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CHEHALIS RIVER BASIN FLOOD DAMAGE

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

January 21, 2026



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DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
STATE OF WASHINGTON

CHEHALIS RIVER BASIN FLOOD DAMAGE
REDUCTION PROJECT: SEPA REVISED DRAFT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

JANUARY 21, 2026
PUBLIC MEETING

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
Pages 1 through 66

**CERTIFIED
TRANSCRIPT**

Taken Before:
Michelle Brandt, CRC, CCR
Certified Stenographic Court Reporter
for
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A P P E A R A N C E S

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Meg Bommarito, Presenter, Washington State Department of Ecology

Bobbak Talebi, Presenter, Washington State Department of Ecology

Angie Thomson, Meeting Facilitator, Thomson Strategic



1 BE IT REMEMBERED that on Wednesday, January 21,
2 2026, at 6:00 p.m., a Chehalis River Basin Flood Damage
3 Reduction Project: SEPA Revised Draft EIS public meeting
4 was held before Michelle Brandt, Washington State
5 Certified Stenographic Reporter, residing at Clark County.

6 WHEREUPON the following proceedings were had, to
7 wit:

8 ---ooo0ooo---

9
10

11 ANGIE THOMSON: Okay. Now for the exciting
12 part of the meeting is the public comment session. I
13 will call people up to provide comments in the order
14 that your name appears on the comment sign-in sheet
15 at the front of the room. And once everyone on this
16 list has had a chance to comment, we're happy to
17 circle back around. Give people a chance, if they
18 haven't made a comment, and circle back to folks who
19 might have more to say.

20 So, okay. We have an interpreter. I'm putting
21 our meeting guidelines back up on the screen. I just
22 read them and talked about them. We don't need to go
23 over them again. I want to remind folks that
24 comments should be no more than three minutes. We
25 will have a timer on the screen, and so when you



1 reach that limit, I will ask you to summarize your
2 comments so that the next person can come up to make
3 their comment and we can get through folks.

4 I'm going to call up people in groups of three.
5 Then we have these three seats. Sorry. So we will
6 have these three seats, and then we will swing this
7 around and people can come up and make their comment.
8 So when you make your comment, if you would state
9 your name, that is helpful for Michelle, our court
10 reporter, and try not to -- make sure you are
11 speaking into the microphone so folks can hear you.
12 Just good practice for speaking clearly so Michelle
13 can write things down and other folks can hear you.

14 Okay. I think we're ready to get started. Our
15 first three commenters are Michael Nichols, followed
16 by Michelle Schilter, and then Jeremy Mikkelsen. And
17 sir, can I have you move over there? Thank you.
18 Hold on a second. We are going to get organized.
19 And now it's public comment session. Here is a chair
20 if that is easier for anybody. This microphone is
21 on, so you can use that. I will pop over here.

22 Okay. Mr. Nichols, when you are ready.

23 MICHAEL NICHOLS: Hello, I'm Mike Nichols.
24 I'm from the town of Pe Ell. I am a Councilmember.
25 My father was the Mayor in 2007 when the flood



1 actually happened. I was in Arizona, and I was an
2 elected official down there. So when I would call
3 him, our conversations were short. He would just
4 say, I'm dealing with flood issues. And then
5 basically hang up on me. So our conversations were
6 short in that aspect. I understand he was busy.

7 Since I've gotten up here -- and he has passed
8 away since. Since I got up here, taken over his
9 house, and became involved with the town, I've sat
10 in, I think, three or four of your guys'
11 presentations. I understand that concept of this dam
12 has been proven overseas once at some location. I
13 support the project. I can't speak for the town. I
14 support, personally, the project.

15 And have you guys studied their plus and
16 negatives ecology-wise? And can we not control the
17 flow of the water more constant so all concerns,
18 fish, grass, trees, and all of that could be better
19 mitigated through the timeframes? If the science
20 behind it is better controlled in the aspects of
21 water control, all the way through the process,
22 especially since the dam has been proven once before,
23 they should have better data for the whole project.
24 And I guess that would be since moving forward in
25 that direction.



1 Thank you.

2 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, sir. You can
3 just set it down. Yeah.

4 So now we have Michelle Schilter, Jeremy
5 Mikkelsen, followed by Edna Fund.

6 And Michelle, you can start whenever you're
7 ready, and keep talking in the microphone. We have a
8 good reminder, whoever gave us a reminder.

9 MICHELLE SCHILTER: Good evening. My name
10 is Michelle Schilter. My husband and I operate an
11 organic dairy over in Adna. And, yes, we were
12 affected by the '07 flood.

13 Not only did we have water in our house, we also
14 had water in our dairy. I guess you could say we
15 were one of the lucky farmers where we only lost
16 about 10 cows. But we lost all of our feed. So
17 for -- you know, it was chaos. It was crazy. I had
18 my kids there. It was just probably your worst
19 nightmare that you could ever imagine.

20 The hardest part for us -- I know Pete and Cindy
21 are here, and John our neighbor, they lost
22 everything. That was their livelihood. And I'll be
23 honest with you, there were a couple of times that
24 Lonnie and I looked at each other and just kind of
25 wished, it might have been better off if we lost

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1 everything, all of the animals. Because we couldn't
2 get them fed. We couldn't get them milk. We
3 couldn't get them taken care of like we always do.
4 So from that, that is how I look at this now. You
5 know, it was such a devastating event to our farm
6 and, you know, it changed our lives.

7 I know this is a tough issue. I come from an
8 area in California that has dealt with this for
9 years. Napa went through a very intense flood
10 mitigation strategy that took 20, 30 years. But they
11 did it. And the community flourished. And they had
12 all the same issues.

13 They had an additional issue with the tide flow
14 so that complicated things even more. But they
15 implemented all of the different strategies, and they
16 were able to come to a sound solution that made it
17 better for the entire community. And I know Napa is
18 a very wealthy area, but there is a lot of
19 similarities in where we live as well.

20 And so for me, I have been on board with this
21 strategy from the beginning because it makes sense.
22 I've seen it work in California. And I know it can
23 work here. On our farm, part of our strategy, I
24 mean, we do everything that we can to provide the
25 best habitat for fish, for wildlife, for everything.



1 It is part of being an organic dairy. That is part
2 of your business model.

3 For me, if we can incorporate that on our 500
4 acres that we farm, I know with this sort of
5 structure in place, it'll be a no-brainer. It just
6 makes the whole environment better. For me and my
7 family, I want to see this go forward. I know there
8 are questions about fish. I know there are questions
9 about habitat. But it is just such a great option
10 for us living out in, you know, in Adna.

11 We can't put a big fat levy around our farm.
12 We're very limited in what we can do. And our farm
13 has been part of some of the different mitigation
14 strategies, but I know this is probably part of the
15 best solution for us long-term.

16 Thank you.

17 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you.

18 Jeremy Mikkelsen, Edna Fund, and then Adrianna
19 Garibay.

20 JEREMY MIKKELSEN: Good evening. My name
21 is Jeremy Mikkelsen. I live on a farm right outside
22 of Adna. It's not quite that big. I only have
23 40 acres.

24 Ironically, the last public meeting I attempted
25 to attend was cancelled due to flooding. But that



1 same day, two of my kids, high schoolers, part of
2 Running Start, didn't have classes at CC because of
3 the potential flood impacts. I understand this
4 facility wouldn't trigger with that flood. But what
5 I didn't see captured with the EIS was the events
6 close to the line. Centralia College didn't close
7 that day because of flood events but because of the
8 possibility of flood events.

9 That same day on the farm, I was packing
10 sandbags and getting things ready for animals in the
11 potentiality of the forecast changing to being, oh,
12 there is actually more water. Where as if a
13 structure like this would have been in place, I could
14 have rested knowing, hey, if the forecast suddenly
15 shifts and water will be deeper, the dam would be
16 able to take care of it.

17 There is near-term effects. I didn't see those
18 being quantified. I think there's a lot of those,
19 those near threshold events; forecasting uncertainty,
20 impacts of closures, preparation on schools,
21 cancelled public meetings, lost workdays. There is
22 all kinds of impacts from the near events. It
23 doesn't have to trigger for it to be a benefit.

24 My first request to Ecology is to quantify the
25 benefits. Number two is about equality. The EIS



1 touches on the various equality issues.

2 Disproportionate number of lower income families
3 impacted because they live across the river or live
4 in apartments impacted by flooding because they are
5 low-cost apartments. But what I didn't see in the
6 EIS is a comparison from a wider equity perspective.

7 An example of this is there are other flood
8 control structures in the state of Washington, and
9 the area around Seattle has many flood control
10 structures that are getting revised, getting permits
11 allowed for those things, and are protecting those
12 areas. Then we are in a situation now where we are
13 proposing a structure that would protect our region,
14 and I don't see any equity conversation of, hey, if
15 Seattle's flood control structures are replaced to
16 being something like what is proposed here in the
17 flow-through, I suspect you could arrive at the
18 situation where they would have protection, we would
19 have protection, and the fish would be a net benefit.

20 I don't see a comparison. Maybe that's what I
21 would like to see is a comparison of the relative
22 impact of the flow-through dam and its proportional
23 impact compared to other existing structures already
24 impacting fish. If the removing of one structure up
25 in the Seattle area would double, you know, bring in



1 so many more fish, how much are we taking away by
2 adding this very safe structure? And perhaps a
3 better evaluation of equality would be consistent
4 standards of protecting fish but also protecting
5 communities' equitability.

6 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you.

7 We have Edna Fund, followed by Adrianna Garibay,
8 then Tony Ketchum.

9 EDNA FUND: I'm Edna Fund. Thank you for
10 this opportunity. Thank you for coming. We
11 appreciate that.

12 We have a room full of people who know what
13 happens when a flood occurs. I look forward to their
14 testimony. I also know there is folks who have been
15 very critical of what we would do, meaning with a
16 flow-through dam for mitigation, and they have just
17 looked at what the bad things are, that we know
18 things are bad. And then they don't have the rest of
19 the equation.

20 So what does is Flood Control Zone District
21 going to do about those? I encourage people to --
22 when the permitting starts, that's where you will see
23 more of the mitigation. Because there is more to
24 this story than is currently available to people. So
25 that is one of the things that when I look at EIS



1 that we need more information, and that will come
2 when the permitting starts.

3 And I also want to say, when we looked at
4 fish -- so we have a two-prong effort from the
5 Legislature. So we are talking about flood
6 mitigation and we are talking about aquatic species.
7 So half of that money is going to aquatic species and
8 a lot of that is with the salmon. And then there is
9 flood mitigation. When we talk about fish, aquatic
10 species, it is not just the mitigation side. It is
11 also in the other half of what the Legislature wants
12 us to do.

13 Thank you.

14 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you. Okay. Adrianna
15 Garibay, then Tony Ketchum, then Kathy Burnaman.

16 ADRIANNA GARIBAY: My name is Adrianna
17 Garibay. I'm a Centralia City councilor. I advocate
18 for the Hispanic community also.

19 In my role of supporting families facing
20 challenges, I have gained firsthand insight into the
21 critical importance of a flow-through dam for the
22 residents. Contrary to claim, the dam primarily
23 benefits large businesses. Thousands of low-income
24 families experience the most flooding, including
25 significant property damage and force relocation. I

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1 urge you to support in these risks, the members of
2 community through implementation of effective flood
3 control measurements.

4 So I was looking through the pictures. And I
5 was in Centralia. And just looking at these
6 pictures, it makes me just remember how bad it was.
7 And then just thinking about the solution that we can
8 have, I think it's just very important for you to
9 think about that.

10 I was able to go and help families to clean
11 their houses. Kids' care, providing food for them.
12 Now we have something we can prevent. We can prevent
13 those things from happening again.

14 And I know that we have to think about
15 everything else that you were already saying. And
16 I'm assuming that you are not only going to focus in
17 on the bad things. I'm assuming that you are also
18 looking for the good stuff that this dam will
19 provide.

20 So I am in support of this. And then if you can
21 just give us, you know, more -- more ideas or more
22 ways to provide more comments for the Hispanic
23 community, I will be very happy to bring those to
24 you.

25 Thank you.



1 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, Adrianna.

2 Tony Ketchum, then we have Kathy Burnaman, and
3 Pete Dykstra.

4 TONY KETCHUM: Hi. I'm Tony Ketchum, Mayor
5 of City of Chehalis.

6 The 2007 flood in the Chehalis Basin cost more
7 than \$900 million of damage, which in today's rate is
8 about 1.4 million. We will have many more levels of
9 flooding according to climate models. To spend
10 1 billion or more to reduce catastrophic flood damage
11 for people across the Basin is good public policy.

12 I have to say that the city of Chehalis has been
13 supportive of this project since the very beginning.
14 We support this project wholeheartedly. We have a
15 saying in the city: When you do a flood project, do
16 no harm. We see this project as causing no harm to
17 anybody in the Chehalis Basin, any of our neighbors,
18 east, west, north, or south. It controls the water.
19 I know controlling water works.

20 I was just talking to an individual business
21 owner in Centralia over the last flood and talking
22 about the China creek project that was put in. And
23 they were able to slow the water down. And every
24 time the flood happens, he expects his business to
25 get flooded. And he talked that he didn't get



1 flooded at all this year. It is because of the China
2 project. Controlling the water flow and letting it
3 out when it needed to go.

4 So we are very serious about this project, and
5 we hope that you look seriously at this project. And
6 I believe that it does not damage fish habitat, fish
7 population. It controls the water flow. It doesn't
8 end up putting fish in your front yard or on your
9 front porch where they cannot get back into the
10 river. So we seriously hope that this project can go
11 forward.

12 Thank you for the time.

13 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, sir.

14 We have Kathy Burnaman, and then Pete Dykstra,
15 then Stan Langland. Stan, you're next.

16 Kathy, go ahead.

17 KATHY BURNAMAN: Hi, I'm Kathy Burnaman,
18 the project manager for the Flood Control Zone
19 District. We know how devastating flooding is in the
20 upper Chehalis Basin. Therefore, the project
21 proposed by the Flood Control Zone District is
22 designed to reduce the worst flooding impacts by
23 targeting major and catastrophic floods.

24 The good news is the Revised Draft EIS concludes
25 that the project serves its purpose. In a



1 catastrophic flood, it would prevent more than 2,400
2 structures and 4,000 acres of land from being
3 inundated, from Pe Ell to Cosmopolis, along a hundred
4 miles of river. It would also reduce flooding on I-5
5 allowing it to reopen sooner. The project is meant
6 to be consistent with an overall Chehalis Basin fish
7 and flood strategy to reduce major and catastrophic
8 flooding damages while still creating successful
9 outcomes for fish.

10 For that reason, the project is not a
11 traditional dam. It is a flow-through facility.
12 Most of the time, and for years on end, the project
13 will allow the river to flow through it. It only
14 closes when a major or catastrophic flood is
15 forecasted, and even then it allows average
16 wintertime flows to pass.

17 Regarding mitigation, we have proposed and are
18 committed to robust mitigation. Our scientists,
19 biologists, and engineers have been working to
20 improve it for five years and will continue to
21 improve it throughout the permitting process and in
22 consultation with tribes. The project can't proceed
23 through permitting unless we can demonstrate that
24 mitigation will work. That's the legal requirement.
25 We have to meet it or the project can't be built.



1 All large projects have impacts. But the point
2 is to design them safely, effectively, and with as
3 few impacts as possible. That's what we believe we
4 have done here and what we are committed to doing if
5 the project is selected to succeed. We will be
6 submitting comments by February 4th.

7 Thank you.

8 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, Kathy.

9 Next is Pete, and then we have Stan Langland,
10 then Frank Corbin. If you two want to make your way
11 up to the front.

12 All right. Pete, when you're ready.

13 PETE DYKSTRA: My name is Pete Dykstra.
14 I'm a dairy farmer. I'm a retired dairy farmer from
15 Curtis. My family was located on the banks of the
16 creek on the South Fork in Chehalis. Before moving
17 here, I lived on the Green River in Auburn. So I've
18 lived in a floodplain my entire life. Flooding was a
19 problem on my parents' farm until a dam was built.

20 My wife and I moved to Curtis in 1973, which is
21 considered an electric floodplain. The County
22 reminds me of that every year. And one of the
23 reasons for picking our farm was the river bottom
24 soil and irrigation possibilities. We have had minor
25 flooding on our farm most winters. In '90 and '96

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1 our barns and cows took water for a few hours. And
2 pumps and motors had to be rebuilt after that flood
3 but that was not major.

4 My wife and I were members of the fire
5 department, so we were aware of the flooding on the
6 South Fork. There were videos of wall water coming
7 up the South Fork and across our farm, and many
8 people saw the logs coming back up the South Fork to
9 the Chehalis. Our cows were on a cement slab by the
10 barn where they have always been safe. When all of a
11 sudden we had seven feet of water in our house and
12 nine feet of water in our barns.

13 On December 2nd, I milked 60 cows. On the
14 3rd, they were all dead, along with about 60 head
15 of goat stock. My wife and I, and our dog, evacuated
16 out a second-story window through a Sheriff boat.
17 One of our grandsons is planning on starting a dairy
18 farm on our property in June. I pray he never has to
19 go through this in his lifetime.

20 The repeated testimony about fish, we have seen
21 too many of them trapped in puddles on the farm after
22 floods. After the flood of '07, a lot of dignitaries
23 were on our farm estimating damage. I said, I have
24 been through, not one, but two 100-year floods and a
25 500-year flood, so I must be 765. Well, today I'm



1 785.

2 There have been a lot of studies and a lot of
3 work that has been done over the last 18 years. But
4 we need the flow-through dam so that the work that's
5 been done on the tributaries can do their job. It is
6 time to quit studying and start doing. We need this
7 dam. I hope that this is the last study we have to
8 do. Let's get to work.

9 Thank you for your time.

10 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, sir.

11 We have Stan, then Frank Corbin, then Sue
12 Rosbach.

13 Stan, when you're ready.

14 STANLEY LANGLAND: My name is Stanley
15 Langland. I'm a volunteer advisor with the Flood
16 Control District.

17 So I would like to speak in favor of the
18 flow-through retention structure. I think it has a
19 lot of positive things to bring to the area. I've
20 lived in Lewis county for 30 years. I've personally
21 experienced what some of the severe flooding in this
22 area can do. That includes being on an island
23 unexpectedly for several days. Having no heat or
24 electricity for two weeks. But none of that is close
25 to what some have experienced during these floods.

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1 So what I would like to see, maybe, is Ecology
2 to look at some, instead of just negative impacts,
3 there might be some positive impacts to the
4 structure -- that the structure can bring. One of
5 those would be -- so the structure will reduce the
6 velocity and turbulence of the water during floods.
7 That will reduce the amount of scouring, amount of
8 soil loss along the river. That is also going to
9 reduce the loss of vegetation and debris that the
10 vegetation requires to grow.

11 In my opinion, I think that that will encourage
12 vegetative growth, and encourage soil retention, and
13 that will encourage lower water temperatures, which
14 will actually be beneficial to the fish.

15 I just ask that Ecology consider some of the
16 potential positive impacts instead of just the
17 negatives.

18 Thank you for the opportunity.

19 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, Stan.

20 Next we have Frank, and then Sue, and then we
21 have Brinn Marri.

22 FRANK CORBIN: Thank you. Frank Corbin,
23 Forest Precinct. Also Vice Chair of the Advisory
24 Committee.

25 The Corbin family in the Chehalis Basin have



1 been here nearly 20 years. And we were also impacted
2 by the catastrophic flooding of 2007 and the ongoing
3 less catastrophic flooding as recently as this
4 winter. Fishing in the nearby Newaukum River is a
5 dream for us.

6 The main points I want to leave with you are:
7 Doing nothing is not an option. The salmon
8 population is quickly disappearing, and the proposed
9 projects, as well as mitigation, are sound,
10 scientific, and thoroughly studied. It is time to
11 move forward because climate change will finish
12 killing off the salmon if we fail.

13 Number two: By focusing on scientific study for
14 over 20 years, we have earned the right to
15 self-determination in this county and not to be
16 dictated to by those who don't live or work in the
17 Basin.

18 Number three: The economic cost of past
19 catastrophic flooding events well exceeds over a
20 billion dollars, and future economic impacts will
21 quickly surpass that. The price tag of a flood
22 retention facility and the levees once built will
23 save billions in future costs.

24 Number four: The proposal to move us all out of
25 the fertile and highly productive Basin is



1 inconsistent with other flood prone areas in the
2 state, such as the Skagit Valley and Renton Valley,
3 where businesses and homeowners are not forced to
4 move to higher ground. Significant flood mitigation
5 projects are funded with relative ease in those
6 areas. Why the inconsistency?

7 Number five: EIS fails to adequately address
8 the fact that the flow-through dam will reduce the
9 negative environmental impacts of catastrophic
10 flooding. Reducing catastrophic flooding while
11 continuing to allow for more seasonal normal flooding
12 are all healthy for the Basin ecosystem. I, too,
13 would like for you to consider adding some of the
14 positive aspects of these projects to the overall
15 EIS.

16 Thank you very much.

17 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, sir.

18 Next, we have Sue, and then Brinn Marri, and
19 then Dave Mueller.

20 Sue, whenever you're ready.

21 SUE ROSBACH: Hi, there. My name is Sue
22 Rosbach. My family and I were all flooded in 2007,
23 and we had never been flooded before. As with many
24 of you, we cleaned up the mess, rebuilt where
25 necessary, and life does go on. But every winter



1 when the rain happens nearly nonstop, we all hope and
2 pray that we will not have to live those terrible
3 days.

4 Personally, even though I am on my family farm
5 that has been there for 126 years, I don't believe
6 I'm up to reliving that again. I can't do it. I
7 won't. I can't do it. That is why I'm here tonight
8 to point out, and hopefully clear up, some of the
9 misconceptions that are being circulated out there
10 that are scaring people about this dam.

11 I have been involved with the One Voice Flood
12 Committee since its inception in 2008 right after the
13 2007 flood. I understand the frustrations of the
14 seemingly endless studies, and studies, and yet more
15 studies. And I know that these studies are necessary
16 to ensure both the safety of the people affected but
17 also the effectiveness of this proposed dam.

18 I hope that you can address or mitigate some of
19 the false statements that are out there. People
20 think that when this dam breaks, you know, the whole
21 valley will be flooded and people will die. The
22 chances of that are like 1 in 10,000 that an astroid
23 will hit the Earth.

24 I think these things need to be addressed in
25 your study that the odds that that dam is going to



1 break and flood people out, and I realize now that
2 this new dam or reservoir flow-through facility will
3 not be that way, but I think you need to address the
4 odds of that happening. Even, they are talking about
5 if an earthquake should happen, that it would flood
6 everyone again. The chances of that happening --
7 this dam should be built according to federal
8 regulations, and it would withstand an earthquake
9 without failing.

10 The next facility will not operate as a dam.
11 There will never be a permanent reservoir. And if
12 the 5,000-plus-year earthquake did happen, and the
13 structure breaks, it will not be holding water. I
14 think those kind of things need to be addressed to
15 put people at ease.

16 The odds of a catastrophic failure and causing
17 loss of life is like 1 in 2.5 billion because this
18 5,000-year earthquake would have to hit at the same
19 moment a giant flood would have to be here and on one
20 of the very few days that the facility is actually
21 holding water.

22 The flood affects more than just this valley.
23 It affects this county, and the next county, and
24 probably the next county down, too. It affects many
25 families, many farms, many low-income people. And it



1 just isn't right. It's got to be not talked about
2 anymore. Let's get some action.

3 ANGIE THOMSON: Thanks, Sue.

4 Next is Brinn, followed by Dave Mueller and
5 Kimberly Mai.

6 BRINN MARRI: Hello. My name is Brinn
7 Marri. I am the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
8 for the Chehalis Tribe.

9 I, obviously, have formal written comments I'm
10 submitting, but I want to come to you all today and
11 just discuss my thoughts on this. I'm local to Grand
12 Mound. Grew up there. Lived there my whole life. I
13 have my Master's in archaeological heritage. This is
14 the work I do.

15 I was speaking on this today just as my role,
16 but also as a life-long citizen of Grand Mound. I
17 know this is not opposition or for the thing, not
18 making statements of that. But I just wanted to tell
19 everybody about the importance of cultural resources,
20 and archaeology, and how this project will, in some
21 form and many forms, have effect on archaeology and
22 cultural resources throughout the Chehalis Basin.
23 Not just in one town. Not just in one place.
24 Negative impacts. A lot of them.

25 I just kind of want to point out to people that



1 this project is one of lots of similar projects
2 throughout the country and throughout the state.
3 People like me, and other state workers, and other
4 federal workers, tribal workers, work really hard to
5 protect resources, preserve them for the people.
6 Give them back to the people. But development and
7 projects like these, often cultural resources take a
8 little bit on the back burner and get destroyed in
9 the process. This would be one of those processes.

10 I feel that EIS, in this case, it severely lacks
11 the understanding for the public as to how negative
12 the impacts are for this and why that matters. A lot
13 of people, unfortunately, just don't really have a
14 lot of exposure to archaeology. So they might not
15 know why that is a bad thing that any number of sites
16 are going to get destroyed by flooding.

17 That's kind of a thing that I have spent my
18 lifework doing, which is getting people more aware of
19 archaeology and the Tribe's deep, deep, deep heritage
20 with archaeology, and holding these objects, and
21 knowing these sites, and having that connection to
22 the past. And why it's important to protect it, and
23 why it's not -- like, to some people it might not be
24 a big deal if things get washed away or destroyed.
25 But to the Tribe, it is very important, and it is my



1 whole job essentially.

2 So I just want to say, as someone who has had
3 the privilege to go out into this whole Chehalis
4 Basin and do work, I think everybody should have the
5 time to go out and hike and see beautiful spots.
6 I've gotten to see all of these beautiful cultural
7 resources and visit all these sites.

8 I feel like the immensity of these sites and how
9 important they are should be better reflected in how
10 the EIS is presented and how people see cultural
11 experiences.

12 That is all.

13 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you.

14 Next, we have Dave Mueller, and then we've got
15 Kimberly Mai, then Ronald Averill. So if Kimberly
16 and Ronald can make your way up to the front.

17 And Dave, go ahead when you're ready.

18 DAVE MULLER: Thank you. My name is Dave
19 Mueller. I grew up in Pe Ell. Spent the rest of my
20 life in the Chehalis area.

21 Didn't personally flood, myself, but I have
22 family and a lot of friends who did. You heard some
23 of it already. The frustration that people have with
24 the fact that all we do is study, and we will get a
25 little bit more of that.



1 The Corps of Engineers authorized, in 1933, to
2 study flooding and come up with solutions. We have
3 been doing this for a hundred years, almost. There
4 is about every 10 or 20 years, there will be a flood,
5 and there will be a new set of studies. Nothing
6 happens.

7 So that went on until 2007. And the local
8 officials took charge, at that point, and did quite a
9 job to push the plan to reduce this flooding. And
10 that's what we have today. The dam's been modified
11 from a typical retention dam, which has significant
12 impacts.

13 I would really encourage Ecology to look at the
14 fact that with the flow-through dam, there will only
15 be water in the reservoir maybe 5% of the time or
16 maybe less. Every 5 or 15 years that there is
17 actually an event, and it'll only be in there two or
18 three weeks, and then it'll be drained again. And
19 you avoid the damage from catastrophic flooding to
20 habitat.

21 So we talked about the negative impacts to fish
22 habitat. So the Fish and Wildlife has done studies
23 for the last eight years on how many spawning, salmon
24 spawning beds, there are in the Basin. So above the
25 dam, average of three per year. For the whole Basin,



1 617. So that is just a miniscule amount of impact.
2 And with mitigation, that can be easily taken care
3 of.

4 So I really encourage you to look at the fact
5 that the water retention facility with flow-through
6 has minimal impact compared to a regular dam and
7 count that as a positive.

8 So that the EIS and the Corps of Engineers
9 looked at 61 different alternatives. Anywhere from
10 levies and dikes to protect Centralia and Chehalis to
11 moving all the homes or buying out all the homes.
12 This project is actually the only one that meets the
13 requirement to actually reduce flooding. So really
14 encourage you to recognize that in your analysis.

15 This is a win-win. The people get flood
16 reduction, and the fishery folks get fish
17 enhancement. Look at it that way.

18 Thank you.

19 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, Dave.

20 Kimberly, then we have Ronald Averill, then
21 Katherine Humphrey.

22 So Kimberly, go ahead when you're ready.

23 KIMBERLY MAI: Hi. So unfortunately I did
24 not have much time to gather much information about
25 this project since we just learn bed it this week.



1 I'm in Centralia. We -- I'm currently in a climate
2 justice class this is reviewing things that are
3 currently happening in our city and this came up.

4 I without that I don't think I would have known
5 about this project and been able to read about the
6 impacts that it does have on the environment. I
7 think one thing I did want to mention and think about
8 is the fact this flooding -- the flooding is due to
9 climate change and climate change has been -- is
10 being driven by us. And there are impacts more
11 towards climate change with the dams as well.

12 So it is something to also, I guess, I would
13 want to read or see included in the report is what
14 additional impacts towards climate change that it
15 would have. And I guess that's really it. I'm so
16 sorry. I didn't really have much other than that.

17 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, Kimberly.

18 Next we have Ronald, and then Katherine
19 Humphrey, and then Ross Petersen.

20 So Ronald, go ahead when you're ready.

21 RONALD AVERILL: Good evening. I'm Colonel
22 Ronald Averill. I'm former County Commissioner here
23 in Lewis County. In fact, I was County Commissioner
24 during the 2007 flood.

25 I think you have heard some of the impacts of



1 this flood already, but I would like to add a few
2 things to give you the total impact of what it was.
3 This was one of those atmospheric rivers that hit.
4 It brought down -- that rain brought down a huge
5 amount of lumber. It hasn't been talked about here,
6 but most of the farmers here in this room know that
7 we removed thousands of tons of lumber off of farms
8 so we could get them to be able to farm again here.
9 We had fences that we had to replace because the
10 lumber went through them.

11 We lost 1800 head of cattle. We lost three
12 bridges between Pe Ell and Centralia, and it was
13 those bridges that caused most of the damage to this
14 community. Because that lumber got up against those
15 bridges and water got behind it, got heavier and
16 heavier, banging on it, broke the bridge. Went to
17 the next one, broke it. Next one, broke it. Then it
18 broke through the levy that we had around the
19 airport.

20 Now, this doesn't happen with every storm. This
21 was a huge storm. But we did have one other problem
22 that caused us most of our harm, and that was the
23 king tide in the bay. The water couldn't evacuate.
24 It stood here for five days before it evacuated.
25 Fish don't live out of water.



1 But during this storm, if you go down where the
2 Raymond farm is, you will find that that bank on that
3 river is 30 feet down. Their house had the first
4 floor flooded.

5 Pete just told us about losing his cattle. This
6 is a serious matter for us. And that's not that we
7 aren't interested in fish. We have been
8 participating in fish restoration and habitat since
9 the '80s. Our Public Works Department does every
10 project that they do now when it comes across the
11 culvert, has a fish impact on it. To improve it for
12 the fish. We're not against fish. But we do need
13 this project. It is terribly important to us.

14 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, sir.

15 Katherine Humphrey, and then Ross Petersen, and
16 then J. Vanderstoop.

17 Katherine, go ahead when you're ready.

18 KATHERINE HUMPHREY: I had no intention of
19 coming here when I woke up this morning, but I'm very
20 happy to be here. A friend emailed me a letter this
21 afternoon at 4:30 that he asked me to read to you,
22 and I think I will submit it into the written
23 commentary or written testimony.

24 But because I have to read it and think about
25 everything, I will say that people have been talking



1 about the December 2007 flood, and what I personally
2 found more devastating was the flood of January,
3 2009. Because during the year of '08, over a
4 thousand semitrucks and wood debris were removed from
5 my property. We spent thousands of dollars paying
6 people and countless family friends and complete
7 strangers spent hours, hundreds of hours, trying to
8 clean up our house and property so we could farm
9 again in '09. But, of course, then the flood of
10 January of 2009, which did not get in the house, but
11 was actually far more destructive to our land.

12 Creating this hole in the back the size of a
13 football field, and over 14 feet deep, and watching
14 sand dunes up to six feet deep to cover our top soil.
15 In the middle of our property, making it unusable for
16 another year. A year after a previous flood was
17 quite unimaginable. But what really was distressing
18 is the fact it wasn't the big one. Because the big
19 one had been the year before, and not much attention
20 was paid to it. But that not as high a year in '09,
21 was just as devastating economically. For the years
22 we have spent trying to rehabilitate our soils.

23 The baby I was pregnant with during the 2007
24 flood, Jen, will graduate in June and turn 18 in
25 June. I used to come to every single one of these



1 meetings. I used to comment on everything. I have
2 read every word you people have put out for years.
3 But when one of the alphabet soup people came to my
4 property and explained to me that this facility would
5 not have prevented the '09 flood, I checked out. But
6 two family members were like, are you coming today.

7 And this letter from Mike is going to -- Michael
8 was basically going to say what everybody has said
9 about the devastation, and that he wanted to express
10 his support for the measure to reduce flood impacts
11 and hopes we can all get along, is the gist of his
12 thing.

13 For technological issues, the number of -- I've
14 grown up with salmon, and playing in the river, and
15 elk, and deer, and all of the rest of it in this
16 beautiful valley. My kids are the fifth generation
17 that we get to live in and care for. And I find that
18 the minimal disruption of the nesting area above the
19 dam is more than balanced out by social and economic
20 impacts.

21 Thank you.

22 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, Katherine.

23 Ross Peterson, then J. Vanderstoop, and then
24 David Fenn.

25 ROSS PETERSEN: My name is Ross Petersen.



1 I'm speaking today as a homeowner and a landowner of
2 a small farm that borders the Chehalis River, South
3 Fork River.

4 And for the people living along the river,
5 flooding is not theoretical. It is recurring.
6 Flooding also causes ongoing erosion, loss of usable
7 land, damage to personal property that is rarely
8 covered by insurance or disaster assistance. These
9 losses accumulate year, after year, after year. They
10 rarely appear in Basin-wide damage estimates, but
11 they are very real for the folks you have heard from
12 today and from homeowners and small landowners who
13 absorb this cost personally.

14 Flood risk management is ultimately about
15 reducing harm to people and property. While no
16 project eliminates all flooding, reducing the
17 severity of the most damaging events can make a
18 meaningful difference for families and those who are
19 affected by this and live along with this risk year
20 after year.

21 I appreciate all of the work that the committee
22 has done and all that you are doing to protect our
23 folks here.

24 Thank you.

25 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, Ross.



1 J. Vanderstoop, then David Fenn, then we have
2 Scott Brummer.

3 J. VANDERSTOOP: Thank you. Thank you for
4 all of the time you have put into this.

5 I wanted to comment on some items in the
6 document that I would like you to consider as you
7 move forward in making this final decision. First,
8 is the word "unavoidable." Especially as it is used
9 in the opening of the document. It looks as though
10 it is saying all these bad impacts are unavoidable
11 and they are going to happen if this is built.

12 Reading into the document, I know that's not
13 what that word means. It means if they aren't
14 avoided, if they aren't minimized and mitigated, then
15 these things could happen. But that process will
16 happen during permit. The document is clear on that
17 as you go into the document. But if you just start
18 the document as Kimberly from Centralia College just
19 said, I believe she read to me, these impacts will
20 happen.

21 I would just ask that when you finalize the
22 document that the opening explanation makes that
23 clear and that chart doesn't appear to say, these,
24 all of these impacts, are unavoidable. The point's
25 been made earlier. The project will not be permitted



1 if these impacts cannot be addressed to the
2 satisfaction of state and federal environmental
3 agencies. And so those impacts aren't going to
4 happen. Either they can be addressed as the Flood
5 Zone District has proposed, that can be addressed and
6 mitigated so they won't happen, or it won't get
7 filled. That, I don't believe, comes clearly enough
8 in the document.

9 The next item that hasn't been -- wasn't
10 addressed, at the beginning of the Chehalis Basin
11 process there were biologists even from WDFW who said
12 when you get flows in the upper Basin from the
13 Willapa Hills at 50,000 feet per second, there aren't
14 any spawners left. There are no reds left. There
15 are no aquatic species alive after those extreme
16 flows. They are out in a farmer's field in Adna.

17 So to compare the impact on spawners of this
18 reservoir, temporary reservoir, needs to be compared
19 to what would happen if it wasn't there. And in
20 those extreme floods where this would be used, the
21 difference is, they would be dead because of the
22 flood or they may be suffocated by the reservoir.
23 The point is, it is not a net negative. It is a
24 negative, but not a net negative compared to where we
25 are now.



1 The last one is climate. The document states
2 early, shows a chart, that shows the impact of the
3 reach from the facility up above and then the next
4 reach down to Rainbow Falls. And you look at no
5 action, and then with this facility, Rainbow Falls
6 reach looks the same. In other words, the next reach
7 down shows no difference between the fish impacts.
8 And yet I have to go a hundred pages into the
9 document to get the second page.

10 So I can see the impacts up front of the
11 project, but I don't see the comparison of no action
12 even though it shows the same. I just ask that those
13 two climate versus project be made more clear and
14 close together.

15 Thank you.

16 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, sir.

17 We have David, then Scott Brummer, and then Kyle
18 Markstrom.

19 David, go ahead when you're ready.

20 DAVID FENN: I think people have covered
21 most of the major issues here. I want to bring up a
22 couple of other things more specific with part of the
23 process with fish mitigation. And you are going to
24 get a whole lot more interest from landowners if that
25 fish mitigation is coupled with the flow-through dam.



1 That flow-through dam is there -- I tell you
2 personally, I have very little interest in some major
3 project that will be on my property. But that dam
4 there, I will be much more willing to take part in
5 that kind of thing. I'm assuming most people would
6 be in the same boat.

7 I also, there were -- these have been mentioned
8 before, but some of the issues that are raised are --
9 I do not understand them. They are -- I don't think
10 a dam would have anything to do with it. It was
11 mentioned that if you reduce the highest water flow
12 you should have less problem on your river banks
13 washing in, that kind of thing. So some of your
14 points I think are not problems. They are made-up
15 problems, in my estimation. I don't have the list
16 with me or I would name them one by one. And you
17 will probably write, send in a message.

18 That other issue that hasn't been mentioned is
19 the proposed dikes around Centralia and in place of a
20 dam. That will negatively impact upriver from
21 Chehalis, probably all the way to Adna. It'll be
22 higher than it was in the flood, so that option
23 really makes no sense to me and a whole bunch of
24 other people. It is more expensive. It will protect
25 a relatively small area.



1 And the idea that we can use farmland to take
2 care of the overflow of water is ridiculous. And it
3 is also because it will impact those farmers, those
4 farm fields. You don't run water out there and
5 pretend that it is not going to have an effect on
6 your crop, on your farming next year. I object to
7 that kind of thought process in terms of trying to
8 help an area and damage another area.

9 With another one I was going to go through --
10 oh, the flow-through dam was shown as steady of how
11 effective, how big an area it would effect. It would
12 be beneficial starting at the dam, actually, to have
13 a benefit all the way to the ocean. So it is not a
14 small area that will help. Granted, the further
15 downstream you go, the less it will be beneficial.
16 But it'll be beneficial to a large area.

17 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, sir.

18 Scott Brummer, and then we have Kyle Markstrom,
19 and then Christopher Fay.

20 Scott, go ahead when you're ready.

21 SCOTT BRUMMER: I'm Scott Brummer. I am
22 the Flood Control Zone District Chair. I've been a
23 biologist here in this county for over 30 years as a
24 fish biologist.

25 And from my perspective, the Flood Control



1 District would not be in this position tonight and be
2 bringing this project forward if it was not the very
3 best world-class science and ability to not impact
4 fish. I believe in being a good steward of our
5 resources, of both the fish and all of our natural
6 resources, that we have a responsibility to. And
7 this project is the very best that can be offered.
8 And this also balances the impacts to people.

9 The last time I was in this grange, in 2007,
10 there was as large a crowd as this. I worked for
11 Fish and Wildlife at the time. And we were dealing
12 with those impacts that you all have heard or
13 experienced yourselves. And this project is a
14 balance of controlling those massive catastrophic
15 floods, the debris, and all of the issues that come
16 with it. As well as providing for continued fish
17 passage and for the river to be able to continue
18 doing what rivers do. That's meandering through our
19 valleys and natural processes.

20 And with that, I say that the Flood Control Zone
21 District is going to supply responses to all of the
22 comments. Our team is going to work continually to
23 address every issue it has brought up. We are
24 committed to this process. We will see it through,
25 so we can get to the permitting phase, and we can



1 move forward on the construction of this facility.

2 Thank you.

3 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, sir.

4 We've got Kyle Markstrom, and then we have
5 Christopher Fay, followed by Julie Gullett.

6 KYLE MARKSTROM: Good evening. I
7 appreciate the opportunity to speak. My name is Kyle
8 Markstrom.

9 I'm a Centralia resident. I've lived in
10 Centralia most of my life and grew up there. In
11 1996, I was eight years old, and our house was -- we
12 lived close to the Skookumchuck River, and our house
13 was flooded. We had about three feet of water in our
14 house. All of my adult life I've taken a lot of
15 interest in my community, and volunteered, and been
16 involved in efforts before and after all of the
17 floods after 1996.

18 Seeing all the collaboration and work that's
19 been done by the Offices of Chehalis Basin and Flood
20 Control Zone District, it has been real obvious to me
21 that there's been a tremendous amount of thought and
22 work put into where we are today with the
23 flow-through dam. I also had the opportunity to sit
24 in on the land based meetings and saw work done there
25 and alternatives proposed.



1 I just have no doubt that, like Commissioner
2 Brummer said, that the option being proposed with the
3 flow-through dam is the best option that is
4 available. It is really easy to focus on all of the
5 negative impacts. That is the purpose of EIS, and I
6 also echo what was said earlier. It would be
7 interesting to see to me what an EIS would look like
8 for 60,000 cubic feet of water being introduced into
9 the Chehalis River. What would that impact be on the
10 fish and the wildlife within the Basin, and how does
11 that compare to the benefits of this facility?

12 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, sir.

13 We have Christopher Fay, followed by Julie
14 Gullett, and then Lee First.

15 Christopher, go ahead.

16 CHRISTOPHER FAY: Good evening. My name is
17 Chris Fay. I'm speaking tonight as a member of the
18 Flood Control District Advisory Committee and also as
19 a sixth generation landowner resident in the Chehalis
20 Watershed.

21 I have experienced all of the major flood events
22 over the last half century here. What I wanted to
23 address was I'm a fish biologist, like Commissioner
24 Brummer. I have no doubt that whatever your fish
25 biologist was that participated in this was



1 knowledgeable and an expert in their field. But I
2 don't believe they were a resident of this county as
3 someone who has fished every tributary along the
4 Chehalis River, between Chehalis and the Willapa
5 Hills, in my lifetime.

6 I think the statement that the fish project,
7 even in the Revised Draft, that it would
8 significantly impact fish habitat, I think that's
9 misleading. Because at the very far upper reaches of
10 the Chehalis River, the headwaters, thinking about
11 all of the other tributaries, places where fish,
12 salmon, trout, whatever, where they exist from Rock
13 Creek, Elk Creek, Hope Creek, Garrett Creek,
14 Nicholson Creek. That's just before you get to the
15 South Fork of the Chehalis River and all of the
16 tributaries up the South Fork.

17 Then you have Bump Creek, Stearns Creek,
18 everything to the Newaukum River, and all of the
19 tributaries upstream on the Newaukum. Then the
20 Skookumchuck and everything downstream from there.
21 There are hundreds of smaller tributaries that feed
22 in, and to focus on this one small area in the upper
23 headwaters. Which I've been in that area in late
24 summer, early fall, not a lot of water there.

25 It is hard for me, and most of the people in



1 this room, to be convinced that by doing this
2 project, with the most state of the art facility that
3 the engineers can come up with at this point to
4 minimize fish impact, that having that facility up
5 there in that place would cause a significant
6 negative effect.

7 And if it was in the EIS somewhere, the 324
8 pages of it, that there was statistical consideration
9 of what that would be, I couldn't find it. And if it
10 is 1/10 of 1% change, if it is statistically
11 insignificant, I don't think that should be weighing
12 heavily on this decision, the final decision.

13 Real quick, I want to say, I was at the meeting
14 a couple weeks ago at Centralia College. There were
15 a lot of people -- not a lot, but enough people who
16 spoke against the project. Most of them, I noticed,
17 were not residents of Lewis County. And a couple
18 things they mentioned, about the cost of the project.
19 And I know the estimates are somewhere north of 1.1,
20 1.3 billion. This state allocated 3.9 million for
21 replacing culverts. I think it is a fantastic
22 project, and I think it should go forward.

23 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, sir.

24 We have Julie Gullett, and then we have Lee
25 First, and then Lindsay Pollock.



1 Julie, go ahead when you're ready.

2 JULIE GULLETT: Good evening. My name is Julie
3 Gullett. My family and I own Seedpod Farm on the
4 banks of the Skookumchuck River just north of
5 Centralia. I have attended most of the hearings for
6 the flow-through dam's EIS, and I prepared my
7 comments tonight based on those comments which are
8 very different than what I'm hearing tonight,
9 honestly.

10 I would first like to start by thanking the
11 Department of Ecology and this Board for this type of
12 participatory process where public input is
13 solicited, in part, to identify gaps in our thinking.
14 Clearly, there is a lot of resources, time, and
15 money, and brain power that have been put towards the
16 problem-solving of what a complex array of challenges
17 that we have. There are no quick and easy solutions.

18 As I've listened deeply to the concerns of my
19 neighbors over the sessions, I've heard concerns
20 about habitat and aquatic species impact. I do share
21 some of those concerns. We are working in our own
22 way, as I know most of us are, on our farms to
23 mitigate what we do. We all need to do better in our
24 way.

25 I'm also impressed by the innovative approach of



1 the flow-through dam. 10 years ago the dam was
2 proposed, and scrutinized, and sent back to the
3 drawing board. What they've come back with is an
4 innovative design that has been used elsewhere in the
5 world, in Japan, for example, which, I think, is
6 worth noting.

7 As I understand it, part of the estimated cost
8 of the FRE is to restore forest habitat back to
9 proper repairing forest, which can withstand an
10 occasional flooding event, unlike the board or paper
11 timber planted now. What I know about restoration
12 comes from being a farmer on land that includes South
13 Sound Prairie Habitat and 2 1/2 acres of preparing
14 zone. Restorations takes time, research, and
15 dedication.

16 Between the Chehalis, Newaukum and Skookumchuck,
17 we have three houses going into the Chehalis Basin
18 bucket, but we do have a spigot on the hoses.
19 Mitigation of the Skookumchuck Dam and Reservoir, a
20 piece of infrastructure owned by TransAlta, was
21 outside the bounds of this EIS, but it's certainly
22 integral to the impact of flooding in the Basin.

23 By improving water retention capacity in the
24 reservoir and reworking the fish passage, we have the
25 potential to dramatically effect the amount of water



1 entering the Basin during a flooding event. It would
2 seem to me, in order to determine the effectiveness
3 of the FRE, we would need to ask ourselves, if we
4 expand the Skookumchuck Reservoir capacity, would
5 that improve the FRE even more? Looking at the
6 before and after hydrological map shows the FRE can
7 be a promising investment for the Chehalis Basin to
8 address flooding impacts with sensitivity to the
9 environment.

10 I wonder how they would change if the
11 Skookumchuck Reservoir was greatly improved, not just
12 for water retention in case of a flood, but also to
13 improve fish passage. When you know better, you can
14 do better. I think we are all trying to do that
15 here.

16 Thank you very much.

17 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you.

18 Next we have Lee First, then we have Lindsay
19 Pollock.

20 LEE FIRST: Lee First, Twin Harbors
21 Waterkeeper. I've lived in this basin for 20 years.

22 The construction of a proposed dam on the
23 Chehalis River is an issue that affects all residents
24 of Washington State because of the significant and
25 detrimental impact. The state's Fish and Wildlife



1 law, RCW 77.04.12, states that wildlife fish and
2 shellfish are the property of the state. Who is the
3 state? We are. According to Legislative Findings of
4 Intent under RCW 77.04.020, Washington's fish and
5 wildlife resources are the responsibility of all
6 residents of the state. We all benefit economically,
7 recreationally, and aesthetically from these
8 resources.

9 Spring Chinook and Coho Salmon are owned by all
10 of us. No matter what river or where in the state
11 these salmon survive. Yet, in-person hearings have
12 only been held in Southwest Washington. Although,
13 virtual meetings have been held, these meetings have
14 not been well advertised throughout the state.
15 Articles on the proposed dam and Draft EIS comment
16 period have appeared in "The Chronicle" and "Daily
17 World." Nothing in "The Seattle Times," "Spokane
18 Review" or the Tacoma "News Tribune."

19 The SEPA rules, which guide the development of
20 the Draft EIS, have a whole section on the
21 requirements for commenting. The clear goal of these
22 rules is to invite public and agency comments. For
23 nonproject proposals, having a regional or statewide
24 applicability, copies of the notice shall be given to
25 the Olympia Bureaus of the Associated Press and



1 United International. Was that done? Although,
2 Ecology issued a press release on the DEIS, we have
3 no idea if it was circulated statewide. Was it
4 circulated statewide?

5 Finally, when 50 or more persons residing within
6 the jurisdiction of the lead agency or would have --
7 or would be adversely affected by the environmental
8 impact of the proposal, if these 50 people make a
9 written request to the lead agency within 30 days of
10 issuance of the draft, or when two or more agencies
11 with jurisdiction over a proposal make written
12 requests to the lead agency within 30 days of the
13 issuance of the draft EIS. So if people all over the
14 state didn't know about this, then you know, that
15 really couldn't have happened.

16 In conclusion, we would like to request state --
17 that statewide hearings be provided to issue all
18 residents of the state so they have the opportunity
19 to comment on the proposed extinction of spring
20 Chinook salmon and near extinction of Coho salmon on
21 the Chehalis River.

22 Thank you.

23 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you.

24 Finally, we have Lindsay Pollock. And Lindsay
25 is the last person who signed up. So we will finish



1 with Lindsay, then see if there is anyone who hasn't
2 had a chance to comment who wants to make a comment.

3 Lindsay, when you're ready.

4 LINDSAY POLLOCK: Thank you, Lindsay
5 Pollock, Lewis County Commissioner. I grew up here,
6 and this is my district.

7 With regard to the Draft EIS, we are very, very
8 pointedly saying you are disregarding the mitigation
9 that we have proposed. That is the definition of
10 bias. We also have environmental impacts that I
11 think are not considered.

12 It took years for some of our fields to come
13 back into arability of having six inches of clay
14 dumped on them. Yes, small floods can help with your
15 soil health. But when you talk about a catastrophic
16 flood, you are wiped out, and the only thing you can
17 grow is horse tail. And that is not a viable
18 product.

19 Additionally, we talked about 1800 head of
20 cattle that perished. Those had to be buried. If
21 you're not fortunate enough to have a spot to do
22 that, you can have running water problems for years.
23 That's a public health issue.

24 You talked about air quality and measuring that.
25 I can assure you that the air quality in this valley



1 was horrific after the flood because we had
2 spontaneously combusting hay. We had folks from
3 urban areas telling us, put out your fires, put out
4 your fires. We couldn't. This is a natural process
5 that happen whens hay gets wet.

6 It was months before we had potable water
7 available through the water system. Now, we were
8 fortunate. We didn't have major impacts, but I don't
9 know if you have seen the population level diarrhea
10 storm. I can assure you, it is a bad thing.

11 So going forward, I would just ask that our
12 environmental concerns be looked at, our
13 environmental public health concerns be looked at,
14 and also that you remove the bias from your study.

15 Thank you.

16 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you.

17 Okay. I want to see if there is anyone who
18 hasn't had a chance -- I see two hands. Is there
19 anyone who hasn't had the chance to make a comment
20 who would like to sign up for comment? Here and
21 here. Okay.

22 Erin, you want to -- you will ask people to sign
23 up on there. Or maybe have folks come to the front
24 of the room, and I'm trying to see how many of you
25 there are. I don't want a line of 10 people.



1 Sir, come on up. Go ahead. How many other
2 folks would like to make a comment? Just raise your
3 hand. Okay. So ma'am, if you make your way up, then
4 we will do, sir, you, and, ma'am, you. And then one
5 back there that I missed. Could be the next three.
6 Okay.

7 Sir, why don't you come up here. Oh, hold on.
8 We are getting it figured out. And we are trying to
9 ask folks who have not had a chance to comment. We
10 can come back around if you -- you will be able to
11 get on for a second time, but we want to do the first
12 time, first. Okay.

13 First, we have Vince Panesko. Vince. Then,
14 Albert Ulrich, and then Julie.

15 Vince, go ahead.

16 VINCE PANESKO: Okay. We lost our house in
17 2007 in Chehalis on the floodplain. It got
18 destroyed. The two bridges on our tree farm south of
19 Pe Ell got wiped out, including the Tin Bridge. And
20 the main road on Weyerhauser got washed out. We had
21 no access to our property. I'm a tree farmer. City
22 of Pe Ell wanted to put a new water line in and
23 required going through our property and blasting a
24 hillside out. So we blasted the hillside out, and
25 allowed Pe Ell to come through and put a new water



1 line in.

2 My point here is, on this EIS, you are not
3 getting into all of the environmental impacts. The
4 big one is the impact on city of Pe Ell on the water
5 system. I expected this document to say that the dam
6 removes half mile of the only road to the Pe Ell
7 Reservoir. I expected this document to say that that
8 the dam would remove the water line to the Pe Ell
9 Reservoir. I expected this document to say there is
10 not going to be a shovel moved on the dam until the
11 city of Pe Ell gets a new water system.

12 And I expect this business about mitigation, and
13 you're not going to talk about the environmental impacts
14 that are happening until some future time. This is a
15 document that you are supposed to be talking about
16 environmental impact, the options of mitigation. Meaning
17 one option, you have to build a new road to the reservoir.
18 You will have to put in an electric line. This reservoir
19 is in a canyon. You have to put a pumping station in.
20 That is one option. That should be in this document.

21 There is a 2015 report on landslides. It talks
22 about -- and most people here don't have any idea that
23 document exists. There is a landslide, an active
24 landslide, right over the Pe Ell Reservoir. The document
25 actually shows brush hanging over the creek. The



1 reservoir is going to be up against that hill within
2 20 feet. Saturation of that hill will exacerbate that
3 landslides.

4 If I was anybody in the city of Pe Ell right
5 now, I would say, wait a minute, guys, we need a new water
6 system. We need it into Rock Creek or -- probably Rock
7 Creek. But that is something that should be in here. The
8 impact on how the new water system, and that water
9 system -- so this document has to have a schedule ahead of
10 time that shows it will take two or three years, or four
11 years, to get a new water system for the city of Pe Ell
12 before the dam can even be built. Nobody is talking about
13 it. Come on, get busy and do your job right here.

14 Thank you.

15 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, sir.

16 We've got Albert, and then we have Julie.

17 I know it is getting late. We have been here a
18 while. I want to make sure Michelle can hear. Folks
19 are having side conversations. If we can hold these
20 down so we can hear from folks. It is echoey in the
21 room.

22 So Albert, go ahead when you're ready.

23 ALBERT ULRICH: Thank you. My name is
24 Albert Ulrich. I've lived on the Chehalis River all
25 my life.



1 Mr. Dykstra, at seven feet or eight feet of
2 water is disastrous. I had 21 inches of water in my
3 house in '07 and 39 inches in our shop. And,
4 fortunately, we weren't blessed with three feet of
5 mud like some people up the river. But I understand
6 you are here to collect information on the
7 environmental impact study.

8 I hear all this stuff about fish. Well, I think
9 when we closed the gates on this dam, or this
10 proposed dam, which I'm not that hot about, but
11 that's my personal opinion, when we closed the gates
12 on that dam due to stream flows that are above 40,000
13 cubic feet, we're in an emergency situation. I don't
14 think we got to pay too much attention to fish when
15 we are in an emergency situation.

16 When that dam was functioning with the gates
17 open, there isn't any impact on the fish. They are
18 going through it, up and down the same water, and
19 rocks, and so forth, and so on. But when it gets to
20 be an emergency situation, I would have to think that
21 the locals come first and fish come second. I would
22 change my focus on your EIS there. When you go into
23 emergency, we are in the transportation business.

24 When it flooded, we didn't have to buy permits
25 and so forth. I know that's not a fish, but we did



1 what needed to be done with equipment in the areas
2 that needed to get there because we were in an
3 emergency situation. I don't think that your
4 position to rediscover how fish are going to live
5 when the dam gates are closed or in emergency
6 situations are really necessary.

7 If you are going to spend 3.9 billion or
8 \$4 billion, I haven't heard anything about I-5. I-5
9 is basically a military road. Now, if you are going
10 to spend that kind of money, you need to make sure
11 I-5 doesn't get wet. I heard proposals and, bless
12 his heart, Bill, our old Commissioner, passed away.
13 Old stamper used to come over from time to time. I'm
14 not a hydrologist, but there was about a foot of
15 clearance under the old overpass. They told me the
16 dam would reduce the water by, say, a foot. That is
17 still puts eight feet of water on I-5 at that
18 location. That is something.

19 If you want Congress to continue, needs to be
20 addressed. I know this dam won't do it. Probably
21 not anything will do it unless you reroute the water.
22 We're 180 feet above sea level at our location.
23 Water doesn't move fast. But the EIS focus, think of
24 it in an emergency situation.

25 Anyway, thanks for the opportunity.



1 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you.

2 We have Julie Balmelli-Powe. And then we will
3 get those next three folks who identified can make
4 their way up.

5 Julie, go ahead when you're ready.

6 JULIE BALMELLI-POWE: I wanted to say, you
7 guys have been great. You explained what happened in
8 '07 very well.

9 Damage to the fish habitat above the dam area
10 will happen whether the dam is there or not, whether
11 it is a catastrophic flood, or water held back by the
12 dam. It is downstream from that, that the most
13 impacts from the devastating flood happened. If you
14 have the dam holding water up, and then you are able
15 to calmly release it down, you don't have the seven
16 foot of flood in people's houses. You don't have
17 nine feet of flood in Robert's shop washing out the
18 chemicals into the river.

19 I live above the Milton Street Bridge. That is
20 basically a reservoir for that dam. I tell you what,
21 the amount of garbage left on my place was
22 incredible. If you don't think that is damaging fish
23 habitat, it is damaging habitat for all species that
24 live next to the river as well as in the river.
25 That's just one thing I haven't heard people talk



1 about is that.

2 The catastrophic floods will do a lot more
3 damage than just stirring up the water that the
4 spawning grounds in the river. There is a lot of
5 habitat that gets ruined outside the river when it is
6 allowed with contaminant soils in surrounding areas.

7 Thank you.

8 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you, Julie.

9 Other folks who wanted to make a comment, I know
10 you raised your hand here, sir. And then, was there
11 one other back here? Someone who wanted to make a
12 comment? Okay. I'm not seeing. All right.

13 DICK IRELAND: Thank you very much for the
14 opportunity.

15 We did a lot of restoration in the upper
16 Chehalis, pulling back logging roads, diverting
17 sediment, and et cetera, back in the mid 90s, I
18 guess. So it is interesting to see how we have come
19 along.

20 My only comment is that I think we need to also
21 consider the forest of the logging practices. It
22 contributes a lot to the flooding. Particularly, the
23 duff, the tempered rainforest is one of the best
24 forests to hold -- just think of it as a big sponge.
25 The duff layer on top will hold a lot of water. And



1 going into different logging systems that are not
2 clearcut. Don't compact the Earth. It will help to
3 mitigate the flooding situation and problem.

4 And so I was somewhat amazed at the Forestry
5 Act. Is anyone here from either DNR, or Weyerhaeuser,
6 or major forest? I think it's an important part
7 of -- and I am a forester, by the way, from British
8 Columbia, and Washington, and the boreal forest.

9 I think it is important that you consider the
10 forest as well when you consider the environmental
11 impact. And I didn't see a lot of the forest
12 practices talked or considered here. So more than
13 just the dam. Look out on the hill. Think of the
14 duff as a sponge, and soil as a washcloth, and water
15 comes down because it doesn't come down in a big
16 bucket. It comes down across the Willapa.

17 I would suggest that you include more technical
18 forestry and include that as part of the necessary.

19 Thank you.

20 ANGIE THOMSON: Sir, can I have you state
21 your name for the record?

22 DICK IRELAND: My name is Dick Ireland.
23 Just like the country. Most Irish name in the world.

24 ANGIE THOMSON: Wendy Dyer, you are next.
25 When you're ready, go ahead.



1 WENDY DYER: All right. I am kind of along
2 with him on the forest being a big part of, you know,
3 what takes care of the rivers and stuff.

4 When I was a kid -- I've been here 50 years. So
5 when I was a kid, it would take like two weeks of
6 rain for the water to come up in the rivers because
7 the forest soaked it up. And in 2007, before the
8 flood happened, there was a lot of clearcutting. And
9 it is to the point where, I mean, apparently, the
10 market was dropping because of all the trees coming
11 in, and then the trees were -- the logs were put on
12 clearings all over the hills. You could see piles of
13 logs.

14 And those logs were part of what came down and
15 blocked up the water or the rivers and took out the
16 dams. The 40-something-acre slide that happened
17 above the Tin Bridge, I mean, that blocked off the
18 river for, what was it, 15 to 18 minutes. The water
19 stopped, and when it broke through, it came in a
20 rush, you know, and wiped things out.

21 I think that the ground is also something that
22 needs to be looked at. It is moving. It is a young
23 range that is growing. So those things have to be
24 considered when you are putting it in. Because where
25 they were going to put it before isn't even there



1 anymore. It went downriver. You know, I mean, they
2 are talking about, you know, this -- oh, it is a good
3 rock area, you know. You know, big strong -- and it
4 is gone. It is a big vast, you know, expanse there
5 now.

6 And also, I think that the building that is
7 going on down in the lowlands has been kind of
8 pushed -- it has pushed this whole thing. We have to
9 protect the businesses that are down there and, you
10 know, there is going to be suffering -- there is
11 things that can be done with those buildings. They
12 are doing it up north where there is a reservoir
13 underneath the buildings in these lowlands. So that
14 all of that water space is taken away by filling it
15 in. I just think that there should be more thought
16 put into that, too.

17 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you. Okay.

18 Anyone else who would like to make a comment who
19 has not had an opportunity?

20 Yes, sir. Let's have you sign your name here
21 and you can...

22 All right. Grab a mic and make your comment.

23 JOHN SMITH: Thank you, everyone, for
24 coming. Let us pray. Lord, we pray that you keep
25 everybody safe. We pray that you stop this climate



1 change. We pray that you limit the amount of rain.
2 We pray that the dam goes in. We pray that everybody
3 makes it home tonight safely and sound. And we ask
4 in your name, oh, Lord. Amen.

5 ANGIE THOMSON: Any other comments from
6 folks who have not had the opportunity to comment?
7 Okay. We are getting close to 8:00, but we might
8 have time for maybe -- is there anyone who has
9 commented that has something else they would like to
10 add? I'm just looking. Okay.

11 Let's go to our next slide, Erin, and we will
12 just close out here.

13 So as we said before, all the comments that have
14 been received in any form, whether that is written,
15 verbal comment, emails, spoken -- I said, verbal and
16 spoken, that's the same thing. Any form you have
17 sent in comments, those will be weighed equally.
18 They will be transcribed and available on-line.

19 If you would like to send Ecology written
20 comments, please remember those are due by 11:59 p.m.
21 on February 4th, which is coming up. You can send
22 them by mail to the address that is on the screen.
23 And you can also provide comments on-line using
24 Ecology's e-comment form, which is on that URL also
25 on the screen.



1 And as Meg said earlier, all the comments that
2 are received at this meeting, including comments as
3 well as at the other meetings and hearings that were
4 held in person and on-line, along with all of the
5 comments that were received for the earlier EIS -- or
6 DEIS, excuse me, will be part of the official record
7 and considered as part of the final Environmental
8 Impact Statement. Ecology will respond to all those
9 comments.

10 When the final EIS is issued, and right now,
11 they are expecting to issue that in August of this
12 year, Ecology will send notice about the availability
13 of the final EIS to anyone that provided written
14 comments or oral testimony on this Draft EIS and
15 submitted their contact information.

16 Everyone who signed in for today's meeting and
17 gave their contact information, anyone that provided
18 comments on the Draft EIS in 2020, and any other
19 interested parties, if you want to know about the
20 final EIS but you didn't -- none of those things that
21 I listed applied to you, then make sure that you
22 catch one of the staff members and provide contact
23 information so you can be notified on the -- when the
24 final EIS is issued.

25 I think the last thing that I would say is there



1 is also an on-line open house on Ecology's website
2 that you can also get to on the URL on the screen.

3 That was a lot of information. Trying to make
4 sure there is many ways for folks to hear that as
5 possible.

6 I think with that, we really appreciate the time
7 that everyone spent in coming to the meeting,
8 listening to each other. Appreciate the way that you
9 all showed up for each other, and were respectful,
10 and made this an enjoyable experience for us.

11 Bobbak, is there anything you want to say as we
12 close out?

13 BOBBAK TALEBI: That was perfect.

14 ANGIE THOMSON: Thank you.

15 Thanks, Folks. I hope you all drive safe. We
16 will see you next time. Thanks, all.

17

18 (Meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Michelle Brandt, a Certified Stenographic Court Reporter in and for the State of Washington, residing at Clark County, do hereby certify;

That the foregoing proceedings were taken before me and thereafter reduced to a typed format under my direction; that the transcript is a full, true and complete transcript of said proceedings consisting of Pages 1 through 66;

That as a CCR in this state, I am bound by the Rules of Conduct as Codified in WAC 308-14-130; that court reporting arrangements and fees in this case are offered to all parties on equal terms;

That I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any party to this action, or relative or employee of any such attorney or counsel, and I am not financially interested in the said action or the outcome thereof;

That upon completion of signature, if required, the original transcript will be securely sealed and the same served upon the appropriate party.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 4th day of February, 2026.



Michelle Brandt, CCR No. 3421
Certified Stenographic Reporter



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