

Stella Anonymous

Hello, I am a high school student writing to stop the proposed dam on the Chehalis River. My favourite animals are Orcas; I've loved them since I was little.

The Southern Resident Killer Whales are the pod of Orcas that live near me and they are endangered. 2024 saw the birth and death of three newborn calves (J60, L128, and J61) along with the loss of two adult breeding males (L85, and K26). The population is holding in the low 70s because there is not enough fish to sustain population growth. To ensure calves and breeding members survive, there needs to be enough fish to support growth.

Constructing dams on critical salmon habitat will only further exasperate the lack of food, further risking the endangered Southern Residents. The Chehalis River is a vital habitat for wild salmon, including Chinook salmon, which are crucial to the endangered Southern Resident killer whales. Construction of the dam would inundate approximately 847 acres and extend 6.2 miles, leading to the loss of critical spawning and rearing habitats. This alteration could significantly disrupt the life cycles of salmon species, potentially reducing their populations.

What is so distinct about the Southern Resident pod of Orcas is that their primary food source is Chinook salmon; they aren't like other Orcas who hunt seals and sharks. This dam would disrupt the ecosystem of the Chinook salmon that these endangered Orcas depend on.

Thank you for taking the time to read my message and I hope this informs your decision.