

Joanna Buehler

Washington Department of Ecology

Having served as the representative of Save Lake Sammamish for nearly three decades on many land use / water quality and quantity / salmon-recovery efforts, including Issaquah Creek Basin and Non-Point Pollution Plan, Sammamish Basin & Non-Point Pollution Plan, WRIA 8 (Cedar River & Lake Washington Basins), I strongly oppose the proposed FRE dam on the Upper Chehalis River for the following reasons:

1) As disclosed in the RDEIS, such dam would cause "significant and unavoidable harm" to steelhead and salmonid runs and some of their best, irreplaceable spawning areas. As DOE is well-aware, many Pacific salmonid runs have been lost or endangered due in part to the cumulative impacts of irresponsible land use and development in floodplains, with consequent damage to fish, water quality and humans. Our State has spent much effort and money attempting to restore depleted habitat and fish runs. Prevention is cheaper and easier than restoration. A sensible rule is "Save the Best - Improve the Rest!"

2) RDEIS also reveals adverse impacts to water quality, temperature and river morphology. In my opinion, the Issaquah Creek Basin Plan has been effective in reducing flooding and improving habitat over time. The Plan evaluated and prioritized various projects; such as restoration of wetlands, adding riparian vegetation, meanders and complexity to improve habitat and water quality, and to recharge the Aquifer. Acquisition and removal of buildings on frequently flooded properties has been a significant improvement and cost saving.

3) Cost at \$1.5 - \$2 billion for the proposed dam is prohibitive. Few engineering projects of this magnitude are completed without time and budget over-runs. Funds have not been allocated and the State budget currently has a \$16 Billion funding deficit. Less expensive and destructive options to alleviate flooding, such as those described in the Local Actions Non-Dam Alternative, are available.

4) Geologic hazards have not been adequately addressed.

The RDEIS is merely a disclosure document enumerating the environmental impacts of proposed projects and reviewing alternatives. DOE may approve or deny permits based on that information. Based on the level of ecological damage it would cause and the fact that less expensive alternatives exist, I urge the Department to deny the Chehalis Dam project and pursue the Local Actions Non-Dam Alternative.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Yours truly,
Joanna Buehler