

GARY LOCKE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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October 22, 2001

The Honorable Ted W. Anderson
The Honorable Ken Dahlstedt
The Honorable Don Munks
Skagit County Board of Commissioners
700 South Second, Room 202
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Dear Commissioners Anderson, Dahlstedt, and Munks:

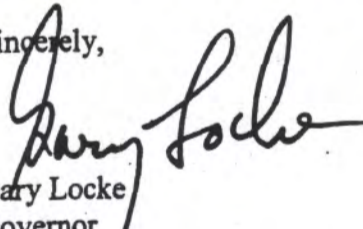
I am writing to endorse the process that your county has undertaken in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to reduce the risk of flooding by the Skagit River. I am aware that this river poses one of the greatest threats of flood damage in the western United States, and I am pleased that you have invited the Department of Ecology to participate in your efforts.

The Skagit Flood Risk Management Working Group has teamed with federal, state and local experts to identify a range of options that have excellent potential to both reduce flood damage risk and restore habitat for endangered and threatened salmonid species. Of course, any flood bypass proposal must address decisions concerning future land use of the existing floodplain, as well as design features critical for fish habitat. In addition, it must consider transportation corridors and impacts upon stream flow, existing water rights, and the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

An Environmental Impact Statement that satisfactorily addresses these concerns could be the critical next step in this project, and we stand ready to assist you in its preparation.

With the cooperation of concerned individuals, state and federal resource agencies, Skagit System Cooperative, the state Department of Transportation, incorporated cities, and the agricultural community, I am confident a flood control project can successfully accommodate both Skagit County residents and vulnerable salmon populations.

Sincerely,



Gary Locke
Governor

cc: Joe Williams
Gordon White
Jeannie Summerhays

