



July 22, 2020

The Honorable Laura Watson  
Director  
Department of Ecology  
PO Box 47600  
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

The Honorable Kelly Susewind  
Director  
Department of Fish and Wildlife  
PO Box 43200  
Olympia, WA 98504-3200

Dear Director Watson and Director Susewind:

Your agencies play an important role in evaluating impacts and advancing win-win solutions for flooding and fish in the Chehalis Basin. The complex challenges facing our communities require science, collaboration, and innovative thinking to forge lasting solutions. I appreciate the expertise and experience your staff bring to these challenges.

Recent work evaluating a proposed large-scale flood retention project in the upper Chehalis River has brought additional and significant questions and concerns about impacts and alternatives. I have requested that the Chehalis Basin Board provide recommendations on the process for addressing some of these concerns, particularly the development of a basin-wide, non-dam alternative to flood damage reduction and evaluating the potential to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the impacts of the flood retention and other flood risk reduction projects.

Furthermore, I am directing that Ecology pause the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process through the end of the year and to use funding available within the Office of Chehalis Basin budget to assist the Board in the development of a non-dam alternative.

Tribes have further expressed a desire for greater engagement by the State in these processes. In light of these concerns, I am also requesting that you work together to:

- Invite government-to-government consultations with Tribes, including an initial consultation with interested Tribes individually with both of your agencies.
- Create a more structured process for Tribal staff and their consultants to engage, when they so choose, on technical aspects of agency analyses and related work.



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Given that climate change poses a significant risk to salmon and increased flood damage in the basin, I believe that we will need the best scientific evaluation of options to preserve habitat and restore salmon runs while protecting the basin's human communities. Therefore, I support both agencies' continued participation in the Chehalis Basin Strategy's related work to assess options for mitigation and ecological restoration.

Thank you for continuing to collaborate on these important issues.

Very truly yours,



Jay Inslee  
Governor

CC: Andrea McNamara Doyle, Director, Office of the Chehalis Basin