Chehalis Meeting 20251211 Recording.m4a

Angie Thomson: Hi, folks, we're just a few minutes away. Um, we're just going to let folks get oriented into the zoom space and get yourself settled. So we have we're just going to wait a couple minutes before we start. Those of you who are joining us, we we're going to start in just a minute or two. We're just letting folks get in, um, and settled at their computers before we start. You're just going to wait maybe one more minute before we get started, as folks are still joining in to the space.

Angie Thomson: I think we have most of our folks here.

Angie Thomson: The number of people in the room hasn't changed, so let's go ahead and get started. Um, welcome to the online public hearing for the Chehalis Basin Draft Environmental Impact Statement. My name is Angie Thompson, and I'll be the facilitator for our meeting today. We're so happy to have you here to join us. I want to share some logistics. Um, we are using the zoom platform. You are all here as attendees to this webinar. So you are on mute and your cameras are off automatically. We are broadcasting this meeting in both English and Spanish, so please click on the globe icon that's on the bottom of your screen to select the language that you'd like to listen to the meeting in today. Um, selecting English makes the English a little louder, and selecting Spanish allows you to hear from our interpreters. You can use the chat during the meeting today. Um, you should see this on your screen. I've highlighted it with an arrow. Um, it's usually down at the bottom of the screen if you hover your mouse or your finger there. Um, and this is where you can let us know if you're having technical issues such as trouble hearing us or seeing what's on the screen. And we may also put information in the chat that might be helpful to you. We are not taking written comments through the chat box. We'll share information on where you can submit comments in writing in a little bit. You can also turn on closed captioning so that you can read what we're saying by clicking on the live transcript. And then during the public hearing, you can let us know that you want to give oral comments by using the raised hand feature. Um, let's go ahead and practice raising your hand now so that you're ready when the time comes. So on your screen, um, find the words raised hand. It's usually at the bottom. If you called in, you can raise and lower your hand by pressing star nine on your phone. So once you've found it, go ahead and click it to practice raising your hand.

Angie Thomson: Everybody's putting their hands up.

Angie Thomson: That's great. Good job. Um, I'm going to go ahead and lower all those hands just so we can, uh, start fresh. And I'm going to lower. What am I, um, colleagues hands as well, so that we're back to a clear slate. Okay. Knowing everything that's been going on in the community today and over the last week, we want to know that we we really appreciate that you're taking the time out of your lives to attend this meeting and provide your comments on the proposed project. Unfortunately, we had to cancel our in-person hearing on Tuesday because the Centralia College campus was closed due to inclement weather. Um, we do have additional in-person hearings scheduled in January and an additional virtual meeting in January as well. Today, our purpose is to present information and accept oral comments on the revised draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed project. We'll have a brief presentation to provide some information on the purpose of an EIS, give an overview of the proposed project, share findings of significant adverse impacts, and then move on to the official public hearing where you can provide public comments. Our guidelines for the meeting today, both during the presentation and the public comment session, is to use respectful language when providing comments or asking questions and where possible, provide comments that are specific, constructive and on topic. Respect the rights of others to have an opinion even if you do not agree with their opinion. Be ready to speak when your name is called and your line is unmuted when we're in the public hearing.

Angie Thomson: And then respect the time limit for comments. Um, and please summarize any, any lengthy comments. Um, so that so that we can make sure to hear your hear your comments. Are there any questions about the agenda or how to participate? So please raise your hand or put a message in the chat to let me know if you have a question. Or for those of you only on the phone, you can If you're calling in, you can hit star nine to let me know, and we'll unmute you so you can ask a question just about the the meeting, uh, logistics piece. Seeing none, um, I am going to just remind you that we will be recording. Um, sorry. There was a question about the time limit for comments as we get closer to the public hearing. Fran will review that more. We have a two minute limit for public comment so that we can make sure to hear from everyone. Um, and Fran will go over that in more in more detail. So just a reminder that we are recording this meeting today. We will make a video of the presentation available online as soon as we can for those who can't attend, or if you'd like to watch it again.

Okay, we are ready to move into the presentation. Um, so I would like to introduce Bobbak Talebi, who's the director of Ecology Southwest region. Over to you.

Bobbak Talebi: Yeah. Thank you. And thank you, everybody, for joining this evening. Um, especially with the events that are occurring right now in this week. Um, I know all of you are taking time out of your day to, to be with us here, and I know that that's a you got a lot of things going on. I know we do here. And um, and so I know it's a this is a great opportunity to learn a little bit about the project and, um, and also hear from all of you. And, um, so we've got a short presentation for all of you. And, um, more importantly, we want to hear from you. So I encourage everybody who has feedback or input to add to please provide that when the timing is right. Um, and with that, I will kind of launch into it here. Um, and just to start, I wanted to, um, let everybody know that I'm the Southwest Region director, but also, um, as this role for ecology. I'm the CPO responsible official for the region. Um, so with that, I'm here, um, to to present on the proposed project and our evaluation of that proposed project. Um, we will also be, um, at the next meetings as well. So in-person and virtual. Um, I will be at those meetings, um, to hear input and provide, uh, similar presentation.

Bobbak Talebi: So, um, with that, I'll launch into the presentation and content. Um, so just to start, I wanted to acknowledge, uh, the history here. Um, and this project has been going on a long time, and many of you probably have been involved in it from the beginning. I certainly have not. Um, so, uh, you know, starting from 2017, um, when the original design was proposed after a programmatic EIS was completed, um, we, uh, started to draft the eyes and it was released in 2020. Um, at that time, the governor paused the draft, um, to explore a non dam alternative after a long public comment period associated with that original draft. During that time, the applicant who is the flood control zone district, um, had the opportunity and incorporated a lot of the input that we received during that original draft into a new design. And so that design was then, um, after a pause was resubmitted to ecology in 2024. And we have been in the process to evaluate the revised draft EIS since that time. And one thing that I wanted to highlight here is, um, ecology set an accelerated timeline during the 2024, when this application was resubmitted to to us for our evaluation. And the reason behind that is because we are also, um, using this information to help support the office of Chehalis basins larger effort, um, to develop more of a comprehensive strategy for the basin in comparative analysis.

Bobbak Talebi: So with that in mind, um, a revised draft EIS has a public comment period. And we decided as an agency that 75 days, um, was the appropriate amount of time. Um, one, because we know that this is happening over the holidays. And two, we also know that some of the tribes, um, have extended periods out of the office. And so we wanted to acknowledge that and provide enough time, um, to evaluate this really complex project. Next slide. So now the purpose of an AIS next. So again, I just wanted to reiterate that ecology is doing a neutral evaluation of a proposed project which has been submitted, submitted by the flood Control Zone district. And then this we evaluate, um, reasonable alternatives, uh, propose mitigation measures, um, or minimize that, minimize impacts. And um, the AIS in particular does not approve or deny um, the proposed project. It is simply a neutral evaluation of the impacts of the project. Next. We wanted to acknowledge here, um, again, as I mentioned before, that this project is really just one piece of the different efforts that are going on in the basin right now. Um, to address the flooding issues. Um, and so you can see here that the flood retention facility is, um, is just one of the many different components here that are leading to the office of Chehalis basin, providing recommendations to the legislature on the long term strategy, um, for the basin.

Bobbak Talebi: Next slide. So now I'm going to get into a little bit of what the revised project looks like next. So the proposed project, um, really the purpose is to reduce flood damage and major flood events that happen in the Chehalis Centralia area. And the objective is to reduce flooding coming from the Willapa Hills, um, and improve the levee protection level, uh, levee protection level at the Chehalis Centralia Airport. Next. So this slide here is a map showing our study area. And the areas outlined in orange are the areas in which we conducted the full evaluation of impacts for the project. And so you can see here the labels of the FRT facility. That's really the proposed project. And some of the other project areas that are associated with this. So one of the reasons why this area is so vast is because we know that there could be potential impacts in all these areas, and so we do an investment of time here to look at all those different areas, to understand how how this project would affect all these different parts. Next. So here's an overarching visual of what the proposed project would look like.

Bobbak Talebi: Um, and some major components to the project, including a flow through flow through passage area for fish and sediment. Um, it also includes a spillway

and um, and it also has a structure here that is a little bit different design than the originally proposed. Um, the proposed project next. Also included in the project proposal was again raising the existing airport levee. Um, and, uh, erase a portion of the Northwest Louisiana Avenue along the southern extent of the airport and replace the utility infrastructure. So you'll see this, um, throughout the documents that we created, these two different elements that were being evaluated through this project. Next. So I'm showing here this is a graphic and it's really just to demonstrate the differences of what this proposed project does from a conventional dam structure. So an important element here is the flow through capability. So you can see on the on the right hand side of the screen the flow through dam, which is the proposed project. And what that means is it a majority of the year this facility would be open to the river flow, which would allow fish to pass through as well as sediment. And on the left you see more of a conventional dam structure, which would retain the retain the water throughout all parts of the year. So in this flow through structure, during major flood events predicted you could close the facility to then retain structure and then reopen it to to let the water back flowing through to the system to alleviate those water levels behind.

Bobbak Talebi: Next. So on this slide, then we, um, we wanted to include this, and we did this. Uh, it's a late addition to this presentation, but I think it's really important to highlight here, um, given the current conditions, um, that are being faced in the, in the basin and across the state and across the western part of the state around flooding. So this is a chart that is, um, showing here the different flow rates, um, within, within the area. Um, and so, you know, we we were likely going to get questions around whether or not this would trigger the facility to actually be closed during an event like this. And so, um, so what we know here is, um, one, I think an important part to highlight before we get into this is that the operations plan and the procedures are still in the works, so the applicant is still working on that. Um, when this would be triggered, when it would not be triggered. Um, and the different components and elements that, that would go into that different operations plan. But again, this is just to just to provide you an example of what the flows look like.

Bobbak Talebi: And um, so during the event of that we're currently facing right now, it doesn't actually reach the 38,000 cubic feet per second limit that would likely trigger the facility to be closed. Um, what we do know from, um, from some of the initial analysis is that the the dam structure would be used as such around once every seven years,

potentially, um, as part of that, uh, operations and procedure plan. Um, that's currently in the works. Um, and we also know that in addition, the dam would, um, provide the most flood damage reduction benefits in the upper part of the Chehalis basin, um, roughly from PL to, uh, to Centralia and Chehalis Next slide. So there were as I mentioned before, there were some major changes that the applicant incorporated into the new design since 2020. You can see some of those things here on the right. I'm just going to talk through the image here to show one of the big major changes that was provided in the new draft is the relocation of the facility structure itself. So in the red, you can see the structure that was proposed in 2020. And in the yellow you can see the new proposed location and the size of the proposed flow through facility. Next slide. And I think I'm passing it to Meg.

Meg Bommarito: Great.

Angie Thomson: Sorry I went to the wrong. Um, yeah. So I'll just jump in real quick. I want to introduce, uh, Meg Bommarito. Meg is a college's, uh, eyes project manager. Um, and is going to take us through the overview of the significant impacts. Go ahead. Meg.

Meg Bommarito: Great. Thanks, Angie. Appreciate that. Welcome, everyone. Glad you're here with us this evening. I'll start with just a little bit about the analysis that we did. And then I'll jump into a very high level overview of our significant impact findings. So you can go to the next slide Angie. Okay. So for our analysis we looked at both natural and built elements of the environment and likely impacts. We looked at impacts from construction and operation of the dam and airport levies. We considered mitigation measures that might reduce Impacts. We did review and incorporate a lot of the feedback and comments that we received during the 2020 draft. So the eyes that went out for the original design, a lot of that was already incorporated into this work or helped to shape our analysis in some way. We looked at three different alternatives. We looked at a no action alternative. What would happen if the project was not built over time? To these resources we looked at a local actions alternative. Also no dam, just local level projects and then the project itself. We considered climate change as part of the baseline conditions for the analysis. So that was embedded throughout the entire evaluation, all three alternatives. And we also modeled major and catastrophic floods. And we looked at two time frames mid-century and late century. There were some

differences between the analysis that we did in 2020 and our approach for this analysis. Some of those include updated climate change models. We had a lot more information to use for this analysis.

Meg Bommarito: We also used a range of climate change scenarios for each time frame, so both mid and late century. We had new and updated scientific information and studies that were considered. We also had input from the tribes on our technical analysis of tribal and cultural resource impacts. And those are just some of the differences. There are more, but those are some of the primary or more important changes. And just a reminder too, that this EIS, as we stated earlier, is not a decision document or an approval or a denial for a project. It discloses impacts and also discusses mitigation, and it is meant to be used by decision makers to help them minimize impacts of a project. So the next couple of slides will go through the high level overview of our significant impact findings. Or some of them. You can go to the next slide. So I want to note two, that we saw a lot of the same impacts with this design that we did from the design we analyzed back in 2020, draft EIS. So we saw a lot of the same impacts. There was new mitigation brought forward for a lot of the impacts. Um, and then also another note is that we did see that a lot of the impacts were cumulative, which means what we saw was climate change is already affecting resources. And then on top of that, this flow through dam would amplify those impacts, especially for fish and wildlife. So we did see for fish and for wildlife that there was habitat degradation, significant impacts or habitat degradation, uh, disturbance of spawning areas for fish, reduced fish passage for wildlife.

Meg Bommarito: We saw reduced nesting and breeding areas and for earth resources we saw changes to the river channel, increased risk of landslides, reduced channel forming flows. Uh, next slide please. There will be impacts to water and wetlands, which include water temperature increases, more turbidity and less dissolved oxygen. We determined there would be significant impacts to tribes and tribal resources. And we want to acknowledge that there is a federal process called the 106 process for those who are familiar with it. And if you're not, it's a federal process which analyzes tribal and cultural resources and potential mitigation. Information from that study will be given to us when it's available, and we will incorporate it into the final EIS. So that information is coming. But we have already established that there will be significant impacts to tribes and tribal resources. Next slide. And we also saw significant impacts for recreation, the

permanent loss of access to several miles available for kayaking and riverbank fishing. There may also be significant impacts to the water supply line for pails water system. During construction, there may need to be improvements or relocation. And we also looked at a very low likelihood scenario that there may be an earthquake when the reservoir is holding water. So when the dam is in operation and we analyze this and the results are all in the eyes. Next slide. So for the mitigation, there were mitigation measures discussed and considered in this EIS.

Meg Bommarito: And these are measures that are designed to reduce, eliminate or compensate for project impacts as part of the EIS process. There is no requirement to analyze the feasibility and effectiveness of these measures. The EIS is done very early in the process, so these measures will continue to be developed as the design is finalized and as the project moves into permitting if it is approved. So all of that will happen later in the process. But we did consider mitigation and did discuss it in this eyes. And I also want to acknowledge the applicant brought forth a lot of mitigation measures. Uh ecology's team and other state agencies. More will be proposed later on and further analyze. And another note to the mitigation is only enforceable if it's part of a legally binding document like a permit. So the mitigation work will continue on again if the project is moves forward. Uh next slide. So for project next steps, as you all know, we have just started the public comment period. We have three more meetings planned. Uh, two of those will be in person. One will be online. Our comment period ends in early February on February 4th. And after that point. That is the period of time when we will take a look at all the comments and develop a response document for them, and it will be attached to the final eyes. And I want to note again the comments that were made for the 2020 draft EIS.

Meg Bommarito: We are considering those and will respond to those that are still relevant to this new design in that final EIS. So if you've already made comments, we know people spent a lot of time and effort putting their comments together. We want to assure you that we've already been looking at them and making changes to our analysis and the document, and we'll continue to look at them and incorporate them into our response document. And then we will work on making potential edits to the EIS based on comments. And then we will release the final version in August of next year. Uh next slide. And then finally, just to remind you all, there are a lot of ways that you can share your thoughts with us. If you don't make a comment tonight, there are plenty of other

opportunities. Again, through February 4th, you can go online. You can attend the other public meetings that we have planned, both in person and online. And you can also send us a letter, uh, and the address and all this information is on our website as well. If you need to look, look up the times and you can register for meetings on our website too. And I do want to note that all comments will be equally weighted regardless of how they are submitted. So letters we get in the mail are weighted just as equally as verbal comments during a meeting or those submitted online. And with that, I'm going to turn things back over to Angie.

Angie Thomson: Thanks, Meg. Um, a couple just reminders for folks that we said at the beginning. But if you joined late, you may not have heard. We are broadcasting this meeting both in English and in Spanish. If the audio seems a little quiet to you, make sure to go to the bottom of your screen where there's a globe icon and select the English Channel or the Spanish Channel, depending on what language you'd like to hear the meeting in. Um, also letting folks know that we are we are about to transition into the public hearing where people can make comments. We don't have, um, some folks are putting a few questions in the chat. We are not anticipating answering those questions in a in a dialogue, but we're we're collecting those questions. Um, okay. As we move into the public hearing, I'm going to be turning the microphone over to Ecology's hearing officer. I wanted Fran Sant. I wanted to remind you of the meeting guidelines that we reviewed at the beginning of the meeting around using respectful language, um, respecting the rights of others to have opinions that may differ from yours. Being ready to speak when your name is called and your line is unmuted. And then, um, respecting the time limit for comments. And that's a two minute time limit. And just so that you all know you won't hear from me again because we'll be closing the meeting. Um, at the end of the hearing, we just don't want it to be awkward so that, you know, when the hearing is over, the meeting is over. Um, so with that, I am going to turn it over to Ecology's hearing officer Fran Sant.

Fran Sant: Thanks so much, Angie. And thank you, everyone, for for being here tonight. Um, I have a bit of a formal role, so I need to read some official information, uh, for the record. And then we'll go ahead and start the public comment time. Um, so again, this is information that's required. For the record, I'm Fran Sant, hearing officer, for this hearing this evening. We are here to conduct a hearing on the revised draft environmental impact statement for the Chehalis River Basin Flood Damage Reduction

Project. Please let the record show that it is 6:31 p.m. on December 11th, 2025, and this hearing is being held online via the zoom platform. Notices of this hearing were mailed to approximately 13,000 interested people in the EIS study area, emailed or sent via our listserv to approximately 4086 interested people. Ecology issued a news release about the hearings on November 20th, 2025. Notices were also posted to the Ecology Public Events Calendar, and then finally notices of these hearings were also published in the following newspapers the Centralia Chronicle, the Aberdeen Daily World and The Olympian, and these were all published. Published on November 20th of 2025.

Fran Sant: For our online hearing today, I will be calling people to provide their comments. When I see your hand raised. Um, I will also try to cue the next person. If there's quite a few hands raised about who's going to be next. So now is your opportunity to raise your hand and let us know that you would like to provide comment. I'm going to give everybody a few seconds to do that and share some additional information. When I call upon you, I will go ahead and unmute you. We'll do a brief sound check so you know that you're being heard. And then I will ask you to state your name for the record, and please provide your comments. Uh, for this evening, we're asking folks to keep comments to about two minutes. You will see a timer on the screen. And I am starting to see some hands raised. So we're going to go ahead and get started. Uh, we're going to start with Nathan. And then we'll be following up with Kathleen Saul. So Nathan, I've unmuted you. Can you hear me?

Nathan Ereth: Uh, yeah, I can hear you. Can you hear me?

Fran Sant: Great. We certainly can. Please go ahead and provide comments.

Nathan Ereth: Uh, awesome. I would like to say, as a point of order, um, when we're talking about some of these areas, it's really important to get the town's name right. So it is Pe Ell for the record. Um, I'd also like to return to another piece of information at the front of the of the presentation from Bobbak. I don't think pause is a great word for what Inslee Decided he, um, had much more, um, intent behind his words in saying heck no to this kind of a project. And he did not want to pause to this. He wanted this project taken off of the table. Um, as someone who does do stream surveys in that area, uh, I'm still just appalled that we're still even talking about this project. It was bad enough when it was set at the first one. Um, now that you guys have made it larger, considerably

larger, with a much larger, um, retaining pond, whether or not you want to call it a a run of the of a river dam or not, it will inundate Lower Crime Creek and inundate the lower, uh, the the Chehalis River in some of my most prolific spawning areas for the last of the spring Chinook that we have and are very important native steelhead run. Um, plus, we don't know what exactly is going to happen to the gravel composition from PL down, which it also accounts for a large amount of spring and Chinook spawning, as well as native steelhead spawning. Um, this is just it's really sad being an environmental worker and hearing, uh, ecology or any other natural resource department propping up this, um, project. Uh, I feel that this is a very hostile attempt, um, by corporations to basically strong arm Washington state into allowing them to develop the Chehalis River floodplain to look like that of Renton, Washington and US Washington state taxpayers need to stand up and say, no, that's it. Thank you.

Fran Sant: Thank you for your comment, Nathan. I'm going to go ahead and ask you to lower your hand and I'll put you back on mute. Um, we're going to have Kathleen. I will go ahead and unmute you. And then Kathleen, um, I'm sorry. Following Kathleen will be Lee first. Kathleen, you should be able to hear me now. And you should be able to. We should be able to hear you. All right. Let's check.

Kathleen Saul: Okay. Um, my name is Doctor Kathleen Saul, and I'm from Olympia, Washington. I'm speaking in opposition to the proposed dam for the Chehalis River basin. At a time when groups across the Pacific Northwest actively pursued dam removals to return rivers to their more natural state and to reestablish the habitat for endangered salmon. And as the Washington Department of Ecology and others work to preserve northwest forests for the carbon they sequester in the face of climate change, to construct a dam that has significant and unavoidable negative impacts on fish and wildlife, forests and the natural environment, with a vague promise of mitigating future flood is misguided, irresponsible and a waste of taxpayer dollars. The benefits do not outweigh the costs. Rivers aren't the problem here. People are. People have chosen to build in a floodplain rather than attempting to constrain the natural element the river. We need to rethink our built environment, our development strategies, and focus on developing structures that can withstand the inevitable floods. On raising dwellings high above the water levels. We need to think about and build alternative routes so people aren't trapped by rising waters. We need better warning systems to alert people to potential flooding. Above all, we need to educate the public about living with floods. We

cannot control the force of the water, but we can control our own actions. While I acknowledge the EIS is neither, neither denies nor permits this project. I urge you to act now, to put an end to the dam project for the Chehalis River basin that will cause irreparable harm to the very environment that makes the Pacific Northwest so special. Thank you.

Fran Sant: Thank you, Kathleen, and thank you for putting your hand down. Um, after Lee First, I'm going to call on Kathy Berman. Lee, you should be able to talk now. Be unmuted.

Lee First: Yes. Can you hear me?

Fran Sant: I sure can. Thank you.

Lee First: The cost for this mega dam is a staggering 1 billion to 1.7 billion for construction, and it does not include permitting, operations, maintenance and other costs. Add to that tens of millions in consulting fees. If we raised and flood proofed essentially every at risk structure over 30 years, it would cost a small fraction of that amount. I'm for the local actions non damn alternative. Let's raise more homes. Let's stop building in the floodplain. Imagine the progress that might have been made if there had been a concerted effort to move people out of harm's way since the 2007 floods, and with it taking until 2020, 2042 to build this mega dam. That's another 17 years that Lewis County and the cities could have been elevating, flood proofing and relocating to keep people out of harm's way. The era of dam building is over. Thank you.

Fran Sant: Thank you. Lee, if you could go ahead and lower your hand, that'd be great. Um, so we're going to have Kathy, and then Kathy's going to be followed by, uh, Vanessa LaValle. Um, let's see, Kathy, let's get you unmuted here. All right, Kathy, I'm having a bit of a challenge unmuting you. Angie, can you see if you can assist with that, please? So we can hear Kathy.

Angie Thomson: Yes. Mm. Kathy. It looks like you should be able to talk. If you have yourself muted on your own computer, that might be you might need to unmute yourself on your own machine.

Fran Sant: Yeah I'm getting the. Yeah. There you go. Kathy.

Angie Thomson: Yes.

Kathy Burnaman: Perfect. Alright. Fantastic. Um, I'm Kathy Burnaman, the project manager for the flood control zone district, and we know how devastating flooding is in the upper Chehalis Basin. Therefore, the project proposed by the Flood Control Zone District is designed to reduce the worst flooding impacts by targeting major and catastrophic floods. The good news? The revised draft EIS concludes that the project serves this purpose in a late century catastrophic flood, it would prevent more than 2400 structures and 4000 acres of land from being inundated from Pell to Cosmopolis, along 100 miles of river. It would reduce flooding on I-5 along, allowing it to open faster. The project is meant to be consistent with an overall Chehalis Basin Fish and Flood strategy to reduce major or catastrophic flooding damages, while still creating successful outcomes for fish. For that reason, the project is not a traditional dam, it's a flow through facility most of the time and for years on end, the project will allow the river to flow through it. It only closes when a major or catastrophic flood is forecasted and and even then, it allows average wintertime flows to pass. For the past five years, our scientists, biologists and engineers have worked to provide flood benefits while minimizing impacts to fish and the environment. We wouldn't be proposing the project if we didn't think we could provide substantial mitigation. All of our mitigation measures will be robust. They are detailed in our mitigation plan and will be further described in our comments to the revised draft EIS and future project design. All projects have impacts, but the point is to design them safely, effectively and with as few impacts as possible. That's what we believe we have done here and what we are committed to doing if this project is selected to proceed. Thank you.

Fran Sant: Thank you for your comments, Cathy. Um, so we're going to hear from Vanessa LaValle next and then followed by Jason Dicks. Vanessa, I have unmuted you.

Vanessa LaValle: Can you hear me?

Fran Sant: I sure can, thank you. Go ahead.

Vanessa LaValle: Great. Thank you for your time. So I believe that the reality of our flooding situation in the basin is much more complex and will not fully be addressed with this free, and it certainly isn't worth the price tag. It's not going to do anything for our friends in the new Whatcom, for example, or skookumchuck areas. 2024 was the hottest year on record, with average temperatures continuing to rise. We will experience warmer and higher volume rainfall across the entire basin. Ruining the headwaters of PL will only accomplish the extinction of the spring Chinook. It will not be operational for another 17 to 20 years, and residents like me will be paying out of our pockets during an affordability crisis. Forest practices have not changed, although that was a key item in Governor Gregoire's original recommendations. And our agricultural lands are so rich because of this repetitive flooding, it's how our topsoil is replenished at a time when global figures for topsoil are declining. In 2021, when it was first proposed, it was clear that the costs would far outweigh the potential benefits. How many homes could we have raised with the funds spent on redeveloping and reproposing this plan? How many levees, flood walls and dykes could already be in operation at this time? I oppose this project and I hope that the larger community does as well. Thank you for your time.

Fran Sant: Thank you. Vanessa. Um, after Jason, we're going to hear from Heather Nicholson. Um, Jason, you should be able to, um, uh, let's see. I think you muted yourself as well. If you unmute yourself, you should be able to provide your comments.

Angie Thomson: We're not hearing you, Jason.

Jason Dix: Hello?

Angie Thomson: There you are.

Fran Sant: Now we can hear you. Thank you. Please go ahead.

Jason Dix: I can't do it.

Angie Thomson: We can hear you, Jason.

Jason Dix: Muting unmuted.

Fran Sant: Jason. Yeah, we can hear you. You're fine.

Jason Dix: Okay. Hey. Good evening. First off. Um. So first, I've got a few questions. I was wondering about checkpoints and if they're being identified. Uh, the central choke points that I've seen in the latest upcoming floods. And are they are they being visually validated? And and second, is there a plan for an area level aerial perspective during the live flood events? And what observations from residents are included and why. And at what assumptions do does the model make about rate versus rise versus constriction points? Um, I appreciate all the efforts that you're all doing. I'm currently working with a bunch of people on ground level as observers of the floods, and we find that our methods are kind of more systematic and more timely when it comes time to accurate information. So I'm wondering if there's people that are on the ground during these floods that are kind of getting these same observations at, at choke points and choke points? I'm referring to bottleneck areas where lots of fill has been brought in. And second, is there like some sort of, uh, estimated amount of Um, survey that's been brought in on the amount of soil that's been brought into this valley, because I've seen that I've lived here since 99 and the floods seem to get worse. Where I moved here, I was told I have a 100 year flood zone and a 500 year flood zone, and those seem to happen way more often. That's it. Those are my questions.

Fran Sant: Thank you Jason. Appreciate you asking those questions in a comment form. Um, Heather, we're going to go ahead and allow you to talk, and then we'll be followed by Edna Fund. Heather, you should be able to hear me and you should be able to be heard.

Heather Nicholson: Thank you. Can you hear me? Okay.

Fran Sant: I sure can, thank you.

Heather Nicholson: Great. Thank you. I'm Heather Nicholson. I will be short and sweet, but frankly, this project looks like a disastrous boondoggle. To be frank, I. I concur with the previous speakers who have given good reasons why it should be abandoned. I think it should be abandoned. Um, you know, collectively, we have a lot of ingenuity, and I. I don't think this is a project that we should be applying our ingenuity to, uh, our mitigation, our so-called mitigation in Washington state for salmon, for orcas has

not proven successful. We are slipping. We are falling. This is an expensive boondoggle project, and I think it needs to be stopped. So I really appreciate the brainpower and the solution oriented thinking that folks, uh, you know, pour into this kind of thing. And folks are living in the area, but I think we need to step back. So thank you. Thank you for this comment opportunity.

Fran Sant: Thank you Heather. If you could go ahead and lower your hand, we'd appreciate that. And thank you for your comment. Um, Edna, we're going to hear from you, followed by Terry Wright. And now you should be, um, you need to go ahead. There you go. And you should be able to speak now. And and I can hear you.

Edna Fund: Okay. This is Edna Fund, and I'm a resident. I am also on the advisory committee for the flood control zone district, former county commissioner and former councilor in city of Centralia, and have experience flooding in the. When I think about the 19 or 2007 flood, we estimate it cost $1 billion for our community. And when we look at what are some of the things that we can do with the flood authority and office space? And we've done 140 projects. So we're working on multiple items. And this gives me hope. The flow through dam and I don't know if anyone has seen the video that talks about this flow through them, because it is different than any other dam that you've ever seen. It is flowing through and helps the fish get through and would be, you know, used probably eight every 7 or 8 years. It gives us hope in the community and sometimes that's very difficult anytime it starts raining. I'm sorry. You're probably hearing the train going by. Um, anytime it starts raining, we think about what's happening to our community and this like I said, this gives us hope and folks may not know all the things we've done. So if there's a time that folks who say you haven't done anything, I'd be glad to meet with you and give you a tour and show you some of the things we've done, and this is one of our big tools that could help us and help our community. So appreciate the time today. And once again, it's about people in the community and the aquatic species, and we respect all of that as we continue to work on the water retention facility. Thank you.

Fran Sant: Thank you for your comments, Edna. Um, we're going to hear from Teri Wright next and then followed by Bonnie Blessing. Um, Terry, uh, you should be able to, uh, be heard now.

Teri Wright: Thank you so much, Fran. My name is Teri Wright, and I've been following this project, um, probably since 2015 when the Office of Space and Board was, was created. My concern, based on what you've stated this evening, is that your outreach has been to basin residents only. And I wonder why this is. Does that mean that only the basin residents will be responsible for the cost? I would like to see a much wider outreach to all Washingtonians. I would also like to know who will be paying the continuing costs if the dam is built. Um, because that's that's not been identified yet. And then I have a question for you. If significant impacts to salmon have been identified, then how did you determine that? No significant impacts to the southern residents who are dependent upon salmon? I don't get that. If I mean southern residents, that's what they eat. They eat salmon. And if salmon are going to be harmed, then so will the southern residents. And the southern residents are already not doing well. Salmon in the basin, regardless of the dam, are not doing well due to low flows in the river and also to also the tributaries and to warming water temperatures. And then another thing I don't understand is why is development still being allowed in the floodplains? My understanding based on history is that when settlers came to the basin, the indigenous people who lived here for millennia warned the Warn the settlers to not build in the floodplain. Why did we ignore this warning then? And why are we still ignoring this? I to support the local actions non dam alternatives that former Governor Inslee asked to be evaluated. Thank you.

Fran Sant: Thank you. Teri. Bonnie, I'm going to go ahead and, uh, let you talk now, and you should be able to be heard. Oh, there we go.

Bonnie Blessing: Hello, hello, hello, I'm Bonnie Blessing, and I know some farmers down in. Oh, hello. Hello. Hey, I know some farmers down by Elma. They don't live in the floodplain or down in. Or they live on the edge. Their animals are are fine. They they sometimes move them. That's a normal thing to just kind of do. But but overall, um, I would like to see whether the dam goes in or not. Can we do a better job at the planning level to prevent harm to people in general? Uh, start off by emphasizing instead of emphasizing flood control, let's implement the strongest measures to prevent harm to people in the first place from flooding. Zoning zone flooded areas when we know them for open space parks, forest field. Shouldn't zoning be totally updated to prevent building in flood prone areas? I did take a look at the zoning map, and it looks like there's existing zoning for a lot of like people activities in places where it floods. Can

those zoning maps be changed to like create more open space in those places? And please review whether the local cows and comprehensive plans adequately advise on construction and uses in flood prone areas, and is consistent with all those federal guidelines for like FEMA stuff because we might need it, you know, and that's in 44 CFR please review that okay. And it discusses how preservation of flood prone areas should be done as open space, relocating occupants away from flood prone areas, acquisition of land and frequently flooded structures, and full disclosure to prospective buyers. Um, there does seem to be a fair bit of development in the floodplain itself. And like, I think Lewis County and some other counties, you know, allow some. And it's called like a flood hazard zone permit code. Is that consistent with what we need? And for outreach, Jimmy Carter said that we should post signage for where floods have happened in the past. I never see signs like that. Where are they? Like Executive order 11988. Page 26955 says, hey, post where these floods have happened so people know when they're driving around. Increase the knowledge and outreach. Thank you.

Fran Sant: Thank you. Bonnie. Um, I see a hand here from John Harwood. Um, when you're ready, John, we would like to hear from you, please. Looks like you've muted yourself. Please, please go ahead and unmute yourself. There you go. We should be able to hear you now.

John Harwood: Can you hear me?

Fran Sant: We sure can. Thank you.

John Harwood: Terrific. Thank you very much. I feel like there's been a whole lot of emphasis, uh, also, given the current situation. Uh, emphasis upon the the flood situation. But, um, a good friend of mine recently pointed, recently pointed out to me that this last summer, the Chehalis River hit the lowest flow level of all time. And I don't think there's been enough emphasis put on the low flow period of the Chehalis River flow. Um, because I feel like there is zero room for impact, given that we've set a new low record, and I don't think that that's been taken into account in this, um, in this, in this, uh, evaluation. So I think it needs to be reconsidered based upon the new low flow levels that have been set, uh, during the summer. After all, it's the same river and the climate change is going to have the same impacts upon those low flow levels, just like the climate impacts will have on the higher flow levels this time of year. So that needs to

be considered because there is no room for, um, for adverse impacts on those low flow times of the year. Thank you very much.

Fran Sant: Thank you John. Go ahead. When you're ready, you can also go ahead and lower your hand. You already beat me to it. Um, so I am not seeing any additional hands raised. This would be the time of the evening if you. Oh, there we go. Jeremy, we are going to, uh, make sure that you can hear us and that we can hear you. And you can go ahead and provide your comment when ready.

Jeremy Mikkelsen: Okay. My name is Jeremy Mikkelsen. Uh, I am a local farmer, a small scale hobby farmer here on the Chehalis River. Um, and, uh, our property has been flooded twice. Uh, we're in the 500 year floodplain and not a whole lot of damage to the property, but to the farm. Um, and both those floods are only recent. Um, and so the old farmers, this was like a good spot because it didn't flood, but now it now it floods. And I'm assuming climate change is probably a part of that. Uh, a couple comments. Questions on the, um, the environmental justice portion seems to make a big deal about the disproportionately impacting communities of color and low income populations, uh, under the earthquake scenarios or various, but doesn't seem to talk about the benefits, um, to them. I know for myself, we're a low income family. Uh, and many of my neighbors who are near the floodplain are also in that. And just listening to my kids, um, coming home from school and folks who are impacted even by this flood, um, there's a lot of them. And it's the folks who are it's a huge deal to them. So I'd love to see some sort of analysis in there that would quantify the benefit to low incomes versus the potential risk, because it makes it sound like it's scarier.

Jeremy Mikkelsen: Whereas I think most low income people in the flooded areas would actually appreciate some protection. Uh, I'm curious if feedback's been collected directly from tribal members. Um, you know, if you read the River gauge page, it says, hey, you know, this flood cut off people from the Chehalis reservation because of the roads being flooded? Have we asked these people, would they like it or not? Um, and I just a question about the equity issue. You know, how much does this dam the flow through impact fish compared to a traditional dam? Is it 1%, 5%, 10% compared to if you put a traditional dam there and thinking of the equity in the Washington state, you know, we're like, hey, let's protect the fish. But all around King County's, all these old, old dams that are being maintained and permitted improvements, uh, are is the scale of

the impact of this project compared to those partial and equitable. I know my time is running out here. Do I get a little bit sensitive to the end here or not?

Fran Sant: Um, we're going to let everybody provide comment and then I will open it up. If you've made a previous comment and you'd like to provide another comment. So I, we want to be consistent with everybody. So thanks for understanding, Jeremy. We'll go ahead and have you. Perfect. You lowered your hand. We're going to hear from Liz uh Gilliam and then followed by Frank Corbin. Liz, um, can you please go ahead and unmute yourself? There you go.

Liz Gilliam: Can you hear me now?

Fran Sant: We sure can. Thank you.

Liz Gilliam: Okay. Thank you. So good afternoon. I'm Liz Gilliam. Um, I'm commenting on the geomorphic and sediment transport analysis, um, for this large dam, um, and just historically across the northwest, sediment dynamics have been underappreciated and understudied. And that leads to massive costs to agencies and The municipalities to fix all the impacts, um, from, uh, when sediment is blocked in these systems. And, um, on the analyses that have been done, I feel that the sediment transport modeling that underpins the review is, uh, fairly, fundamentally flawed, um, for a number of reasons. Um, and as a result, uh, it cannot reliably predict how sediment will move or be trapped by the, uh, 12 foot wide conduit, um, and the stilling basin within the dam. But, um, independent review indicates that downstream sediment transport capacity could drop by 65% during major storms with most coarse material trapped upstream. Um, and that is a clear signal to sediment starvation in the river. And when that happens, this channel incises it disconnects the river from the floodplains and side channels become Come disconnected. Tributaries erode to readjust and culverts can become perched, bridges undermined, and floodplain storage is lost. So, counterintuitively, it could really increase flood risk and it can greatly degrade habitat. So I encourage more thorough sediment analysis. And then beyond the sediment concerns, I also, um, stress that the alternative analysis presented, uh, falls really short. Um, it's scant on specifics. It lacks comparable analysis and was not afforded the same technical scrutiny as the dam proposal. So, um, I guess I had more to say, but I ran out of time. But, um. Thank you.

Fran Sant: Thank you. Liz. Um, Frank, we're going to go ahead and hear from you. And then, um, for folks that haven't had an opportunity to comment, um, I want to give you an opportunity to raise your hand. And then if you've already commented and you'd like to provide additional comment, we'll allow you to do that as well. But I'm going to be scrolling, making sure that I'm allowing people to provide their first comment first. Um, Frank, go ahead and unmute yourself and do a quick sound check with me and then go ahead.

Frank Corbin: Yes. Hi, my name is Frank Corbin. Can you hear me?

Fran Sant: I sure can, thank you. Frank.

Frank Corbin: All right. Thank you. Uh, I would like to, as a member of the Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee and the chair of the Lewis County Planning Commission. I've been very deeply involved in land use, as well as in the flood control efforts of Lewis County. Uh, this community is a county that's often left behind when it comes to state infrastructure spending. And this is one opportunity for the state to, uh, to help this community thrive. Flooding has occurred in this basin for for generations. Everybody knows that. But this is one technology that has been proven overseas in Japan as a viable technology that does much less damage to the environment after it's built in that it allows the river to flow through naturally. The salmon won't even know that the dam is there, except in the case of a catastrophic flood. And catastrophic flooding costs our state billions, not just our local economy here, but it costs the state. When the freeway is closed, it costs billions. And so this investment in the future economy of the state of Washington, while doing much less environmental damage to the environment, and actually with all of the improvements to the habitat that are being proposed that are actually being done now, it's a net gain for everybody. And so, uh, I would like the environmentalists to please take off your environmental hat for just a minute and think about the broader implications of what this can actually mean. There have been people moved out of the basin. There have been houses razed. There's a lot of all the above is taking place. And we need to continue that and we will continue that. But we need the flood retention facility to hold back the catastrophic floods so that the river can readjust itself afterwards in a safe fashion. Thank you.

Fran Sant: Thank you. Frank. You can go ahead and lower your hand when you're ready. Um, so, Jeremy, I do see your raised hand. I want to make sure I'm not missing any other raised hands from people that have not had an opportunity to provide comment. And at this point in time, I'm not seeing any. Um, so I will go ahead and, um, uh, you're already unmuted, Jeremy. So you can you can have another two minutes here with us.

Angie Thomson: I think we need to unmute. Jeremy. There we go.

Fran Sant: Oh, there we go. Sorry, I sorry.

Jeremy Mikkelsen: Okay. Am I on now?

Fran Sant: You're on now.

Jeremy Mikkelsen: Okay. Uh, the second part of my comment was just the from a farmer's perspective on the sediment and erosion, you know, the land that we. So bits of the bank, uh, from our farm erodes into the river, and it happens during the largest flows, the medium sized flows, even this year's storm. This doesn't affect the the bank, at least along our farm significantly. However, the biggest flows have a exponentially larger impact on the bank. And so it's kind of a weird thing. But when you when those flows come through, it's still farmland, right? You look at the aerial image, it's still land by the river. But when it leaves the old, the old non incised floodplain of ages ago. Like that's the prime pasture. That's the prime farm real estate. Once it's been eroded down to the lower level, which my property is about two thirds high bank and one third it's been, it's been eroded out and, you know, from the meander of the river. But there's a huge loss in, in the, um, benefit or the fertility if the land when that when the erosion happens and it's no longer all at the same level, it's the fertility might be there, but the usability is not there for actual farming. And so I just I was curious, um, as I was reading through the land use section doesn't talk about topsoil erosion. Um, how much more erosion happens due to higher intensity storms? Again, Barry Diamond prior to oh seven didn't hadn't ever flooded in human records. Uh, at least those records that we have. Whereas now we've had it twice have happened since then with even smaller floods. So, um, just concerned about what the actual I didn't see much of the eyes

talking about the impact to topsoil. And I know if you study other dam projects, other flood systems, that topsoil erosion is a is a potential issue that I'd love to see addressed.

Fran Sant: Thank you. Jeremy. Um, Jason, go ahead and, um. There you go. You should be able we should be able to hear you. Now, you want to check in?

Jason Dix: So I am curious about how model, how the modeled results are being visually validated against past flood events, especially at known constriction points. And second question, at what scale does the climate modeling hand off to site specific hydraulic analysis? Number three, how are repeat observations from residents being incorporated or weighed into the analysis? And does the analysis account for lag time between upstream and downstream impacts? And has any contradictions been given to the area level or aerial observations during the live flood events to identify flow paths and choke points? That's that's all I have.

Fran Sant: Thank you. Jason.

Jason Dix: Pleasure.

Fran Sant: Um. Let's see. Lee. Um, you should be unmuted now. And, uh, let's do a quick sound check.

Lee First: Hello?

Lee First: Can you hear me?

Fran Sant: Sure can.

Lee First: Great. Thanks. Instead of a dam and levee project w w the Department of Transportation needs to seriously consider raising I-5 at the same time as it is widened, saving money and reducing environmental impacts by combining the two actions. According to a 2014 Department of Transportation study, widening and raising I-5 out of the floodplain would cost between 300 and 400 million, which is much less than the cost of the mega dam and levee. The proposed dam would only protect I-5 when a similar when when a flood similar to 2007 occurs in the upper Chehalis. However, even with

the dam built, a major event in the Skookumchuck South Fork Chehalis or the Nooksack River watersheds would still cause a 2007 level flooding in the Chehalis Valley and close I-5, and I remember reading the newspaper after the 2000 2022 flood that said that if there had been a mega dam, that it wouldn't have done any. It would. It would have done almost nothing for that 2022 flood. And I'll be really curious to see, um, where most of the water comes from this time around. Is it coming from the Cascade foothills? Is it coming from the upper Chehalis? And would and would a mega dam have done any good this time? Thank you very much.

Fran Sant: Thank you. Lee. All right. For folks that have not had an opportunity to provide comment or, um, would like to do so, this would be your opportunity. If I don't see any additional raised hands, um, we'll go ahead and start to, uh, Wrap up the hearing for this evening. Um, I, I so I'm going to take a quick look. Give folks a minute or two to decide if they do want to provide comment that haven't had an opportunity to do so. Um, and then I'll talk about other ways that you can provide comment and close the hearing out. Uh, Liz, I have, um, let's see unmute you and there you go. You should be able to provide an additional comment. Thank you Liz.

Liz Gilliam: Thank you for this additional time. I'll make it quick. I just wanted to speak to, uh, in the context of today's flooding that had levees and flood walls and homes been lifted. Um, this would have prevented so many from flooding during this event. Um, and according to the The discharge trigger, the dam wouldn't even have been activated. Um, so, you know, with with local action options, so many people would be protected permanently. Um, even during those lower, infrequent or lower, more frequent flood events. Um, so with the dam in place, it's not like, uh, costs and impacts are going to disappear. Um, there's still going to be frequent flooding in and that needs to be addressed. So the dam will also likely not be built until 2042. And so, um, there's a lot of expenses, um, between now and then that are going to be incurred. So I'm concerned the benefits provided by the dam are quite limited compared to the cost of the dam, and that the alternative analyses are not sufficient to capture the benefits of the local action or the land benefits for protecting infrastructure. Uh, all the time and more effectively. So thank you.

Fran Sant: Thank you. Liz. Um. Let's see. I see David with your hand raised. Um, Liz, thanks for putting your hand down. And, David. Uh, we are, um, going to ask you. Okay. You should be able to provide your comment now.

David Linn: Okay. You can hear me.

Fran Sant: I sure can. Thank you.

David Linn: Good. Yeah. I wasn't going to say anything because I haven't really gone through the latest DEIS. But while I've been watching and listening to some of the comments, I opened up, um, comments that I had back in 2020. And I know there's been, uh, increased studies and, uh, more detail provided with this latest one, but just looking at it's a remarkable how little has changed. And I wrote back then that this, this dam is so typical of the hubris and arrogance of humans. Create a problem. Build in a floodplain and then try to fix that by creating another problem, which would be huge environmental devastation. So the answer is to fix the original problem, get out of the floodplain, or build high enough so that you're not exposed to the damage. But it's just no reason that all of us in the state should accept the financial and environmental costs because of a few people chose to ignore reality and build where they should not have built. So it's just amazing that this keeps coming back like a bad penny that we can't get rid of it. Even though the tribes, the former governor, and the majority of the people in the state really don't want this dam. It seems like it's being forced upon us just to to keep this zombie dam going until finally the the the legislature gets tired of funding it, but it's just really ill advised. It makes no sense. And there are much better ways. The the land program is certainly some something to investigate, but this is just, um, just not acceptable to any of us. Thank you.

Fran Sant: Thank you. David. Um, Teri, I see that you have your hand up. Um, you should be able to, uh, hear me now, and we should be able to hear you.

Teri Wright: Thank you. Fran. I just I just want to make another quick comment this time. So basically, the difference between the the dam and the land is not much except for a huge difference in cost. So residential structures that will be protected by the dam are roughly not quite 1200. Protected by the land is almost 1500 um commercial buildings protected by the dam are 204 commercial buildings protected by the local

actions. Non dam alternative is is almost 300. Um, so as you can see there's there's not really a big significant difference between what will be protected except the cost, not just from an economic cost, but also cost to the environment. And so while I respect everybody's opinion and their right to exhibit their their opinion, um, as an environmentalist, which I am proud to be, I would rather err on the side of safeguarding the environment, especially in this time of climate change and biodiversity loss. Let's save what we have. Let's safeguard people that are already living in a floodplain and help elevate their homes and help move people out. And let's make sure that we do not continue to build and put people in harm's way. Um, I concur absolutely with the comments that David Linn just made. And thank you so much.

Fran Sant: Thank you. Terry. Um, Janean. Uh, Parker, I see your hand raised and you look like you are ready to be heard. You want to do a quick sound check? Can you go ahead and try unmuting yourself, Janean? I'm not. There we go. Hi. Can you hear me? I apologize.

Janean Parker: Um, so I to the last a point that I haven't seen raised here and I would just like to address I, I, I do not think that it is wise to assume that the land alternatives are cheaper. I think one of the commenters pointed out, rightly, that there's been so little analysis on the land alternatives that you're comparing apples to oranges, to be able to say that one will have a lot fewer impacts and one will be a lot cheaper. I, I, I, I do not think that that is a true statement based on the level of analysis that has gone into the land proposals to date. This is 50 some miles of levees and taking up private property owner's land and their livelihoods for this. So I must respectfully disagree and ask that. I do understand that there are other land analysis going on, but we're right now we're comparing the FR to A to land alternatives that haven't been fully developed. And I don't think that that is fair to assume that they will be either cheaper or less impactful. Thank you.

Fran Sant: Thank you Janine. All right. Um, I'm going to take another look through our attendees. This would be your opportunity to raise your hand and either provide your first comment or provide an additional comment. Um, so let's, uh, give it a moment for folks to make a decision on that. We'll just pause here for about another minute while folks decide if they are interested in providing a comment. And then I'll share some information with everyone. Um, and then we will go ahead and start to, uh, to wrap up.

Uh, I will just also add, uh, you'll hear me say this at the end, but I'll go ahead and say it now while you're thinking about providing comment, uh, we did advertise this event as, uh, going on till 8:00. Um, so I'm going to go ahead and take us through the end of the hearing if I don't see any additional hands raised. Um, and then I will go ahead and, uh, Frank. Frank's going to comment. So, um, we'll talk about what happens. I'm going to pause the hearing until eight if more attendees come. But, Frank, you should be able to unmute yourself and do a quick sound check and then provide your comment.

Frank Corbin: Thank you. This is Frank Corbin. Can you hear me?

Fran Sant: I sure can, thank you.

Frank Corbin: All right. Thank you for the second go around here. One of the things that I wanted to mention that I didn't have time for was the fact that if you do nothing, the salmon are still on a downward trajectory towards great loss. And so with the flood retention facility, uh, which would hold back catastrophic flood waters, what? That would do a lot to preserve salmon habitat in the future. Plus you add in the the land alternatives and all of the other habitat restoration work. And, uh, there will be significant gains, uh, made to the environment for the dwindling salmon populations. So doing nothing is also not an option. There has to be something done. And I think it's a combination of both the flood retention facility and the environmental habitat restoration projects that have been proposed. Uh, it's not an either or. It's got to be both. And the legislature also mandated that the two go hand in hand, funding, uh, from the legislature, 50% towards the study of the flood retention facility and 50% towards, uh, the non dam alternatives. You know, they have to go hand in hand. Uh, and so, uh, moving forward, they should still go hand in hand for the long term until we've actually completed these projects. And I am in all of the above kind of a person, not an either or. And getting back to, uh, economic justice in the state, we spend billions for Seattle. We spend billions in other parts of the state, you know, but Lewis County gets very meager amounts of support, and our freeway is two lanes for a reason. It's not because, um, they want to spend an equal amount of infrastructure in Lewis County. Um, we tend to get left behind. So this is a great opportunity for the state to show some economic justice. Thank you.

Fran Sant: Thank you. Frank. All right, folks, I'm going to just keep checking in, uh, with you until we have a long enough pause where I don't see any hands raised, and we see Heather. Heather. Um, please go ahead and check in with me so we know we can hear each other. And then go ahead and provide your comment.

Heather Nicholson: Sure. Thanks, Fran. Am I audible?

Fran Sant: You sure are. Thanks.

Heather Nicholson: Oh, great. Thanks. Yeah. Uh, you know, just, uh, I think one thing that's come to mind again for me during this period of flooding that's going on in the state is that flooding is, um, is a natural occurrence, and it's supposed to happen in the floodplain and that the Sam it gives a lot the salmon benefit from flooding. Um, it may not happen every year. It happens differently from year to year, but flooding is part of the ecological process. And so I want us to keep in mind that, again, mitigation we what we think of as mitigation can only look out so far ahead. And our ability as humans to calculate the difference between what we're doing and what would what our beneficial things that occur in nature, nature are very, very dissimilar. We don't have the foresight and our analytical skills are extremely limited. It is hubris to think that we are going to nail it. I'm not against ingenuity. I'm not against having places for people to live. I'm not an environmentalist. I'm a human with my place on the planet. And we have to keep in mind that flooding is natural and it provides benefits that might be a little bit, pardon the pun, above our heads to understand. So let's keep that in mind for the salmon. And they're not doing well. So let's be careful. And there's time. Let's study it correctly. Let's make sure we're clear about what we're doing. And we're not just being political or trying to, you know, look out for our own interests. There are a lot of folks who may feel they have a lot at stake for their homes and businesses. They're not alone. They're not being cast aside. Let's work on this together and make sure that the species are taken care of and the whole of the environment is taken care of for all of our sakes. Thank you.

Fran Sant: Thank you. Heather. All right. You've heard me say this many times, but I'm still looking for raised hands. We do want to hear from you. We appreciate that you've taken the time and energy to be here. So we want to hear from you if you want to provide comment. And if you don't, that's okay too. If you're just here to listen, I'm going to give it another minute or so and see if anybody raises their hand again or raises it for

the first time, and then we'll go ahead and talk about what's going to happen next. I'll give it till about 725, and then I'll start sharing some additional information with the group. All right I'm going to do one more scan. I'm not seeing any hands currently. So this would be your opportunity to raise your hand for the final time. Um, I'm going to go ahead and read some information and then pause the hearing until 8:00. Um, so you're welcome to stay with us, but you're also welcome to probably have dinner and start your evening. Um, so could I get the, um, the slide up on. There you go. You read my mind. All right. I want to just remind folks that, um. Oops. Let me just fix those controls. All right, so you have had the opportunity to provide oral comments to us tonight. You can also submit additional comments or new comments in writing to us. Please remember that they are due to Ecology by February 4th, 2026 at 11:59 p.m..

Fran Sant: Uh, you can see on the screen the ways to send those comments to us. You can either use the online comment form or you can mail them to us using US mail. That address is shown on the screen, and hopefully one of my team members is putting that information in the chat if you want to jot that down. So all comments that were received tonight at this hearing, as well as all comments for the additional in-person hearing on January 6th, 2026, and an additional online hearing on January 8th of 2026, as well as an additional public meeting that will be held on January 13th of 2026, along with all written comments received or postmarked no later than February 4th, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. will be part of the official hearing record for the final Environmental Impact statement for the Chehalis Basin Flood Reduction Project. In addition to these comments on the revised draft, EIS ecology will also consider all comments received on the original draft EIS issued in 2020 as we prepare the final EIS. We'll respond to all comments again. Uh, we'll respond to all comments, and then we'll also send notice about, uh, the final EIS that everyone that provided written comments or oral comments on the draft revised EIS and submitted contact information. So everybody, at tonight's meeting, you had to provide an email. Probably. That's how we'll know how to send to you. Um, so everybody that signed in for today's hearing, um, anyone that provided comment on the draft EIS in 2020 and then all the other interested parties on the agency's mailing list and email lists and gov delivery list for the proposal.

Fran Sant: The final environmental impact statement for the Chehalis Basin Flood Reduction Project, in response to comments, will contain the agency's response to your questions that you asked tonight and issues of concern that were submitted during the

public comment period. So the next steps are for ecology to review all the comments received on the original draft EIS and the revised draft EIS from all the public meetings, and to issue a final environmental impact statement. Ecology anticipates the final Environmental Impact statement with the response to. All comments will be issued um in August of 2026. So, on behalf of the Department of Ecology, we greatly appreciate you spending time with us this evening. We thank you for coming. We appreciate your cooperation and courtesy and hope that you have a good evening. Right now we're going to go ahead and officially pause the meeting. So please let the record show that this hearing is paused at 7:29 p.m.. Again, we did advertise that we would be here till 8 p.m.. So we're going to pause the hearing and we'll reopen it for additional public comment should new folks join us later between now and 8:00? Uh, so I hope you all have a good evening and thank you again.

Fran Sant: Just for folks.

Fran Sant: Again, I can reopen the hearing. We're not going to be, uh, doing any type of question and answers. Uh, so if, uh, um. Really just holding this period of time for folks that, uh, may join us between 730 and 8, um, if you do want to stay on and, uh, uh, hang out with us, we're going to be sort of sitting in silence. Um, we're not going to be taking questions. We're just going to be making ourselves available for folks that may not have been able to to get here yet, and that we had indicated in our noticing that we would be here till 8 p.m.. Um, Angie, I'm going to give. Since we're paused right now, I'm going to give myself AA2 minute break and then I'll be right back online.

Angie Thomson: I'll be here.

Fran Sant: Thank you.

Fran Sant: Angie, if you need.

Fran Sant: A couple minutes, I can cover for you. Uh, just for the folks that are hanging out with us. Uh, the the core team is going to be here online, uh, till 8:00. I'll open the hearing back up if I see, uh, new folks join us, or I see folks that are here that haven't had an opportunity to provide comment. I can certainly open the hearing back up for that. Um, but otherwise we'll go ahead and adjourn at 8:00 if no one new joins us.

Steve, if your hand is raised to provide comment, I'll go ahead and open the hearing back up around 750. And if it's not to provide formal comment, um, maybe if you have a question for the something that we can help you with, you can put that in chat. Otherwise I'll go ahead and open the hearing back up in a few minutes.

Fran Sant: Hey, folks.

Fran Sant: I'm going to go ahead and, um, open the hearing back up. I can see perhaps in the chat. Mr. Grunbaum, you might want to make a comment if you do. Um, please. First of all, has everybody no one knows who joined us. If you have just joined us, please use the raised hand feature and I will repeat, uh, all of my hearing script again for you if you've been with us all evening. Um, I did pause the hearing a few minutes ago because everybody had provided comment. Um, we will be here till 8 p.m. tonight. Or past that. If everybody here would like to provide comment. So this would be your opportunity to raise your hand. And we'll go ahead and let you make a formal comment. Great. Mr. Grunbaum, when you're ready, go ahead and unmute yourself and please provide your comments.

Arthur Grunbaum: Hi. Uh, this is Arthur Grunbaum, and, um, I had a question. I'll have others that I will send in, but it just is one that's bothering me. If the vegetation above the dam location is going to be removed in order to provide a retention of water if the dam is employed, how will invasive vegetation be handled, such as Scot's broom? Um, what would be the effect of herbicides if they were used on the waters flowing into the stream and into the channels? Thank you.

Speaker23: Thank you sir. Um, if you.

Fran Sant: Don't want to make any additional comments, you can go ahead and lower your hand. Um, for the folks that have, um, stayed with us, if you'd like to provide a comment, uh, now would be your opportunity to do so. We're here to hear from you. Um, so if you'd like to raise your hand and provide comment, please do so. Otherwise, we will all enjoy each other's company until about 8:00. And then I'll officially, uh, close the hearing at. Facilitation team. Could you drop in to chat one more time? How folks can provide written comments, both the online comment form and our mailing address please. Perfect. Thanks for displaying that as well. Just want to remind folks that are still

with us as attendees. This would be your opportunity to raise your hand and provide a comment or additional comment. And then at 8:00, I will go ahead and read a bit more information for the official record and close the hearing out. Great folks. This will be the last call for raised hands. Um, if you would like to provide a comment or an additional comment, please go ahead and raise your hand and let me know. I'll be watching the clock here. Uh, at 759. I'll go ahead and proceed to read some final information.

Fran Sant: I apologize for those of you who have been with us the whole time. Uh, you will hear this information again. Uh, but I want to make sure that we have an official record for the hearing, and I need to read this information again. Okay, this is my final call for a raised hand. Thank you so much for staying with us. And I want to make sure, um, that if you did want to provide comment, we've given you the opportunity to do so. I'm not seeing any raised hands. I'm going to go ahead and close the hearing out. I will be, like I said, reading some information again. So all comments received at this hearing, as well as the in-person hearing to be held on January 6th and the online hearing to be held on January 8th, and the public meeting to be held on January 13th, all in 2026, along with all written comments received or postmarked no later than February 4th, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. will be part of the official hearing record for the final Environmental Impact statement for the Chehalis Basin Flood Reduction Project. In addition to the comments received at these hearings, all comments received on the original draft EIS will be considered as part of the official record.

Fran Sant: Ecology will respond to all comments received when the final EIS is issued. We will also send notice about the availability of the final EIS to everyone that provided written comment or oral testimony on this draft, revised EIS in the original draft EIS and who submitted contact information. Everyone that signed in for today's hearing and provided an email address and other interested parties on the agency's mailing and email lists for the proposal. The final environmental impact statement for the Chehalis Basin Flood Reduction Project and will contain a response to comments, and it will contain the agency's response to comments, questions, issues of concern that were submitted during the public hearing. The next steps is for ecology to review these comments and respond to them, and issue a final EIS. Ecology anticipates issuing the final EIS with the response to all comments um in August of 2026. On behalf of the Department of Ecology, we thank you for coming. We appreciate your cooperation and courtesy and hope you have a good evening. Please let the record show that this

hearing is being adjourned at 8:01 p.m. on December 11th, 2025. Thank you so much and have a good evening.