

Kim Koon

I strongly oppose the construction of a dam on the Chehalis River.

Washington State has decades of clear, well-documented evidence showing that dams cause severe and lasting environmental damage—particularly to salmon populations. Dams block migration routes, alter natural river flows, raise water temperatures, degrade habitat, and disrupt the sediment and nutrient systems that salmon and other native species depend on. Despite mitigation efforts, fish ladders, and technological promises, dams throughout our state have repeatedly failed to protect salmon runs, many of which are now endangered or extinct.

The Chehalis River is one of the last largely free-flowing river systems in Washington and provides critical habitat for salmon, steelhead, and other wildlife, as well as cultural, ecological, and economic value to local communities and Tribes. Building a dam on this river would put additional pressure on already vulnerable salmon populations at a time when we should be restoring rivers—not fragmenting them further.

Across Washington, we are actively removing dams because their environmental costs have proven too high. Constructing a new dam ignores these hard-earned lessons and risks repeating the same mistakes that have devastated our rivers and fisheries statewide.

I urge decision-makers to reject this proposal and instead invest in solutions that protect salmon, respect Tribal treaty rights, and prioritize river restoration, floodplain reconnection, and climate-resilient approaches that work with natural systems rather than against them.

The Chehalis River should remain free-flowing—for salmon, for ecosystems, and for future generations.