

Prolite Rod Technology (Christopher Wegeleben)

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Chehalis River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Project. While I understand the need to address flood risk in the Chehalis–Centralia area, I have serious concerns about the proposed flood retention facility and reservoir on the Chehalis River near Pe Ell and the associated levee modifications. Flooding is a natural and necessary process in river systems, and the Revised Draft EIS identifies significant and unavoidable impacts to fish habitat, water quality, and overall river function. In particular, the documented impacts to salmon and steelhead raise concerns that the ecological costs of this project may outweigh the flood-reduction benefits.

As the owner of Prolite Rod Technology, my business and livelihood are directly tied to the health of the Chehalis River and its fishing opportunities. The local fishing community depends on healthy, functioning river systems to support sustainable salmon and steelhead populations. Projects that further disrupt migration, spawning habitat, or natural flow regimes place both the resource and the small businesses that depend on it at risk. For these reasons, I cannot support this project as proposed and urge decision-makers to prioritize non-structural, nature-based flood management solutions that reduce risk while protecting the long-term ecological and economic value of the Chehalis River basin.