

AIR MAIL

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31 JAN 1964

Honorable Henry M. Jackson
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Jackson:

This is in reply to your inclosed letter from Mrs. John Swisher, Mount Vernon, Washington, concerning the Avon Bypass project, Skagit River, Washington. Mrs. Swisher states there is no need for the kind of flood control being proposed and that she is concerned about possible mutual interests between parties favoring the flood control and parties involved in a Padilla Bay - Saish Island development.

Our immediate flood control plans on the Skagit River consist of two elements. These are construction of the Avon Bypass and minor improvement of 15 miles of Skagit River levee and channel downstream from the bypass. These improvements would provide protection from all floods with frequencies of occurrence of less than once in 30 years. The area protected includes most of the 68,000 acre delta area downstream from Sedro Woolley, which in 1962 had an estimated value of lands of \$113,000,000. The present level of flood protection in the delta area is once in 3 to 10 years, depending upon the locale and the protection afforded by the existing diking system. The cities of Mount Vernon and Burlington now have only 5 to 8 year flood protection. The foregoing flood control projects have sound economic feasibility with benefit-to-cost ratios of 2 to 1. The Chief of Engineers is now studying a feasibility report to reactivate the Avon Bypass project which was authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1936. We are completing a survey report for submission to the Chief of Engineers on authorization of the levee and channel improvement projects.

On a long range basis, in cooperation with other agencies of state and Federal government, we are studying the possibility of multi-purpose upstream storage in the Skagit River Basin. Such storage would permit development of 100-year flood protection for the delta area of the basin, and in addition could provide multiple-purpose water resource

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usage for other purposes, such as irrigation, hydropower, water supply, recreation and low flow augmentation for fisheries. Studies of upstream storage will extend over the next 3 to 5 years. Our overall planning has progressed enough so that we know that the presently proposed downstream channel improvements will be an essential part of any long range plan that may include upstream storage.

On 10 January, a public hearing was held in Mount Vernon, Washington on the Avon Bypass and the downstream channel and levee improvements. About 200 persons attended. At the hearing these projects were endorsed by:

1. State Supervisor of Flood Control.
2. Chairman of Board of County Commissioners of Skagit County.
3. County Engineer, Skagit County.
4. Mayor and City Engineer, Mount Vernon.
5. Washington State Departments of Game, of Fisheries, and of Conservation and Economic Development.
6. Skagit County, Pomona Grange No. 10.
7. Washington State Grange.
8. Skagit County and Washington State Flood Control Councils.
9. Inland Empire Waterways Association.
10. Residents of Diking District No. 1.
11. Commissioners of Diking District No. 3 and 20.
12. Petition signed by 216 Mount Vernon residents.

Opposition to these projects was voiced by:

1. Diking District No. 12 Commissioners (Burlington area).
2. Fire District No. 6 (Burlington area).
3. An attorney representing a group of unknown size in the Burlington area and 4 individuals.

Their objections centered around severance of the area south of the bypass. The Bayview-Padilla Bay Civic Association objected to inclusion of fisheries and recreation as project purposes of Avon Bypass. The Swinomish Indian Council objected to possible detrimental effects on salmon runs that may result from the bypass. One individual opposed levee construction in the downstream area and one individual opposed channel improvements near the mouth of the Skagit River.

On the basis of the foregoing representations, it appears that a substantial segment of responsible public bodies, farm organizations and the general citizenry of the area have endorsed the Corps of Engineers immediate flood control plans.

To the best of our knowledge, the only active interest of the Federal government in the Padilla Bay - Samish Island development is through the Area Redevelopment Administration. The Corps of Engineers was asked by the ARA to review preliminary plans and cost estimates

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submitted to ARA (Contract Cc-6087 between ARA, United States Department of Commerce and Marshall, Barr and Associates) in a first stage planning report. Comments of the Corps of Engineers to ARA were limited to a discussion of engineering design slopes and cost aspects pertaining to channel and fill design proposals.

We have very little first-hand knowledge about the sponsoring organization for the Padilla Bay development. About two years ago, Mr. Bailey, one of the principal land holders visited this office and inquired about the possibility of obtaining fill from the Avon Bypass for the Padilla Bay development. He was advised that fill from the Avon Bypass would have to be disposed of by the least costly method, which is disposal immediately adjacent to the bypass channel. Any diversion of fill from these spoil areas would have to be arranged for with the County and at no expense to the Federal government. There was no provision for utilization of Avon Bypass fill material in the Padilla Bay development plan reviewed by this office. **Engineers of Marshall, Barr and Company also contacted this office, primarily to determine if any conflicts existed between functional operation of the bypass and the Padilla Bay development. We could find no conflict and they were so advised.**

Skagit County Board of Commissioners is the designated operating body which will undertake to provide the local cooperation requirements for the Avon Bypass and for the downstream levee and channel improvements. In none of our discussions with any Skagit County official has any representation been made to us to plan or to otherwise design the Avon Bypass so as to facilitate the Padilla Bay development. Physically and functionally, the two projects are entirely separate. Any relationship which might be developed between the two projects, as for example disposal of fill, appears entirely incidental to the separate project purposes.

I hope the foregoing information answers the questions raised in Mrs. Swisher's letter.

Sincerely yours,

Gedney

cc: OCE ATTN: ENGCW-PD w/basic
NPD ATTN: NPDEN-PL "

ERNEST L. PERRY
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

Stein
~~C. S. TEMPLETON~~
Baccot
~~LT. COL. DEWEY~~
COLONEL PERRY
Concurrence
Hopkins K
Skrinde RAS.

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