

David Linn

I am strongly opposed to the proposal to build a dam on the Chehalis River. It would create an environmental disaster as described in the Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS). The claimed benefits of building this dam pale in comparison to the devastating impact it would have on fish, wildlife and the environment. To build this dam would be irresponsible.

The DEIS acknowledges that this dam would have negative impacts on water quality and increase in sedimentation. It would degrade the fish and wildlife habitat and destroy 600 acres of trees and other vegetation. It would negatively affect wetlands and increase development. It would worsen air quality and increase congestion. These impacts are unacceptable.

This study discusses the flooding problems that have occurred over the past number of years in times of heavy rainfall. In dealing with the flooding problems, we should look to the cause of the problems to find solutions. In this case, the cause is clearly the ill-advised development that has occurred in the Chehalis floodplain over many years. This is entirely a man-made problem and that is where we should focus our attention for a lasting solution.

Building a dam will only be a partial and short-term answer to the flooding. And, it will create additional problems (such as encouraging even more development) that will require more "solutions" down the road. We should have learned from past mistakes where our "solutions" to a problem only create new problems requiring more "solutions" in an endless cycle.

I think that the DEIS is flawed because it only does an in-depth study of this one alternative – as if it were the predetermined outcome. It gives little consideration to the Local Actions Alternative and the No Action Alternative. I think the Local Actions Alternative is a better solution and needs further analysis. In addition, it places the cost and responsibility at the local level where it belongs and does not require such a large-scale project that burdens the entire state.