

Kathy Pierson

To: Department of Ecology

Re: Proposed Chehalis River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Project Draft EIS

My husband and I are relatively new to Grays Harbor County, and I attended the January 13, 2026 public hearing on the proposed Flood Retention Expandable (FRE) facility because we wondered how this facility would affect the natural environment which attracted us to this area. Apparently we've missed much of the 2020-2024 discussion of the Local Action Non-Dam (LAND) alternatives, but I hope to obtain this information in the future.

My comments don't vary from the 23 citizen speakers who expressed opposition to the FRE facility. I want to elaborate on the "cultural" significance that a dam poses to area residents who supplement their meals with foods gathered by hunting and gathering – quality salmon, meat from deer, elk, fowl and foraging summer and fall vegetation.

Again, we are recent homeowners in Garys Harbor and as often is the case, there were repairs and improvements needed. But unlike our previous residence in Puget Sound, there are not an abundance of available construction workers, and we soon learned nearly no one was available in the months of September or October because they were "fishing with my Dad" or "It's hunting season!". This is a very real phenomenon, and although frustrating, it didn't take long to jump on the bandwagon. We've attended three Mushroom festivals, made jam and pies from the local Evergreen Huckleberries and were recently gifted venison from a deer shot out our very rural neighbor's window. Preserving edible flora and fauna is important to this region.

At the Aberdeen public hearing I heard six Quinault tribal members speak about the threat to the Spring Chinook. Didn't the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe tell Washington legislators for years that the two dams on the Elwha were destroying the Chinook (King) Salmon runs? Aren't we going to learn from our past mistakes and not create (the same) problems for Washington's future generations?

I am sympathetic to home and property owners in Centralia and Chehalis affected by floods in 2007. I worked as an Environmental Health Specialist in Snohomish County after the winter flooding in 1990-91, helping Snohomish River residents and farmers return to their homes and land after flooding - water marks seven feet high on interior walls, discarding food, burying cattle, restoring well water, repairing septic systems. It was a mess. It took a long time to clean up. Some people stayed, others left, others built on stilts. Eventually City of Everett Water and Public sewers were made available to most residents.

I encourage the Chehalis River Basin Flood Control District and the Office of Chehalis Basin to include in future Environmental Impact Statements a cost/benefit analysis of the Local Action

Non-Dam (LAND) Alternatives compared to the environmental impacts posed by FRE, particularly to fish and wildlife. With that comparative analysis, I think it will become evident that building and utilizing a dam on the Chehalis River is NOT this region's solution.