

Sanders Nye

Opposition to Proposed Chehalis River Dam

To Whom It May Concern,

I oppose the proposed dam or flood-retention structure on the Chehalis River.

This project carries significant long-term economic risk while offering limited and uncertain flood-reduction benefits. Large river infrastructure projects routinely exceed cost estimates and create permanent public obligations for operation, maintenance, monitoring, and eventual repair or removal. Taxpayers would be locked into ongoing costs for generations.

The dam would also cause lasting harm to fish and wildlife. Even so-called “flow-through” dams disrupt natural river processes, sediment movement, and seasonal flows that salmon, steelhead, lamprey, and other native species depend on. Fish passage systems do not replace a free-flowing river, and ecological damage at this scale is effectively irreversible.

Climate change further increases risk. More extreme and unpredictable flood events may exceed the design limits of the structure, creating a false sense of security while encouraging continued development in flood-prone areas and increasing long-term exposure to loss.

There are proven, lower-cost alternatives—floodplain restoration, levee setbacks, buyouts, land-use reform, and elevation of existing structures—that reduce flood risk while strengthening river health rather than degrading it.

For these reasons, the proposed Chehalis River dam represents an outdated, high-risk approach that shifts costs and environmental damage onto future generations. I urge decision-makers to reject this project and pursue non-dam solutions that protect both communities and the river.

Respectfully,

Sanders Nye