



BURLINGTON NORTHERN

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT  
Seattle Region

22  
800 Third Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98104  
Telephone (206) 444-1900

District Engineer  
Corps of Army Engineers  
P. O. Box C-3755  
Seattle, WA 98124

April 10, 1978

Attention: Mr. Forest Brooks

Dear Sir:

Please refer to your public brochure entitled "Skagit River Levee and Channel Improvements" dated March, 1978, in which you invite comments on a proposed levee improvement project on the Skagit River.

The Burlington Northern is opposed to raising the heights of levees because it will endanger our bridge and embankments in the vicinity of Burlington, Washington.

Following are our reasons for opposing an increase in the height of levees either upstream or downstream from our bridge at Burlington:

1. With dikes at present level, when they are overtopped in a moderate flood, excess water flows into the Sammamish basin or sloughs or open farmland where damage is minimal.
2. If levees are raised two feet, then when they are overtopped and washed out, heavy damage is sustained by properties adjacent to the break.
3. If the right bank is diked between Sedro Woolley and Burlington, then the property owners on the left bank will be damaged. Then they will press for a dike and when they get that, the river will be confined between levees that will not provide enough waterway for a major flood and overtopping and dike break will be disastrous to those in the vicinity of the break.

P 002501

District Engineer

Page 2

April 10, 1978

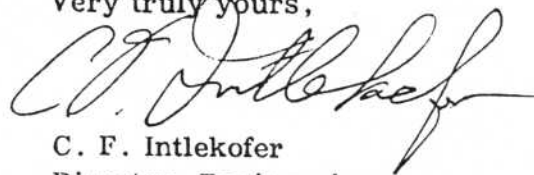
4. Increasing the height of levees raises the water surface so that when the river is flooding the floating debris damages bridges across the river.
5. Between our bridge and Burlington, our embankment is the levee. We have had trouble in this area in past floods and sustain near washouts. We have had sand boils form on the land side of our embankment in the flood of December, 1975, and in earlier floods.
6. Construction of levees invites competition between diking districts for one to raise its dike a little higher than its neighbor, and so the river surface is raised and so is the volume and velocity, all to the detriment of the bridges.
7. The Corps proposes to "turn the completed project over to Skagit County to operate and maintain." What facilities and what organization will Skagit County have to handle this responsibility when it devolves upon them.

We are in favor of Alternative 1 as outlined in your brochure. You mention that average annual damages of about \$4.5 million are incurred under this alternative. We would guess that this sum would be the annual interest on the money you would expend on any of the other alternatives.

You indicate that Alternatives 2 through 6 would bring "a reduction in annual flood damages and hazards to life and property" over Alternative 1. I don't agree. Construction of dikes and raising dikes makes for a greater catastrophe when they break. Dikes give people a false sense of security. Marshland and French Creek dikes on the Snohomish River in December, 1975, are an example.

Upstream storage is an alternative that is acceptable to us.

Very truly yours,



C. F. Intlekofer  
Director, Engineering

cc: Mr. J. W. Wicks  
Mr. D. H. Burns  
Mr. H. W. Bacon

P 002502