

29 October 1975

FACT SHEET

1. SUBJECT: Skagit River Basin, Washington.

2. FACTS:

a. Local Concerns - Potential for major flood damage is very high in Skagit Basin with average annual damages estimated at \$4,246,000 (1974 prices and conditions). Existing flood control projects provide only limited protection for highly developed Skagit River delta. These projects include local levees and provision of flood control storage space in Ross hydroelectric project, owned and operated by City of Seattle. Skagit County has long sought additional flood control measures and has adopted a comprehensive plan which includes authorized and proposed Corps of Engineers projects.

b. Upper Baker Project - An authorization report has been submitted to BERH and OCE by the District and Division Engineers calling for 58,000 acre-feet of additional flood control storage at Puget Sound Power and Light Company's existing Upper Baker project. Trade-off of power generation capability for flood control is economically feasible with a benefit-cost ratio of 2.6 to 1. The proposal is endorsed by local interests and supported by the State of Washington and other Federal agencies. On 14 October 1975 BERH issued a public announcement of concurrence with the District's recommendation. Ninety-day review by Governor and heads of Federal agencies expected to begin in November 1975, with report to Congress by late spring 1976.

c. Skagit River Levee and Channel Improvement Project - This project, authorized in 1966, involves improving existing lower Skagit River levees and channels at a total cost of \$13 million (1975 prices), of which \$500,000 is non-Federal. At 1975 prices and conditions, the benefit-to-cost ratio is about 1.2 to 1. The project was placed in a deferred status in 1971, pending development of additional storage in the Skagit River basin. In May 1975 Skagit County reaffirmed its intention to sponsor the project. A letter report was submitted on 16 September 1975 to the Division Engineer seeking reclassification of the project from a "deferred" to an "active" status on the presumption that the Upper Baker project proposal satisfies the need for additional storage development in the basin.

d. Avon Bypass - The bypass, authorized in 1936 as a "make work" project, involves diverting excess Skagit River flows into Padilla Bay. It was placed in a deferred status in 1971 because Skagit County was unable to meet the requirements of local cooperation. Based on 1966 preconstruction studies, the project would cost about \$61 million (1975 prices), with \$13 million being non-Federal share. Although part of its comprehensive plan, Skagit County has been reluctant to proceed with the project at this time primarily due to the high local cost, as well as project associated loss of agricultural lands.

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e. **Lower Sauk Project** - A major multipurpose storage project was evaluated on a preliminary basis during the Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters Comprehensive Water and Related Land Resources Study, completed in 1971. One of two alternative basin plans included **134,000 acre-feet of flood control storage**, along with hydro-electric power generation at a damsite located on the lower Sauk River, a major tributary of the Skagit River. **Full pool would extend upstream approximately 13 miles near the town of Darrington.** No feasibility studies have been conducted of this project and its benefit-to-cost ratio is unknown. Detailed investigations would be required to determine whether a project could be formulated consistent with Skagit County's desires. A draft resolution has been prepared for use by the congressional delegation to authorize feasibility studies. This resolution and a background report on the project were furnished Senator Warren G. Magnuson and Congressman Lloyd Meeds on 1 May and 19 May 1975, respectively.