

Henry Roller

The Chehalis River is one of the only undammed rivers on the entire west coast. The era of building dams has long passed because humans have realized how destructive they are to the environment. Dams destroy habitat, prevent fish from migrating, and contribute to toxic algae blooms that harm wildlife, pets, livestock, and humans. In 2026, dams are being removed in the United States to repair the environment. Now is not the time to build a new one.

I am especially concerned about the impacts a dam on the Chehalis River would have on salmon. Salmon populations in the Chehalis River have already declined drastically from historic numbers, and salmon are struggling across the entire coast. Building another dam is the worst choice we could possibly make for them. Building a dam on the Chehalis would destroy critical salmon and steelhead spawning habitat, degrade water quality, and increase water temperature. Furthermore, the tribes in the area have spoken and are in opposition to building a dam. The concerns of tribes must be brought to the forefront, as they have been ignored for far too long. This dam would cause irreparable harm to tribes and their cultures and livelihoods.

Financially, this dam makes no sense. It would cost up to \$2 billion and there is no plan for how to pay for it. This burden would likely fall to taxpayers, which are already overburdened amidst budget cuts for essential government services. There are also other solutions besides building a dam. These exist through the Local Actions Non-Dam proposals. These alternatives would actually be preferable to building a dam, because the dam would only protect some structures in the basin, while alternatives would benefit all.

Recovering the Southern Resident Orcas is a priority for Washington State, and dam building would set them back yet again. Chehalis River salmon are listed as a priority stock for these critically endangered orcas, and building a dam would damage this important food source.

I am staunchly opposed to building a dam on the Chehalis River. I have travelled all around the Pacific Northwest counting salmon populations, and have witnessed the horrible effects that dams have on ecosystems. Dam building is a thing of the past. Do not build a dam on the Chehalis River.