

# BARBARA LAU

I am a hydrologist and I do not agree with the current plan as described in the EIS to build a dam on the Chehalis River. The Chehalis River is the largest watershed entirely within the state of Washington and one of the only remaining free flowing (undammed) rivers on the west coast. It is one of the top salmon producing rivers in the state, and the majority are wild fish as opposed to hatchery.

Alternate plans already exist through the Local Actions Non-Dam proposal. These would benefit the entire basin as opposed to the proposed facility, which would only protect some structures some of the time.

The proposed dam would cause irreparable harm to local Tribes, their culture and livelihoods, and Tribes in the area have spoken in opposition to the project.

Chehalis River salmon have declined dramatically from historic numbers due to overfishing, habitat degradation, development and inadequate fish passage. They are not yet listed under the Endangered Species Act, but there is currently a petition under review to list Washington Coast spring-run Chinook as threatened or endangered.

The dam would drown critical salmon and steelhead spawning habitat, degrade water quality and wildlife habitat, and result in increased water temperature.

The draft Environmental Impact Statement states that this project would have significant adverse impacts on salmon, wildlife, habitat, cultural resources and environmental justice.

The draft Environmental Impact Statement states that this project would have a less than significant adverse impact on Southern Resident killer whales, but does not take into account their reliance on coast wide Chinook runs.

Chehalis River salmon are part of the Washington Coast stock which is listed as a priority Chinook stock for Southern Resident orcas.

Data from NOAA shows that Southern Resident continue to target Chinook salmon as their preferred prey year-round, and that outer coast Chinook is an important food source, particularly in the winter. Tagging data also shows that Southern Resident orcas are likely foraging off Grays Harbor at the mouth of the Chehalis.

In this era of dam removal, DO NOT BUILD another. We have seen the ecological damages a dam creates such as on the ELWHA River and the expense it takes to remove these dams. Around the country, dams are being removed because of the damage they cause to rivers, fish and communities. The ELWHA is now in recovery, yet will take many years to recover to its pre-dam ecology and bounty for all creatures who depend on the ecosystem. Do NOT MAKE an outdated mistake again in building this dam.

Building a dam when other alternatives exist to floodplain management is archaic and expensive to

both the tax payers AND our ecosystem. Please consider other alternatives to flood plan management on the Chehalis River.