



## **SKAGIT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD**

**1800 Continental Place  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
Phone (360) 336-3303  
Fax (360) 336-9478**

July 10, 2014

Ms. Hannah Hadley  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
CENWS-EN-ER  
P.O. Box 3755  
Seattle, Washington 98124-3755

RE: Draft FR/EIS for the Skagit River Flood Risk Management General Investigation Study

Dear Ms. Hadley,

Below are comments and concerns from the Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board (AAB) regarding the draft FR/EIS.

The fundamental issue that is not sufficiently addressed in the Skagit General Investigation draft FR/EIS is the expedited removal of flood waters from the floodplain after an event. The highest risk to public safety and costliest damage to property is when flood water remains for extended time on the land and over roads. What must be addressed, whether or not an alternative is implemented, is construction of multiple outlet structures in the sea levees that would open at low tide and allow the water to escape.

The Comprehensive Urban Levee Improvement Alternative will redirect significantly more water to the Samish River. In 2009, the Samish River flood covered roads for days, cutting off Samish Island and leaving flood waters on land for weeks. When the Skagit is redirected to the Samish, the damage caused will be this same scenario multiplied many times. The Samish River Basin drainage infrastructure is not capable of handling this significant increase of water and needs to be improved. An insurmountable hurdle to improvement is the current regulations that govern when and how this can be done. It is imperative that the Army Corp facilitate the cooperation of the multiple state and federal agencies to give assurances to the Drainage Districts to maintain and improve the drainage infrastructure. This same infrastructure will be utilized to drain the floodplain after an event and will be vital for a quick recovery.

The AAB is requesting a response from the Army Corp for the questions below regarding the proposed implementation of the Comprehensive Urban Levee Improvement Alternative:

1. At what river flow velocity, depth and height will water spill at Sterling into Gages Slough and travel north of Burlington Hill?
2. In past flood events, Dike District 12 sandbagged the railroad tracks parallel to Hwy 20 to stop the water from spilling into Gages Slough. Without this effort will there be more frequent flooding of the Sterling Hill area?
3. What kind of water velocities will there be across the farm land and how much scouring will this cause?
4. What are the projected inundation areas and depths from post project conditions? How long will flood water remain on the flood plain?

*Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board Members:*

*Nels Lagerlund (Chair), Kraig Knutzen (Vice Chair), Murray Benjamin, Jim Carstens, Ty Clark, Barbara Cleave, Brian Duquaine, Michael Hughes, Mike Hulbert, Greg Lee, Dan Lefeber, Bill McMoran*

Hannah Hadley  
Page 2  
July 16, 2014

5. How will the Baker Dam storage increases offset the transfer of risk in the Nookachamps and Sterling areas and is this taken into account in the projected flood heights?
6. What guarantees can the Army Corp give drainage districts to conduct emergency repairs and remove sediment from ditches after an event without waiting for the approval of permits?
7. What are the projected increases in river heights south of Mount Vernon?

To this end, the Skagit County Agricultural Advisory Board supports the increase in the Baker Dam storage. We also request that the Army Corp investigate and facilitate the construction of outlet structures in appropriate locations to remove flood waters from the floodplain. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Nels Lagerlund, Chair  
Skagit Agriculture Advisory Board

Cc: Skagit County Board of Commissioners

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