

East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (Craig Simpson)

The federal Columbia Basin Project (CBP) was conceived and developed as a congressionally authorized water recapture/reuse project from its inception for the irrigation of a large portion of central Washington State. The Bureau of Reclamation's design and construction of facilities like O'Sullivan Dam, which allows collection of CBP "waste, seepage and return flows" in Potholes Reservoir, allows the CBP to operate efficiently by reuse of the recaptured water from irrigation in the northern portions of the CBP.

This proposed policy recognizes the amendment to RCW 90.03.380(1) which solely pertains to the Columbia Basin Project's initial use water rights. It clarifies the process the Department of Ecology will use for processing water right changes on the Project as a result of the enactment of HB 1752 in 2024.

The policy will clarify the diversions from the Columbia River are for the initial deliveries to CBP lands, as well as recognize the Project's right to recapture and reuse project water within the CBP's authorized boundaries for other CBP lands as the Washington State Supreme Court ruled previously.

The policy will assist Reclamation and the CBP Irrigation Districts with use of the CBP's water supply as intended and clarify the process for evaluation of future requests.

The East Columbia Basin Irrigation District supports adoption of this policy.