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I'm a 3rd generation SW Washingtonian with family in Kelso and Aberdeen. I'm also a professional salmon ecologist helping to restore salmon and steelhead habitat in the Cowlitz and other Lower Columbia River tributaries.

One analogous comparison that should be considered is the Sediment Retention System and Fish Collection Facility on the NF Toutle that was installed in the late 1980's after the eruption of Mount St. Helens. This structure was built to protect downstream communities, similarly to the proposed Chehalis structure. Now, 40+ years later, we can see that these structures cause immediate and chronic long-term impacts to ecological conditions within the dam site and up- and downstream of the structure. The key findings of the EIS describe the short-term impacts, but we must consider the long-term maintenance obligations and impacts of the structure on salmon recovery. For example, a fish collection facility was installed on the NF Toutle below the SRS, now the USACE and WDFW are spending millions repairing that structure after decades of disrepair. We cannot pretend to assume we can anticipate all of the conditions in a dynamic environment like a river valley. There will be chronic maintenance required, and each intervention will have additional negative impacts to water, earth, fish, tribal, and wetland conditions. The economic and cultural value of a robust salmon population in the Chehalis far outweighs the limited benefits associated with this structure. Please do not spend another penny planning this structure. Instead, start preparing a phased plan to remove infrastructure from the valley floor that is most flood-prone. This would be a better investment of public funding.