

THE COURIER-TIMES

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Skagit River Bridge Near Concrete Urged

Many Groups Join in Requesting Federal Funds for
Construction of Skagit River Span to Make
Timber Accessible, to Aid Schools

Direct appeal for federal aid in construction of a bridge across the Skagit River near Concrete was started Monday at a special meeting called by S. S. McIntyre, president of the East-West, North State Highway Association.

More than a dozen telegrams have already been sent Congressman Henry M. Jackson, H. O. Wahlberg, Skagit County Engineer now in Washington, D.C., and both of Washington's U.S. Senators. Businessmen, labor groups, school authorities, timbermen, farmers and chambers of commerce in Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish counties are requesting that the federal government allocate funds for construction of the span.

To Make Timber Available

Primary reason for the groups' asking immediate erection of the bridge is to make timber available to independent local mill operators in Skagit, Whatcom and Snohomish counties. The span across the Skagit near Concrete would open up transportation facilities to one of the largest areas of virgin timber in the state of Washington.

Aid of the federal government is requested because that body and the state own most of the land comprising this great timber area. The telegrams urge that existing federal funds be used to build the bridge, which is estimated will cost \$400,000.

At Monday's meeting it was pointed out that the counties do not have funds available to construct the span. Although the bridge has high priority on the list of projects included in a four-year program advocated by the North State Cascade Highway Association, most persons at the meeting agreed it is urgently necessary that the bridge be built as soon as possible.

Schools Urge Action

School authorities throughout Skagit County have also emphasized the necessity of a span to insure the safety of children being brought to school. The ferries being used at present have been repeatedly mentioned as "dangerous, expensive and unsatisfactory" for crossing the river.

In addition to the many wires sent Congressman Jackson and Engineer Wahlberg, Mr. McIntyre has conferred with Jackson by telephone and received his assurance that he would let the groups here know what steps should be taken to get action on the bridge.

Congressman Jackson also wired Senator Jess Sapp on April 20 stating: "Regarding Concrete bridge, I will be glad to discuss situation with Wahlberg. Will keep you advised regarding further developments."

Wahlberg was chosen to represent counties in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana at the Bureau of Public Roads meeting in Washington, D.C. which is now in progress.

It has been pointed out that by the government's constructing the span across the river, the value of the timber would be increased sufficiently to pay for the project. The timberlands, owned by the U.S. Government and Washington state, are to go on sale to private timber companies at some date in the future. The bridge would enhance the value of the timber area so that bidders for the land would indirectly help finance the construction.