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I've paddled the Chehalis River above Pe Ell at flows from 900cfs to 6500cfs. This mega-dam poses significant risks to both recreation and the environment. And, Better Solutions Already Exist!

Communities across the basin need real, lasting flood protection -- but a dam doesn't provide 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.

The Proposed Action poses significant risks. The proposed action spans 2,250 feet (0.4 miles) and carries 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, as well as the concerns over ballooning costs.

As stated in the DEIS, the Proposed Action would cause significant adverse impacts on recreation. 6.6 miles of the Chehalis River would no longer be accessible for kayaking and whitewater rafting, and 13.2 miles of riverbank would no longer be available for riverbank fishing. (p.140)

The Proposed Action would also have significant adverse impacts on fish, which would impact recreational fishing by reducing the number of fish available to be caught. Displacement of wildlife would reduce the availability of game and recreational viewing opportunities. Closure of recreational sites and loss of access would have significant adverse impacts on recreational activities such as fishing, hunting, hiking, and birdwatching (p. 140).

Construction and operation would have significant adverse impacts on spring-run Chinook salmon, fall-run Chinook salmon, coho salmon, and steelhead from degraded habitat, noise, and fewer fish surviving passage around the FRE facility (P.84).

Reduction in fish passage during construction of the FRE facility would have a significant adverse impact on species like salmon, steelhead, and lamprey that require access to the upper Chehalis River and headwaters to complete their life cycle (P.88-89).

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

Finally, the DEIS itself states the ecological impacts would be significant and unavoidable. Even with mitigation, much of what would be lost cannot be replaced.

In conclusion, the Chehalis River basin needs up-to-date, proven flood solutions that protect people, the land, and salmon. The proposed mega-dam design is based on an unproven, untested concept,

and it's hugely expensive, costing Washington up to \$2 billion or more. Now is the time to put this proposal to rest and focus on proven solutions that will keep communities up and down the river safe and our fish runs healthy.