

NPSen-DB (1 Dec 77) 1st Ind

SUBJECT: OCE Response to Reclassification of Avon Bypass Project

DA, Seattle District, Corps of Engineers, Post Office Box C-3755, Seattle, Washington 98124

29 DEC 1977

TO: Division Engineer, North Pacific, ATTN: NPDPB

1. Approval to delay our response from 12 December 1977 was received in a 9 December 1977 telephone discussion between Messrs. Dan Nordhill and Captain Don Warner.

2. DAEN-CWP-W 2nd Ind., dated 22 November 1977, to basic NPSen-PL-RP letter dated 23 August 1977, subject: Reclassification of Authorized Skagit River, Washington Avon Bypass Project, rejects our recommendation to reclassify the Avon Bypass from a "deferred" to "active" status. Further, a strong recommendation is made by OCE to pursue studies of the area upstream from Mount Vernon to Sedro Woolley under authority of the Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters Comprehensive Study.

3. We do not wish to rebut the OCE decision on Avon Bypass Project.

4. Substantial development in the Mount Vernon to Sedro Woolley area has occurred in the past 10 to 15 years, and there is strong local feelings about providing increased flood damage reduction measures for these urban and suburban areas. We support the local assessment of need, and believe the lower Skagit valley is the most serious flood threat in western Washington. For this reason, our primary interest has been, and continues to be, completing whatever flood reduction measures are justified for the Mount Vernon to Sedro Woolley reach (as well as the authorized project from Mount Vernon downstream) as quickly as possible.

5. We understand that the Washington Congressional Delegation is planning to ask the Office of the Chief of Engineers for draft legislation to amend the authority for the Skagit River Levee and Channel Improvement Project, authorized by Section 203 of Public Law 89-789, so the project can be expanded to include flood protection from Burlington to Sedro Woolley and to include the addition of recreation as a project purpose. Modification of the existing project authority to allow expansion of the levee system appears to be desirable because the Avon Bypass authority is no longer feasible and is the only currently authorized project that would provide this upstream protection.

6. We believe new legislation that would amend the present authority of the authorized project to include the Mount Vernon to Sedro Woolley reach is the most expeditious procedure to use. We are hopeful that this legislation would be approved in 1978 or early 1979. Our backup

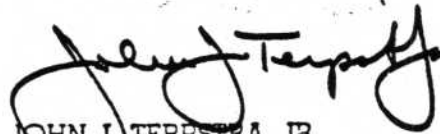
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position, should legislation not be forthcoming, is the submission of a Significant Post Authorization Change (SPAC) report. Using this procedure, current studies would not be interrupted, and our position with local interests would be sound. To proceed with a plan that could only result in the upper reach being constructed several years later than the lower reach would place us in a difficult position with the local sponsor. However, we acknowledge that without the amending legislation being passed, a SPAC could delay construction of the downstream reach.

7. We are proceeding with base surveys, hydraulic and hydrologic studies for the Mount Vernon to Sedro Woolley reach because this information will be needed for the authorized project, as well as any extension of the authorized work. Foundation and exploration work and detail layouts and estimates will be proceeding after the first of the year.

8. We strongly urge you to impress upon OCE the need to have both upstream and downstream studies continue without interruption and construction work completed as soon as possible. The special amending legislation appears to provide the best opportunity for this.



JOHN I. TERPSTRA, JR.
Lt. Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Deputy District Engineer

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