



FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Region X Federal Regional Center Bothell, Washington 98011

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Bill Spurlock, Chief
Flood Plain Management Services
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
P. O. Box C 3755
Seattle, Washington 98124

Dear Mr. Spurlock:

Jerry Gardner has asked me to confirm an understanding that we recently reached regarding analysis of the Skagit River delta. We have been concerned about the analysis for a long time because the situation is rather unusual. As recently as last month, the analysis for the levee project appeared to provide the most accurate delineation of flooding that could be used for the Flood Insurance Study.

That analysis was based on an unsteady state flow model of the river under conditions of levee breaches at specific locations. We have recognized for some time the shortcoming of such a delineation applied to the Flood Insurance Study in that the study would become obsolete through relatively minor improvement to the weakest points in the levees. If that were accomplished, a completely new unsteady state flow analysis would be required with assumed breaches at different locations. In addition, there must be a great deal of judgment applied to selection of the most probable failure points.

The 1972 Flood Insurance Study showed a flooding situation based on complete failure of the system. Such a set of circumstances did not appear probable and therefore appropriate. However, I have learned that the base flood discharge would overflow the levee system at nearly every location in the absence of a blowout failure. In other words, there is a likelihood of major flooding through overtopping at any point along the levee system.

In view of this information, I have agreed to a flood delineation similar to that of the 1972 Study which will reflect overtopping, although not necessarily failure of the entire system.

Sincerely,

Wes Edens, Director of Engineering
Insurance & Mitigation Division

cc: Bud Norris, Skagit County Board of Commissioners
Steve West, Washington State Department of Ecology
Ed Hammersmith, Washington State Department of Ecology

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