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A Mega Dam That Poses Mega Risks

The new expanded dam design would be dramatically larger than earlier concepts, spanning 2,250 feet (0.4 miles) and carrying a price tag estimated at \$1.3–\$2.3 billion. There is currently no clear long-term funding plan, and the proposal does not fully account for operations, maintenance, repairs, or lifecycle costs.

The proposed site presents significant unresolved geotechnical issues (including fractured bedrock, landslide risk, and potential faulting) raising major concerns about long-term feasibility and safety.

Irreversible Impacts to Salmon and Wildlife The upper Chehalis River is one of only three main spawning areas for Chinook and Coho salmon and Steelhead in the Basin. The DEIS shows the impacts would be devastating:

Spring Chinook could be driven to extinction by mid-century.

Coho salmon would be nearly extinct by mid-century.

Fall Chinook and Steelhead would see major, long-term population declines.

The loss of one of these three key spawning grounds would threaten the overall resilience and survival of these species across the entire Basin.

During a 2025 site visit, biologists documented active salmon redds within 1,000 feet of the proposed dam location -- a clear sign of how vital and productive this stretch of river is for spawning.

The DEIS concludes that many of the ecological impacts would be "significant and unavoidable." Even with mitigation, much of what would be lost cannot be replaced.

Better Solutions Already Exist

Communities across the basin need real, lasting flood protection -- but a mega-dam isn't it. Proven, effective, and more affordable approaches, including the Local Actions Non-Dam Alternative, are already being developed. These can be implemented sooner, avoid the worst ecological harm, and provide more widespread protection.