



Skagit River System Cooperative

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February 11, 2008

Ryan Ika
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Region 10

Electronic Correspondence

Reference: FEMA mapping process for Skagit Valley

Dear Ryan,

Skagit River System Cooperative (SRSC) makes the following comments on behalf of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe.

I appreciate you returning my phone call last week and would like to reiterate SRSC's expectations for the FEMA mapping process for the Skagit Valley that I made to you during our phone conversation. It is SRSC's expectations that FEMA will:

1. Follow the standard FEMA process for floodplain mapping. This is a technical scientific process and SRSC is concerned that there may be political pressure to change the process. We are concerned efforts by local governments to convene a scientific panel will go beyond providing technical input to the FEMA process. It is our understanding that local governments propose that the panel be used as the final decision authority substituting an outside panel's decision for scientific evaluation, environmental review, and tribal consultation by FEMA. It is not acceptable for FEMA to substitute an outside panel's decision for the standard FEMA mapping process.
2. Continue to use the best available science in its evaluation. SRSC has followed FEMA's evaluation of flow data from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), outside data from Skagit County, and independent review by a FEMA contractor. We are confident that FEMA has used the best available science to this point in the process.
3. Consult with the Swinomish and Sauk-Suiattle Tribes at each step of the FEMA mapping process.

SRSC is concerned with the effects of the FEMA mapping process on flood plain development in the Skagit Valley, floodway designations, habitat restoration and protection options, and flood control alternative development in the ACOE Skagit General Investigation.

SRSC appreciates its relationship with FEMA and your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stan M. Walsh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a distinct "W" at the end.

Stan M. Walsh
Environmental Services Manager
Skagit River System Cooperative