.

Recent work evaluating a proposed large-scale flood retention project in the upper Chehalis River has brought additional and significant questions and concerns about impacts and alternatives. In light of these concerns, I am requesting that the board work together to:

- Define a process and timeline for developing and evaluating a basin-wide non-dam alternative to reducing flood damage.
- Continue evaluating the issues raised regarding the retention project and other flood risk reduction projects and the potential to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the identified impacts.
- Deliver a consensus recommendation on the process back to me no later than the end of **September 2020** that will lead to a long-term strategy for consideration by me and the legislature in the first quarter of 2021.

Since the Board's recommendations will have implications for the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process currently under way, I have requested that Ecology pause the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process through at least the end of the year. I am also directing Ecology to use available funding within the Office of Chehalis Basin budget to assist the Board in its development of a non-dam alternative.

Climate change poses a significant risk to aquatic species and increased flood damage in the basin, and I believe that we will need the best scientific evaluation of options to preserve and restore salmon runs and protect the basin's human communities. Time is of the essence as climate change is already impacting the basin.

I look forward to hearing back from you soon. If you have questions, please contact my Senior Policy Advisor, Jennifer Hennessey at Jennifer.hennessey@gov.wa.gov. Thank you again for your dedication and hard work.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Inslee".

Jay Inslee
Governor

CC: Laura Watson, Director, Department of Ecology

