

From: [Dennis Clark](#)
To: [NWS-Skagit-River-GI](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Skagit River GI FR/EIS Comment
Date: Sunday, July 27, 2014 1:56:21 PM

I am writing to support the preferred alternative of the Skagit River General Investigation, the Comprehensive Urban Levee Improvement (CULI) alternative. I have been following the Skagit River GI since 2011 and previously offered comments on the preliminary alternatives in May 2012.

The information provided in the Draft Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (FR/EIS) appears to show that the CULI alternative is the most cost-effective and environmentally sound way to achieve the objectives of flood hazard risk reduction while minimizing harmful impacts to the environment.

While I expect there will be some concerns about the implications for rural areas of the CULI alternative, I think that on balance it will better contribute to our county-wide goals of improvements in public safety, environmental protection, and sustainable development by protecting existing urban areas and encouraging further development ("in-fill") in those areas.

I also strongly encourage USACE to retain the so-called "Seattle District Variance" discussed in section 5.7.5.3 of the draft FR/EIS. This variance allows the retention of larger diameter native riparian vegetation on levees, which in turn is critical to the recovery of salmonid species protected under the Endangered Species Act. There is considerable evidence across western Washington that mature native riparian vegetation actually enhances the structural stability of levees and revetments in western Washington. I encourage USACE to consider whether the Seattle District Variance could even be expanded to allow us to "have our fish and levees, too" by allowing still larger diameter vegetation on levees. While discussed only briefly in the draft FR/EIS, the vegetation maintenance requirements under Public Law 84-99 are critical to the long-term sustainability of the Skagit River watershed and should not be jeopardized.

Thank you for your consideration. Thank you for working with our local partners in Skagit County to bring the Skagit River GI to an acceptable conclusion.

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