

23 August 1966

MEMO FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Avon Bypass Coordination with Local Interests

1. This memo concerns coordination between the Corps, Skagit County Commissioners, the Washington State Department of Conservation and the Skagit River Diking Districts on local cooperation planning for the Avon Bypass Project.

2. As a first step, Mr. Greg Hastings was contacted at Olympia and arrangements were made for Mr. Hastings to initiate a letter from Mr. Ahlquist to the County Commissioners. This letter would advise that the so-called "Band Aid" method of State support of the present low level of flood protection in the Skagit River Valley would not be continued indefinitely. The State expected local interests to take measures to improve the degree of flood protection, and thereby reduce the necessity for continued large outlays of State support money for maintenance. Mr. Hastings agreed to have this letter ready for review with me by 24 August.

3. I then called Mr. Claude Wilson, Chairman, Board of County Commissioners, Skagit County. We reviewed in detail the conclusions developed at the meeting on the evening of 10 August 1966 with the diking districts, State and Federal representatives. The conclusions reached with Mr. Wilson were that:

a. The Corps will require some formal affirmation by the County of its position on support of the Bypass Project. Our letter making this request will be forwarded to the Commissioners this week.

b. Mr. Wilson will also receive a letter from the Department of Conservation following the tenor outlined in paragraph 2.

c. At the meeting with the diking districts there was general disagreement between the diking districts and the County Commissioners on the sharing of responsibility for local cooperation requirements for the Bypass Project. The diking districts considered that sponsoring of the Bypass was a County problem; the County Commissioners believed the initiative should spring from the diking districts.

d. At the 10 August 1966 meeting many of the diking districts, not immediately affected by the Bypass Project, indicated lack of interest in supporting the Project, except if it were undertaken as an overall County responsibility.

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4. The foregoing events all indicate that Skagit County is, in reality, facing a flood control crises at this time because of lack of a definite county-wide flood control plan. Mr. Wilson agreed with this conclusion. The suggestion was made that an appropriate way for the County Commissioners to handle this problem would be to set up a flood control advisory committee that could take into account all elements of flood control planning and programming requirements for the County and then come up with a flood control plan for the County. Mr. Wilson concurred that this would be a good approach and said that the County Commissioners would be willing to follow through with this course of action. I also advised Mr. Wilson that I would informally furnish him essentials of a possible press release which the County Commissioners could use in presenting this matter to the public.

5. Following my discussion with Mr. Wilson, Mr. George Dynes, Chairman of the Flood Control Council of the Skagit River Diking Districts, subsequently visited my office and discussed this plan with Mr. Cook and with me. He was very much in favor of and believed that if we could get some of the key Chamber of Commerce representatives, local bankers and other influential citizens to serve on such a committee that this would be the best possible way of generating the necessary local interests' support.

6. We will endeavor to have Corps and State of Washington letters mailed to the County Commissioners so that initial actions can be initiated by the Commissioners at their next meeting on 30 August 1966.

ROBERT H. GEDNEY 