



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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January 3 2002

Mr. Dave Brookings
Skagit County Public Works
1111 Cleveland Ave
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Dear Mr. Brookings:

I am writing regarding certain changes proposed by Skagit County for the FY 2001-03 FCAAP grant for Phase 3 of the Skagit River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan. The change proposed by the County for Task 5: Environmental Design and Mitigation, specifically the second sentence change from "Studies will..." to "Studies may be conducted to evaluate the effects of diverting floodwater to Padilla Bay..." does not fit with our previous understanding of how the County will successfully evaluate this project in the EIS.

An EIS for the Skagit Feasibility Study that fails to evaluate the effects of diverting floodwater into Padilla Bay will be flawed and potentially undermine successful funding and permitting of the project. Governor Locke, in his October 22, 2001 letter of support for the process undertaken by Skagit County and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, stated that the environmental review process must, "...consider transportation corridors and impacts upon stream flow, existing water rights, and the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Reserve...An EIS that satisfactorily addresses these concerns could be the critical next step in this project, and we stand ready to assist you in its preparation."

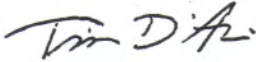
The Department of Ecology has committed over \$ 1million to Skagit County in support of the Skagit Feasibility Study. It is essential for the project to have an EIS that fairly and objectively analyses potential project impacts. Competition for public funds, permitting issues and public trust in the project hinge on a viable EIS. And we know that the County is determined to resolve the Skagit flood issues. So we are confused with the proposal to make evaluating the impact of the bypass on Padilla Bay optional. We want to support a successful project and our fiduciary responsibility in administrating FCAAP requires due diligence on our part to insure that these funds are invested wisely.



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We remain ready to assist you in successfully completing a thorough analysis of the proposed Swinomish Bypass Channel's impacts on Padilla Bay. I am ready to travel to Mount Vernon to discuss this issue with you at your convenience. I also share your desire to execute the current biennium's FCAPP grant as soon as possible. Please call me at 360/407-6796 to arrange a time to meet to resolve this concern.

Sincerely,



Tim D'Acci

cc: Ray Hellwig
Gordon White
Terry Stevens
Neil Aaland
Jeannie Summerhays
Bev Huether