

Salish Sea Broadband, Great Old Broads for Wilderness (Debra Ellers)

The Great Old Broads for Wilderness is a U.S.-wide 501c3 conservation organization, with a mission to protect wildlands and wildlife for future generations. I am writing on behalf of the over 100 concerned residents around the Olympic Peninsula who are part of the local chapter, the Salish Sea Broadband, to express our concerns about the proposed FRE dam on the upper Chehalis River.

According to the DEIS, the project would cause significant and unavoidable harm to salmon and steelhead, including major losses of Spring Chinook, Coho, Fall Chinook, and Steelhead populations. This stretch of the river is one of the Basin's key spawning areas, and once damaged, these habitats cannot be replaced. Harming salmon and steelhead runs in the region would in turn result in more starvation and failed reproductive success in our gravely-endangered Southern Resident Orca population. NOAA has identified the salmon stocks in the Chehalis watershed as one of the 15 priority food sources relied upon by these orcas. Of particular concern is that this project would irrevocably damage one of the few remaining sources for chinook salmon the orcas require for about 80% of their diet.

We are also concerned about the scale and cost of the proposed structure, as well as the unresolved safety and geotechnical risks identified in the DEIS. At an estimated \$1.3–\$2.3 billion, the dam would offer limited benefits while putting the river's ecological health and the communities that rely on it at long-term risk.

More effective, less damaging flood-reduction approaches already exist, including the Local Actions Non-Dam Alternative. Accordingly, we urge Ecology to pursue these solutions instead of the proposed dam.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Debra Ellers
Leader, Salish Sea Broadband
Great Old Broads for Wilderness