

Snoqualmie Fish Farm Flood Implementation Oversight Committee

July 28, 2020

The Honorable Dow Constantine
King County Executive
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800
Seattle WA 98104

Re: Support Letter for King County's Fall City Floodplain Restoration Project

Dear Executive Constantine:

The Snoqualmie Fish, Farm, Flood (FFF) Implementation Oversight Committee (IOC) was convened in 2018 to guide implementation of the landmark 2017 agreement between farmers, tribes, valley residents and other key stakeholders in the watershed. While that agreement included more than thirty recommendations, two key priorities rose to the top for urgent action and it was agreed that progress on each would be bundled together: implementation of large-scale habitat restoration projects to benefit the threatened population of Chinook salmon in the basin, and the development of a comprehensive drainage assistance program to address a key limiting factor of farm productivity in the valley. Agricultural drainage continues to face challenges and the IOC remains dedicated to working collaboratively to address the practical, financial and regulatory hurdles to drainage, as agreed upon in June 2017. Understanding we have more work to do, we are supportive of the Floodplains by Design grant request from King County.

King County's proposed Fall City Floodplain Restoration Project (also known as the Haffner-Barfuse project) will connect the river to 145 acres of its floodplain in a key spawning and rearing reach. The IOC is very pleased to support this significant investment toward following through on the habitat recommendations in the agreement. As part of King County's \$10 million application to the Department of Ecology's Floodplains by Design multi-objective grant program, \$250,000 of the request will be used to help advance urgent actions to improve farm field drainage in the valley. County staff are leveraging the efforts of key FFF partners, including the Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District and the King Conservation District, to identify a suite of potential drainage projects that would coincide with the timing of state funding. Finally, hydraulic modeling results indicate that the project also reduces flood risk by lowering water surface levels during floods on over 300 acres of surrounding farms, roads and other private and public lands. We are very excited to see this explicit combination of actions and benefits in the County's proposal which reflects the intent and spirit of FFF.

The tradeoffs between fish, farm and flood objectives are at times difficult, especially where these goals intersect in the same landscape. For example, in the case of this project, some farmland will be permanently lost in order to restore critical salmon habitat. Similarly, some drainage projects have the potential to adversely affect fish and water quality, but are needed to keep farmland productive. However, we firmly believe that long-term success will only be achieved through collaboration and mutual support for the highest priorities of each caucus.

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In closing, we ask that you include this letter in the county's final grant application packet for Floodplains by Design as an indication of the IOC's strong support for this multi-objective project.

Sincerely,

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Angela Donaldson

Certified Floodplain Manager, FFF Flood Caucus Chair

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Joshua Monaghan

King Conservation District, FFF Farm Caucus Chair

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Cindy Spiry

Snoqualmie Indian Tribe, FFF Fish Caucus Chair

cc: Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)
Josh Baldi, Division Director, Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD), DNRP
Megan Smith, Deputy Director, WLRD, DNRP
Joan Lee, Manager, Rural and Regional Services Section (RRSS), WLRD, DNRP
Curt Crawford, Manager, Stormwater Services Section (SWS), WLRD, DNRP
John Brosnan, Strategic Planning Manager, SWS, WLRD, DNRP
Janne Kaje, Regional Partnerships Unit Supervisor, RRSS, WLRD, DNRP
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