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Skagit Valley Herald

Skagit flood legislation is promised

WASHINGTON D.C. – Senator Warren Magnuson has announced that he and Senator Henry Jackson will introduce legislation this month to authorize expansion of the Skagit River flood control project.

Magnuson, D-Wash., appeared before a Senate subcommittee on water resources to announce his intention.

The bill, similar to one already introduced in the House, would authorize expansion of the flood control project to include Burlington and Sedro-Woolley.

Magnuson told the subcommittee that growth in Skagit County since the project was authorized by Congress 13 years ago has made additional flood protection necessary.

He described the county as one of the most beautiful areas in the state, but said recent floods, most notably in 1975, have caused considerable damage at great expense to property owners.

The legislation will be introduced in the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Rep. Al Swift, D-Bellingham, introduced similar legislation in the House in March at the request of the Skagit County Commissioners. Because of later developments, Commissioner Jerry Mansfield said the request was “like asking Swift to walk on water.”

The commissioners had thought the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is designing the project, would give it full support. Last month, however, they learned the Corps could not support Congressional authorization of the expanded project until a

study and review process was complete which could take two years.

This jeopardizes its chances of gaining authorization during the current Congressional session.

If successful, however, the county will have short-cut the regular method by gaining Congressional authorization before the Corps study is complete.