

Coastal Watershed Institute (Anne Shaffer)

Dear Department of Ecology,

I am writing to express the Coastal Watershed Institute's (CWI) opposition to the proposed FRE dam on the upper Chehalis River. Based on 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.

The scale and cost of the proposed structure, as well as the unresolved safety and geotechnical risks identified in the DEIS are clear reasons this project should be rejected. 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.

As we have learned from over 30 years of work to restore the Elwha nearshore—we have absolutely NO business building new dams, including on the Chehalis. And the Washington state Department of Ecology knows this.

More effective, less damaging flood-reduction approaches already exist, including the Local Actions Non-Dam Alternative. CWI strongly recommends DoE do the work it is mandated to do and NOT just take the politically expediated position (as DoE has built a reputation for doing)—and pursue these solutions instead of the proposed dam.

Respectfully,
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