

Stevie Charley

I oppose the Chehalis River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Project as proposed in the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

While flood protection is important, constructing a flood retention facility and temporary reservoir on the Chehalis River near Pe Ell would significantly alter natural river functions and poses serious risks to fish habitat, water quality, and sediment movement. These impacts threaten salmon, other wildlife, and the overall health of the river system, as well as Tribal treaty rights and cultural resources tied to the river.

The Revised Draft EIS does not adequately demonstrate that this large-scale structural project is the least harmful or most effective option, especially in the face of climate change and increasing flood intensity. Nature-based and non-structural alternatives such as floodplain restoration, watershed management, and community-based resilience strategies have not been sufficiently prioritized.

I urge the Department of Ecology to reject the project as proposed and require stronger evaluation of alternatives that reduce flood risk while protecting the river, Tribal resources, and downstream communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.