

Pat Kaczmarek

I oppose building a dam on the Chehalis River as a way to mitigate flood damage in the Chehalis River Basin. The proposed water retention dam on the upper Chehalis River would have a significant impact on the Chinook Salmon and other salmon runs, which are a primary source of food for Orca Whales in the Pacific Northwest as well as a keystone species for the health of the entire river basin. These runs are already significantly reduced from historic numbers.

This dam would obstruct one of the few free flowing sections of river in the Northwest. This beautiful stretch of the river is an essential piece of the Chehalis River ecosystem and damming it would degrade habitat for increasingly threatened and endangered species. This dam would diminish water quality, which would likely lead to warmer temperatures in the water, endangering fish populations and creating conditions in which algae blooms take hold.

Projected studies of this dam suggest flood mitigation may be limited and that there are better and more sustainable alternatives that have been suggested and are proven to work that could be implemented without spending billions of dollars on a dam that has no proven outcomes and which will have substantial negative environmental impacts. In addition, this dam violates existing treaty rights of indigenous peoples.

With escalating climate change, we must make choices to build a better future by prioritizing natural solutions to reduce flood risks without further degrading our clean water. We must maintain a healthy aquatic environment and habitat for salmon recovery, and adopt solutions that will maintain tribal treaty rights.