

## Tisa Anonymous

I am submitting this comment to strongly oppose construction of a dam on the Chehalis River.

I am not approaching this as an abstract policy issue. I have personally stood on shore and watched Southern Resident killer whales pass by me many times... including the moment when J35 surfaced out from me with her dead calf, J61. That experience is seared into me. It made painfully clear that what we are dealing with is not a distant problem or a future risk. This is happening now.

Southern Resident killer whales are starving. Their primary food source... Chinook salmon... continues to decline. These are not separate issues. They are directly connected to decisions we make about rivers like the Chehalis.

The Chehalis River is one of Washington's last large, free-flowing salmon rivers. It still has functioning floodplains, wetlands, and habitat that produce wild Chinook. Once a river like this is dammed, that loss is permanent. There is no mitigation that truly replaces a free-flowing river system.

What is especially troubling is that the state's own Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement acknowledges that the proposed flow-through dam and reservoir would adversely impact salmon and steelhead populations, reduce genetic diversity, increase water temperatures, and magnify climate-driven declines. Knowing what we know about the precarious status of Southern Resident killer whales, these impacts should be unacceptable.

An environmental review should ensure that recovery of endangered species is not undermined by new infrastructure. Southern Residents should not be further damned... literally or figuratively... by decisions that knowingly reduce their food supply.

Flood protection for communities is essential, but it does not require sacrificing one of our last functioning salmon rivers. Proven alternatives like floodplain restoration, wetland recovery, setback levees, and voluntary buyouts reduce flood risk while protecting salmon and increasing resilience to climate change.

We owe the Southern Resident killer whales... and future generations... better than repeating the mistakes that brought us to this crisis. I urge decision-makers to reject the Chehalis dam proposal and pursue flood solutions that protect people without destroying salmon habitat and further pushing an endangered species toward extinction.

They deserve better.