

Skagit County Dike District 17

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To: United States Army Corps of Engineers
Seattle District Office
Skagit County General Investigation Team

Dike District 17 is writing official comment on the United States Corps of Engineers Skagit River General Investigation Tentatively Selected Plan. The district begins on the right bank of the Skagit River at the BNSF Railroad Bridge, continues through the River Bend and ends at Lions Park in Mount Vernon. The District provides flood risk management to urbanized North Mount Vernon and the county farming community of River Bend. The District provides service to approximately \$500,000,000 of urban and rural assets.

The district supports the Corps Tentatively Selected Alternative of a Comprehensive Urban Levee Improvement Plan. We believe this would be the most effective way to keep the majority of our county's major infrastructure secure from flood damages in the case of a large flood event. This plan allows the district to provide a higher level of protection to our urban community and keeps a majority of critical infrastructure functioning.

The district also supports the potential for increased storage in the Baker River system. The increase in the amount of storage and the timing of that storage has a benefit to the entire Skagit basin. In the 2003 and 2006 floods of record, the enhanced levels of storage in the Baker System relieved the Skagit delta community from potentially higher impacts. This storage reduced the risk to life and property and lessened flood related damages. The district feels written management practices and physical changes to the amount of dam storage will help ensure positive outcomes critical to the flood risk management in Skagit County. Dike District 17 will continue to support such a macro impact approach to flood control.

The District request for the County and the Corps continue to review and refine certain measures within the preferred alternative. For Dike District 17, major concerns are the advantages and disadvantages of the River Bend urban cut off levee. Though the District sees the economic benefit of such a structure, there are concerns about the potential for a transfer of risk to the rural areas within the boundaries of Dike District 17. Along with the landowners in the rural portion of our district there is the multi-million dollar Anacortes Water Treatment Plant. We are concerned with the "stranding" of this critical infrastructure. Further dialog and research on this measure may be needed. The district would like to review the information on the cut off levee measure in order to understand the scope and mitigation (if any) within this measure. Though the District does have some concerns, it believes in the process and is confident in producing a quality end product.

Dike District 17 supports nonstructural measures that remove flood waters from the floodplain. The District realize with a proposed preferred alternative of urban levee improvements, there will be an addition

of flood waters onto the rural flood plain with flood events larger than the capabilities of current control structures. It is important for these flood waters to flow off of these lands quickly in order to minimize damages to these regions impacted. The implementation of new flood gates, pump stations and enhanced drainage systems could be possible measures implemented in order to improve interior drainage. Skagit Counties rural and farm community is a defining component of Skagit Counties' viability and excellent quality of life. Measures to lesson flood impacts to these areas are important to the implementation of a comprehensive flood plan.

The Commissioners of Dike District 17 formally requests for the Corps and the County to engage the District as the next phases as the study progresses. The Commissioners and staff would like to be actively involves in the engineering and design phases of this plan. We believe our input in these next phases will be helpful in the successful flood reduction project.

Dike District 17 is supporting the direction of the Tentatively Selected Alterative as submitted by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Commissioners and staff eagerly anticipate the progress of this process for enhanced flood control in Skagit County.



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