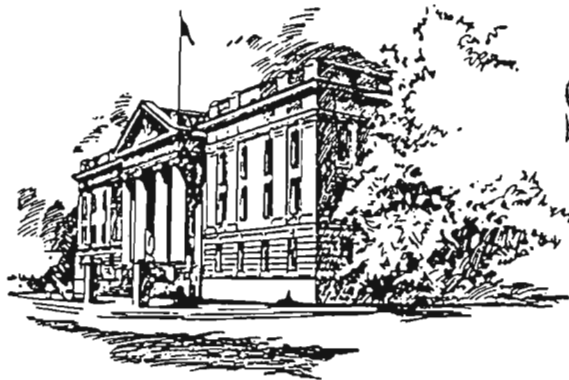


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SKAGIT COUNTY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Skagit County Administration Building
700 S. Second, Room 202
Mount Vernon, Washington 98273
(206) 336-9300
FAX# (206) 336-9307

July 8, 1991

House Committee on Public Works and Transportation
The Honorable Representative Robert Roe, Chairman
Rayburn House Office Building
Independence Ave. and South Capitol Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Roe:

Recent newspaper articles published in the Seattle Times have indicated that the Seattle District Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is being considered for closure. These announcements have caused deep concern throughout Skagit County and most especially among the members of the Board of County Commissioners. Skagit County was nearly defeated in its efforts to control the mighty Skagit River during back-to-back storm events on November 10, and November 25, 1990. It is only through the combined efforts of Skagit County and the Army Corps of Engineers that hundreds of acres of land were saved from irreparable damage when a rent in the dike protecting Fir Island caused much of the county's prime farmland to be submerged in as much as eight feet of flood waters.

Only today, eight months after this devastating event caused millions of dollars worth of damage, can we breathe a sigh of relief and be thankful that we had the Army Corps of Engineers as an ally in this critical battle. Currently 30 Army Corps employees are involved in field operations and, through their Public Law 99 Program, are restoring approximately \$4.4 million dollars of damage to our dike system. This reconstruction is crucial, as we could easily have a recurrence next winter.

The Skagit River is only partially controlled, with dams only able to meter approximately 35% of its flow. The other 65% of the watershed is uncontrolled and protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Because of this status, the people of Skagit County have become well educated in flood fighting. We have developed a well coordinated flood fight plan thanks to the quick response of the Corps' Seattle Office, as well as to their annual flood fight exercise. The proposed alternative will stretch that response time from one hour to over four hours if response must be sought from the Portland Corps office. In our constant effort to improve our flood protection, we are currently cooperating with the Corps' Seattle Office to perform a reconnaissance study of the Skagit River to help us address future long-term flood control measures. This effort will require many interagency meetings and public meetings which would be hindered by the time and distance factors involved in a relocation to Portland.

In closing, we would like to stress that the Skagit River is the most dangerous river on the West Coast, and the need for a quick response from the Corps' Seattle Office is crucial to our flood fight effort. We ask on

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behalf of the citizens of Skagit County that you allow the Corps of Engineers Seattle Office to remain at its current location.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON



W. W. Vaux, Chairman



Robby Robinson, Commissioner



Ruth Wylie, Commissioner

cc: Noel L. Gilbrough, Army Corps of Engineers
Dave Brookings, Skagit County Flood Control Engineer