



September 25, 2023

Laura Watson, Director  
Washington State Department of Ecology  
PO Box 47600  
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

*Re: Designation of the Cascade River (Skagit County), Green River (Skamania and Lewis counties), and Napeequa River (Chelan County) as Tier 111(A) Outstanding Resource Waters under the Clean Water Act*

Dear Director Watson:

The Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) respectfully submits the following comments in support of designating several river systems as Tier III(A) Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) pursuant to WAC 173-201A-330. Nominated rivers Pew supports include the Cascade River in Skagit County, the Green River in Skamania and Lewis counties, and the Napeequa River in Chelan County.

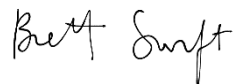
Pew's U.S. conservation work seeks to sustain biodiversity and resilient ecosystems by collaborating with policymakers, communities and businesses, Tribes, and many others. ORWs are high quality waters that constitute an outstanding state resource due to their extraordinary water quality or ecological or recreational values. The Cascade, Green, and Napeequa river systems provide access to clean drinking water, support critical fish and wildlife species, and provide numerous recreation opportunities including fishing, boating, and hiking. They are all deserving of protection as ORWs, and designation of these river systems would benefit the state's people, economy, and wildlife including salmon.

A water designated as a Tier III(A) ORW, is legally required to be protected from any possible degradation, with a few exceptions. By designating the Cascade, Green, and Napeequa Rivers as Washington's first ORWs, the Department of Ecology will be taking a critical step to protect some of the state's remaining high-quality rivers, which provide numerous benefits to Washingtonians. As impacts

from climate change become increasingly more evident, protecting our high-quality rivers and streams is an essential investment for our future and will ensure increased resilience in the face of these impacts.

Pew appreciates your consideration of our comments on the proposed ORW designations. Please feel free to contact me at 971-344-5510 or [bswift@pewtrusts.org](mailto:bswift@pewtrusts.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brett Swift". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "B".

Brett Swift  
Senior Manager  
U.S. Conservation  
The Pew Charitable Trusts