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Survey Funds Sought For Dredging Skagit

Funds for complete study of the feasibility of dredging the Skagit River will be asked at the next session of Congress.

Such a study would be made by the Army Corps of Engineers to appraise the economic benefits and estimate federal costs entailed in dredging the existing course and channel of the river for shallow barge transportation.

Announcement of the expected request for funds for the study was revealed by United States Senator Warren G. Magnuson in Portland. Magnuson said his Senate Interstate and Foreign Commerce committee, of which he is chairman, will consider important federal improvement projects in the Pacific Northwest. The Skagit project will be among those under consideration, Magnuson said.

Other economic benefits would ensue as a result of the dredging as such a plan would provide improved small craft navigation and flood control benefits to the entire valley. The plan has the hearty endorsement of 36 Skagit County business firms and Chambers of Commerce in the area and the Inland Empire Waterways Association of the Pacific Northwest.

The Skagit Valley already has exceptional natural advantages that favor economic growth. They include plenty of electric power, abundance of water, plenty of sustained yield timber, substantial ore-bodies in the Cascades, available refinery and natural gas fuels, land space for dispersal and growth, resident labor source of stable family type, and desirable place to live and work.

The only remaining requirement in this case – low-cost transportation – appears to be

attainable by the simple dredging of the natural course of the Skagit River in its lower reaches from Concrete to Puget Sound.

Brief initial studies have indicated this improvement shows economic justification, engineering soundness, with relatively minor dredging costs.

Senator Warren G. Magnuson's accomplishments in the field of fisheries, transportation, communications and river basin development stem from his chairmanship on the Senate Appropriations committee.

Numerous surface and water transportation groups have cited Magnuson on many occasions for his constant effort to maintain a strong, efficient, modern Merchant Marine in the Nation's system of transportation.

The following is a resolution drafted by the Inland Empire Waterways Association at a recent meeting in Portland:

WHEREAS, it would seem practical that the Skagit River be opened to shallow draft barge transportation from the vicinity of the City of Concrete to the waters of Puget Sound, and,

WHEREAS, there is a growing industrial complex which would be greatly enhanced by such shallow draft transportation, and,

WHEREAS, it would appear that there is presently a potential volume of freight which would make such a project economically sound, and,

WHEREAS, a review of previous navigation studies of the Skagit River was authorized by the House Committee on Public

Works.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Inland Empire Waterways Association, in regular meeting held in Portland, Oregon, this 22nd day of November, 1960, does hereby respectfully request that funds in sufficient amount be made available to complete the study and submit a report thereon to the Congress at the earliest possible date.