

Marc Gauthier

I am writing to express my concerns about 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.

I am also concerned about the scale and cost of the proposed structure, as well as the unresolved safety and geotechnical risks identified in the DEIS. This basin has dealt with floods for generations and alternative strategies can protect communities while maintaining the free flowing river we all love. I managed a farm in the floodplains and we worked with the floods, as they returned vital nutrients to our soils. We need to focus on improving water quality and seeing the value that flood waters bring. We cannot afford to lose the wildlife habitat nor can we bare the costs of this proposed project. A free river is what makes this valley so valuable and working with our surroundings and improving forest health and natural water retention strategies is where we should be investing our limited resources. I oppose the project as currently proposed and I urge you to do the same.