

November 20, 2006

Derek Sandison, Regional Director
 Central Regional Office
 WA Department of Ecology
 15 West Yakima Avenue Suite 200
 Yakima WA 98902

SUBJECT: Draft Programmatic EIS for the Columbia River Water Management Program

The Washington Natural Heritage Program is responsible for maintaining information on rare plant species and high-quality ecosystems in the State of Washington. We have reviewed the above document and have the following comments. Our comments are based upon (1) a review of the statewide database that we maintain regarding rare plants and high quality ecosystems and (2) the experience and expertise of our staff scientists.

- 11-1 All of the proposed reservoir sites have important biological and ecological features present. More thorough surveys are needed, however, to fully assess the potential ecological impacts of each water storage project on the rare plants and ecosystems present.
- 11-2 Of the four proposed reservoir sites, Crab Creek has the highest potential to affect significant natural resources due to the biodiversity values present – rare plant species and high quality ecosystems (sand dunes, cliff and talus, scabland, shrubsteppe). Lower Crab Creek Natural Area Preserve, managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), also is located at this site.
- 11-2 The Foster Creek and Hawk Creek sites also have significant natural features – rare plants, riparian vegetation, woodlands, grasslands, scablands, and some shrubsteppe. There is also a DFW Wildlife Area in the Foster Creek area.
- There are also rare plants, sand dunes, shrubsteppe, and scabland present at the Sand Hollow site as well.
- 11-3 In the *Affected Environment* section of the document under *Plants*, state listed plant species that are not federally listed or candidates for listing should also be addressed for the project areas. The Washington Natural Heritage Program should be referenced as the agency responsible for maintaining this information and should be consulted for potential effects that this project may have on state listed plant species.
- 11-4 In *Appendix I State Listed Plant and Wildlife Species*, the plant list has been omitted in the Draft EIS. This list should be added to the document. The Washington Natural Heritage Program can provide this information upon request.

Derek Sandison, Department of Ecology
 November 20, 2006
 Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Programmatic EIS for the Columbia River Water Management Program. Please feel free to contact me if you would like additional information from the Washington Natural Heritage Program.

Sincerely,

Sandy Swope Moody, Environmental Review Coordinator
 Washington Natural Heritage Program
 PO Box 47014
 Olympia WA 98504-7014

360-902-1697

Comment Letter No. 11 – Department of Natural Resources – Washington Natural Heritage Program

11-1. Comment noted. Please see the Master Response regarding Future Studies for Off Channel Reservoir Proposals. Significant natural resources will be one of the factors considered in the Appraisal and Feasibility studies being conducted on the off-channel storage sites.

It is acknowledged that additional studies will be done at the time specific projects are identified. Refer to the Master Response for future site-specific studies.

11-2. The Final EIS text has been revised to reflect this comment.

11-3. Table 3-16 has been updated to include plant species that are classified as a species of concern by the USFWS in addition to those species that are listed as endangered, threatened, or candidate. Two additional sections have been added to the Final EIS. Section 3.7.2.2 discusses the state listed species and 3.7.2.3 includes a description of WDNR and the Natural Heritage Program.

11-4. Appendix I has been revised to include all state listed plant species.

Leo Bowman
District 1
Max Benitz, Jr.
District 2
Claude Oliver
District 3

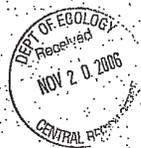
**Board of County Commissioners
BENTON COUNTY**



David Sparks
County Administrator

Loretta Smith Kelly
Finance Manager

November 20, 2006



Mr. Derek Sandison, Central Regional Director
Department of Ecology
15 West Yakima Ave., Suite 200
Yakima, WA 98902

Dear Mr. Sandison:

The Board of Benton County Commissioners has reviewed the Draft Programmatic EIS for the Columbia River Water Management Program of October 9, 2006. Our Board would like to offer the following responses, comments and considerations for new water rights from the Columbia River.

There are four Columbia River Water Management Program components in sub-section II which we would like to address; namely,

2.1.2.1 Storage Component

- Storage projects must be aggressively pursued using the watershed planning process under R.C.W. 90.82. The draft report has six sites identified – Hawk Creek, Foster Creek, Sand Hollow, Crab Creek, Black Rock Reservoir and the Walla Walla Pump Exchange.
- Department of Ecology should be involved with Bureau of Reclamation on building a large reservoir in the Columbia River System;
- No new storage reservoir has been built in the Yakima River Basin in the last 80 years. "Not Acceptable".....We must meet the needs for the economic community and development needs as well as instream flow for fish.

2.1.2.2 Conservation Component - Net water savings from conservation.

First, what conservation projects can be considered? Second, what conservation projects will result in immediate savings that accrued wet water savings can be applied for new water right from the Columbia River?

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commissioners@co.benton.wa.us

- The distance between the point of savings and the river, which creates a time lag;
- The dynamics of natural recharge and other return flows to the river, which complicates the analysis of conservation savings;
- The ability to quantify and monitor consumptive versus non-consumptive water savings;
- Please review the draft supply inventory & long term water supply and demand forecast of Oct. 2006. Not user friendly. Conservation districts submitting information – their cost \$782 million. Irrigation districts identified 82 projects totaling 425,000 AF of water at a cost of \$450,000 million. The point here is that the irrigation district projects are primarily water conveyance/water transmission project (piping) with minimal net water savings. Again, what is the wet water savings?
- Funding criteria for conservation projects: *Response:*
 - Columbia River Supply Development account must be spent on the development of new storage projects. RCW 90.90.010(2)(A). Expenditures may be for new storage and other listed activities and projects (conservation) which result in new water supplies.
- Defining "acquisition and transfers": *Response:*
 - Yes, acquisition and transfers mean any non-storage project that is funded through conservation efforts;
- Conditioning water rights on instream flows: Yes, state legislators should re-address the instream flow requirement for all months of the year in the Columbia River. The Intent was to define water acquisitions and transfers as those related to water right acquired by direct purchase and/or gift separately from conservation project.

2.1.2.3 Voluntary Regional Agreement Component

Yes, aggressively pursue VRAs with the following possible suggestions:
Response:

- Processing Voluntary Regional Agreements, after ground rules for the component are in place first.
- Coordinating VRA mitigation and processing new water rights. Yes, seek legislative authority to skip applications;
- Coordinating VRA and non-VRA processing. Group within the Columbia River one-mile corridor with WRIA permitting;
- Funding projects associated with VRA; no mitigation for applicants in VRA

2.1.2.4 Inventory and Demand Forecasting Component

- Defining "No Negative Impact" to instream flows of the Columbia and Snake Rivers: *Response:*
 - Yes, the location where net water savings from a tributary project would be measured would be at the mouth of the tributary;

12-4

- State legislators should re-address the instream flow requirement on the Columbia/Snake Rivers for all months of the year. This is a "foundation" question of the management plan. The provisions of the new law (RCW 90.90) are in conflict with existing law, (ie page 4 - 49 of the draft programmatic environmental impact statement for the Columbia River Water Management Program).
- Defining the Main Channel and One-Mile Zone: *Response:*
 - Use water resource inventory area for "effective mainstream water resource planning and management"
- Inclusion of exempt wells in water use inventory: *Response:*
 - No, do not include exempt wells in the information system.
- No action alternative: NOT AN OPTION.
- Other non-project alternatives considered but not carried forward to environmental review: *Response:*
 - Must consider all viable approaches for water storage description of early actions and alternatives;
 - Yes, include all the projects listed as well as Black Rock.

12-5

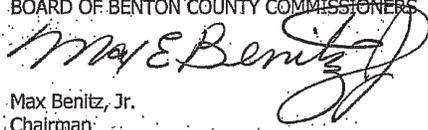
Chapter 6.0 policy discussion

- Aggressively pursue storage options. The Department of Ecology must be tasked to develop long-term storage options as we have no other solution to the needs of all; agriculture, economic sustainability and biological support of fish. The 2007 Legislature should readdress the 13 Policy issues in Section II of the DPEIS.

Thank you for your time and attention to the above concerns we hope could be addressed by the Department of Ecology. We would be more than willing to offer our assistance to any of the above-mentioned matters.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF BENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Max Benitz, Jr.
Chairman

cc: Commissioners
VJ Meadows, Sustainable Dev. Coordinator
Adam Fyall, Community Dev. Coordinator

Comment Letter No. 12 – Benton County Board of County Commissioners

- 12-1. Section 6.2.1 has been revised in the Final EIS to reflect the broader legislative direction to pursue “new water supplies,” not only storage.
- 12-2. See the response to Comment 9-8.
- 12-3. See the response to Comment 9-12.
- 12-4. See the response to Comments 9-14, 9-9-15, and 9-19. The No Action Alternative is included as required by the State Environmental Policy Act. It is used primarily as a baseline comparison for the action alternatives. The Black Rock project is being evaluated under a separate process. See Section 2.2.2.1, New Large Storage Facilities.
- 12-5. Comment noted.

David McClure
Klickitat County
davem@co.klickitat.wa.us

13-1 Section S.2.1 It states in the 2nd paragraph that VARs allow water users to enter into agreements with Ecology to exchange a package of conservation projects for new water rights or water right transfers. However the statute (RCW 90.90.130) does not require VARs to include conservation projects. The provisions of RCW 90.90.130(2) may be met by implementing conservation projects or potentially other means such as developing water storage projects.

13-2 The statute does not limit the VARs to agreements between Ecology and water users. For example Ecology could enter into a VAR with a watershed management partnership or lead agency for watershed planning. A VAR could be a mechanism for implementing obligations agreed to under RCW 90.82.130(3).

13-3 Section 2.1.2.1 Watershed planning under chapter 90.82 RCW is underway in many the water resource inventory areas (WRIAs) comprising the portion of the Columbia basin that is within the State of Washington. The EIS should note the role that an approved watershed plan has under RCW 90.82.130(4); i.e. Ecology shall use the plan as the framework for water resource management decisions and shall rely upon the watershed plan as a primary consideration in determining the public interest related to water resource decisions within the WRIA. This includes decisions pertaining to water storage within the WRIA.

13-4 Modification of existing storage facilities is discussed briefly on page 2-8. However new storage facility development and allocation of waters from new storage facilities are treated differently in the statute than modification or alteration of the operation of existing storage facilities. Two thirds of the funding in the Account is dedicated for projects supporting development of new storage facilities and the water from new storage facilities is apportioned by the statute 1/3 for instream and 2/3 for out-of-stream uses. Projects pertaining to modification or alteration of the operation of existing storage facilities compete for the remaining 1/3 of the funding in the Account with conservation and other actions designed to provide access to new water. New water resulting the modification or alteration of the operation of existing storage facilities is not apportioned by the statute 1/3 for instream and 2/3 for out-of-stream uses. Modification or alteration of the operation of existing storage facilities should be addressed separately from new storage facilities perhaps in section 2.2.

13-5 Section 2.1.2.2 Again the EIS should note the role that an approved watershed plan has under RCW 90.82.130(4); i.e. Ecology shall use the plan as the framework for water resource management decisions and shall rely upon the watershed plan as a primary consideration in determining the public interest related to water resource decisions within the WRIA. This includes decisions

13-5 [pertaining to water conservation programs and water trust programs within the WRIA.

13-6 [Conservation projects must provide access to new water supplies.

13-7 [Agree conservation projects can be funded anywhere within the State of Washington portion of the Columbia River basin.

13-8 [Section 2.1.2.3 RCW 90.90.030 enables Ecology to enter into VARS for the purpose of providing new water for out-of-stream use streamlining the application process and protecting instream flows. The statute does not require a package of conservation projects. The provisions of RCW 90.90.130(2) may be met by conservation projects or potentially other means such as developing water storage projects.

It states in the 2nd paragraph that VARs allow water users to enter into agreements with Ecology to exchange a package of conservation projects for new water rights or water right transfers. However the statute (RCW 90.90.130) does not require VARs to include conservation projects.

13-9 [Agree VARs can be proposed anywhere within the State of Washington portion of the Columbia River basin.

13-10 [Is the public interest test applicable to both surface water and ground water right permit decisions?

13-11 [Section 2.1.2.4 This subsection informs that Ecology worked with consultants the State Conservation Commission and local conservation districts and Washington State University to develop the inventory and demand forecast. However there is no discussion of how Ecology must worked with interested county legislative authorities watershed planning groups and other parties specifically identified in RCW 90.90.040(1).

13-12 [Section 2.2 Section 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 address conservation and discuss how conservation is one of the purposes for which one third of the funds from the account may be spent. There is no discussion of use of this portion of the funds for improvement or alteration of existing storage facilities or for other actions designed to provide access to new water supplies.

13-13 [Section 2.2.1 Ecology should aggressively pursue storage options in order to implement the statute in a manner consistent with the direction the legislature's provided Ecology in RCW 90.90.005(2).

13-14 [Section 2.2 This section should address modification or alteration of the operation of existing storage facilities.

Section 2.2.2 RCW90.90.010(4) states: Net water savings achieved through conservation measures funded by the account shall be placed in trust in proportion to the state funding provided to implement the project. The statute does not direct that the net water savings be placed in the State Trust Water Rights Program. The net water savings could be placed in a trust established and operated pursuant to a watershed management plan.

There is no indication in the statute that benefits of net water savings to instream flows should enter into determining net water savings. Net water savings from a project could include both consumptive and non-consumptive components. For example an industrial user might change production processes resulting in a reduction in both consumptive and non-consumptive water use. Both the consumptive and non-consumptive components must go into trust in proportion to the state funding provided to implement the process change and both must be available to fulfill the purposes of the trust. Where trust water is used to mitigate for out of stream uses those uses will likely have consumptive and non-consumptive components that could be satisfied by the trust.

Section 2.2.3 As stated in the comment on section 2.2.2 the statute does not direct that net water savings go into the State Trust Water Right Program. Where the conservation occurs within a WRIA subject to a watershed management plan approved under chapter 90.82 RCW Ecology should use the watershed plan as the framework for allocating net water savings among instream and out of stream purposes. In absence of an applicable watershed plan net water savings should be used to mitigate for permits authorizing out-of-stream beneficial uses.

Section 2.2.4 In the first sentence of the first paragraph complete the sentence quoted from RCW 90.90.010(2)(a) because it is potentially significant that with specific legislative authority expenditures from the account can be made for acquisitions and transfers from one WRIA to another.

Section 2.2.6 Aggressively pursue VARs. As an example a watershed plan could include a VAR as a strategy to meet instream and out of stream water demand.

Section 2.2.8 Water withdrawal should be permitted to occur downstream of or anywhere in the same pool where the net water savings through conservation or water made available by action(s) to prevent negative impact on mainstem instream flows occur including in tributaries. Avoidance of negative impact to Columbia or Snake river mainstem instream flows during the specified months might be achieved through means other than conservation.

Section 2.2.9 Where in the statute does it limit VARs to enabling withdrawals/diversions from the mainstem of the Columbia River or Snake River only? The statute only says that VARs shall ensure water rights issued from the

13-19

Columbia River mainstem or lower Snake River mainstem not have a negative impact of the Columbia River mainstem or lower Snake River mainstem instream flows.

11/20/2006 11:59:00 PM

Comment Letter No. 13 – Klickitat County

- 13-1. Comment noted. Section 2.1.2.3 has been modified accordingly.
- 13-2. Comment noted. Parties with legal authority to make commitments on behalf of water users and instream resource interests would be eligible to enter into a VRA.
- 13-3. Ecology acknowledges the role that watershed planning plays in water management. Watershed planning is discussed in Section 3.1.1 of the EIS. Water storage projects proposed as part of watershed planning were included in the inventory and demand forecast described in Section 2.1.2.6 of the Final EIS.
- 13-4. Comment noted. The project description in Chapter 2 is organized by type of project, not by the funding allocations. Since similar types of facilities are likely to create similar impacts and require comparable mitigation measures, for purposes of the EIS, this method of organization makes the most sense. It should be noted that creating new storage by modifying an existing reservoir (for example, raising an existing impoundment) would be eligible for funding under the storage portion of the account and would be subject to the one-third/two thirds instream and out-of-stream allocation provisions.
- 13-5. See the response to Comment 13-3.
- 13-6. Consumptive savings obtained through conservation would provide access to new water supplies; however, that is not necessarily the case with non-consumptive savings.
- 13-7. Comment noted.
- 13-8. See the responses to Comments 13-1 and 13-2.
- 13-9. Comment noted.
- 13-10. The public interest test is applicable to both surface and ground water right permit decisions.
- 13-11. The reference in Section 2.1.2.4 (now renumbered as 2.1.2.5) is to the parties that actually participated directly in the preparation of the report, not to parties that were contacted or consulted with during report preparation.
- 13-12. Sections 2.2.2 and Section 2.2.3 address conservation projects. However, for those eligible storage proposals that would not qualify to receive funding through the two-thirds of the Columbia River Basin Water Supply Development Account, the provisions of these sections would apply.
- 13-13. Comment noted.
- 13-14. Modification of existing storage facilities is discussed in Section 2.1.2.1 as part of the storage component of the Management Program.
- 13-15. The portion of Section 2.2.2 referred to in this comment is one of the alternative policy approaches under consideration in the Draft EIS, but is not a policy statement. The question

revolves around how conservation savings obtained through use of the Columbia River Basin Water Supply Development Account should be allocated between instream and out-of-stream use. It would not apply to water put in trust by a private party, or water savings procured through funds other than the Account.

13-16. The text in the Final EIS has been revised.

13-17. Comment noted. See the response to Comment 9-12.

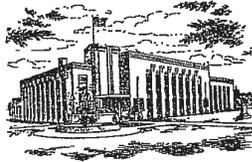
13-18. See the response to Comment 9-14.

13-19. The legislation does not preclude consideration of a VRA that would provide tributary benefits as well as mainstem benefits.

Tony Delgado
District No. 1

Merrill J. Ott
District No. 2

Malcolm Friedman
District No. 3



Stevens County Commissioners
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Polly Coleman
Clerk of the Board

Nettle Winders
Assistant Clerk



November 20, 2006

Derek I. Sandison, Regional Director
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Washington State Department of Ecology
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Yakima, WA 98902

Subject: Comments on Draft EIS, Columbia River Water Management Program

The following comments are offered for the record, regarding the programmatic EIS on the Columbia River Water Management Program.

Page S-3 S.2.2.1 Lake Roosevelt Drawdown

14-1

Final paragraph dealing with the diversion of Lake Roosevelt waters implies that the only tribe with interest on Lake Roosevelt is the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation. The Spokane Tribe of Indians is also a party with interests who must be included.

Page 2-23 Pgph. 2.5.1 Lake Roosevelt Drawdown

14-2

First paragraph. No mention made of the role the Spokane Tribe of Indians has regarding the Lake Roosevelt drawdown. The Spokane Tribe is intergral to the various management programs on Lake Roosevelt, yet no mention is made within this document as to the role the tribe will play with DOE in drawdown negotiations.

Page 3-14 Pgph 3.3.5 Air Quality in the Lake Roosevelt Area

14-3

Paragraph is characterized with some invective use of adjectives and adverbs describing the discharge of materials into the Columbia River by the smelter in Trail, B.C. Curiously, the Department of Ecology is currently engaged in a legal battle with the smelter, and this type of language does little to show objectivity by the Department. Compare this paragraph with the second paragraph under the Water Quality section of paragraph 3.4.2.1 where more objective phraseology is used, and construction is more relevant to the issues being presently investigated.

Page 3-52 Pgph. 3.7.1.3. Anadromous Salmonid Fishes, Steelhead Trout, 2nd pgph

14-4

Typo – second line of the paragraph – “form” should be “from”.

Page 5.11 Pgph 5.1.1.11 Impacts at Lake Roosevelt for Non-Drought and Drought Year Withdrawals – Recreation and Scenic Resources and Aesthetics

14-5

The supposition is that the Biological Opinion will not affect lake levels, and the eventuality remains that Judge Redden may create some sort of flow pattern that could adversely affect Lake Roosevelt. In combination with the proposed drawdown, then, the recreational sites could be adversely affected, especially in the upper reaches of Lake Roosevelt, or those sites which are exposed with the drawdowns first.

The problem is simply the uncertainty of the judicial opinion, and what options are available should an adverse ruling cause heavy impacts upon the recreational, scenic and aesthetical values in the Lake Roosevelt region. Impacts could be strongly negative.

Considerations for socio-economic impacts could also be affected by the pending litigation outcome. In each and every category of consideration, effort should be made to address the potential additional effects the biological opinion may have upon the whole scheme.

Page 6-1 Pgph 6.1 Policy Discussion

14-6

Throughout this chapter, it is apparent that gaps exist in how the department intends to manage water in concert with the various federal agencies' cooperation. Throughout the EIS, little discussion is given to how the department and the agencies will mitigate conflicts in policies controlling flow and use of water in the Columbia River System. I could not help but sense a lack of vision and insight by the department as to the overall scheme of operations in the implementation of the Columbia River Management Program. For many years, the Lake Roosevelt 5-Party Agreement has been in effect which brings together the various parties in regular meetings to discuss operations of the reservoir behind the Grand Coulee Dam. The EIS makes no mention of the various agreements in existence, yet brings to the reader's attention many of the same facets that the federal river operations currently work with.

14-7 [Unless a person is familiar with the federal operation, this EIS gives little indication of the immensity of the federal operations encompassing both the Columbia Basin Project and the entire Columbia River Project. Perhaps the EIS must be contained to its specific elements, however, the essence of this program is tied to cooperation and collaboration.

14-8 [The fatal flaw that awaits is the inability of the department to have successfully negotiated with the Spokane Tribe of Indians. The Spokane Tribe of Indians has not been treated equally with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. The agreement with the Colville's has caused great concern with not only the Spokane Tribe, but also the surrounding counties which abut Lake Roosevelt. Much remains to be done to correct this error. I would encourage the state and the Spokane Tribe to engage in serious negotiations as soon as possible. Much work is yet to be done, before the Columbia River Management Program can become a reality.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Merrill J. Ott

Stevens County Commissioner

Member, Columbia River Policy Advisory Group

Chairman, Columbia River Commissioner's Advisory Group

Comment Letter No. 14 – Stevens County Commissioners

- 14-1. Additional information on the participation and interest of the Spokane Tribe has been added to the Final EIS text.
- 14-2. See the response to Comment 14-1. Ecology acknowledges that the Spokane Tribe is an important participant in discussions relating to the Lake Roosevelt drawdown.
- 14-3. The paragraph in Section 3.3.5 has been revised in the Final EIS to be more consistent with the Water Quality section.
- 14-4. The typographical error has been corrected.
- 14-5. The outcome of the Biological Opinion will be incorporated into Ecology's evaluation at the time it is published. It would be speculative to attempt to address the possible outcomes of this judicial opinion at this time. WAC 197-11-060(4)(a) states that "SEPA's procedural provisions require the consideration of 'environmental' impacts...with attention to impacts that are likely, not merely speculative."
- 14-6. A new Section 3.1.3 has been added to the Final EIS to clarify the complex management of the Columbia River. Information has been added to Section 3.9.4.1 regarding the Lake Roosevelt 5-Party Agreement. See also the response to Comment 7-6.
- 14-7. Federal operation of the Columbia River system is addressed in Section 3.1.1. Additional information has been added to that section to further clarify the complexity of river operations.
- 14-8. Additional information on the role of the Spokane Tribe in the Management Program has been provided throughout the document. Ecology will continue to coordinate with the Spokane Tribe and other interested parties as the Supplemental EIS on the Lake Roosevelt drawdowns is developed.

Kristi Scherger
WW Cty Watershed Ping
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On behalf of the Walla Walla County Watershed Planning Department I have reviewed the Draft Programmatic EIS for the Columbia River Water Management Program.

Water availability is a very important issue for many communities and businesses in the Walla Walla valley. Any decisions regarding water diversions in the Columbia River basin will create impacts.

The CRWMP Draft EIS cites two areas as examples within the Walla Walla basin which are currently underway and are compliant with Walla Walla Watershed Plan.

Pump Exchange Funding has been made to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation to support a Feasibility Study of a Pump Exchange Project.

Aquifer Storage

The City of Walla Walla evaluation of aquifer storage and recover (ASR)

Additional information referenced within the CRWMP Draft EIS regarding the Walla Walla valley is used only as a reference to sources of information.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment at this important stage of the Program.

11/15/2006 10:29:00 AM

Comment Letter No. 15 – Walla Walla County

15-1. Comment noted.

Wellner, Joanne (ECY)

From: Dan Curry [DCurry@cityofwenatchee.com]
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2006 5:01 PM
To: Sandison, Derek
Subject: Comments to Columbia River Initiative

November 20, 2006

Derek Sandison
WA State Department of Ecology
15 W. Yakima Ave, Suite 200
Yakima, WA 98902-3452

Dear Mr. Sandison,

The City of Wenatchee has the following comments on the thirteen policy choices outlined in the draft Programmatic EIS for the Columbia River Water Resource Management Program.

1. **Selecting Storage Projects**
The City supports Alternative #1 in which Ecology reviews projects only as proposed by applicants.
2. **Defining Net Water Savings from Conservation**
Alternative #2 appears to allow more flexibility and the potential for including more information in determining the benefit of net water savings from conservation.
3. **Funding Criteria for Conservation Projects**
Alternative #3 is the preferred approach. This alternative is a good balance between enhancing instream flows and providing more out-of-stream allocations, which could overall encourage more diverse groups to pursue conservation projects.
4. **Defining "Acquisition" and "Transfer"**
The City recommends that Ecology not create new definitions for acquisition and transfer and simply state that no money will be expended on non-storage projects.
5. **Conditioning Water Rights on Instream Flows**
The City supports Alternative #2 to work towards developing a way of recognizing the benefit of shifting demand from the low-flow months to the high-flow months. This approach is consistent with the Program's emphasis on storage projects.
6. **Initiating Voluntary Regional Agreements**
The City of Wenatchee supports Alternative #1 in which Ecology would review VRAs only as proposed by the applicant.
7. **Processing Voluntary Regional Agreements**
Alternative #1 is the preferred alternative.
8. **Defining "No Negative Impact" to Instream Flows of the Columbia/Snake Rivers**
The City proposes that Ecology not restrict where the net reduction in stream flow is measured.
9. **Defining the Main Channel and One-Mile Zone**
Alternative #2 is the recommended alternative. The Columbia River watershed is of course much larger than the main channel and the area within one-mile of the river, the City supports including as much of the watershed as reasonably possible in the Columbia River Water Resource Management Program.
10. **Coordinating VRA Mitigation and Processing New Water Rights**
Alternative #1 appears to be the simplest option administratively.

11/27/2006

11. **Coordinating VRA and Non-VRA Processing**
The City recommends Alternative #3.

16-1 12. **Funding Projects Associated with a VRA**
VRAs may not be applicable in all situations, so the City supports Alternative #1. How conservation project money is spent should not be limited by whether applicants are part of a VRA or not.

13. **Inclusion of Exempt Wells in Water Use Inventory**
Exempt wells should be included in the water use inventory as stated in Alternative #2. Information about exempt wells is essential to developing a comprehensive inventory and water balance.

16-2 In addition, the City of Wenatchee would like to comment on how Ecology reviews "pump exchange" projects or projects that move water upstream for use. While the benefits of these projects to instream flow might be clear, the City is concerned that water quality issues should also be carefully considered. For example pumping water up a tributary for domestic use may help increase instream flow and provide domestic water for growth. However, if water quality issues exist that are associated with ground water or septic systems, increased availability of domestic water and population density could negatively impact water quality and outweigh the benefits to instream flow.

Thank you for considering the City of Wenatchee's comments.

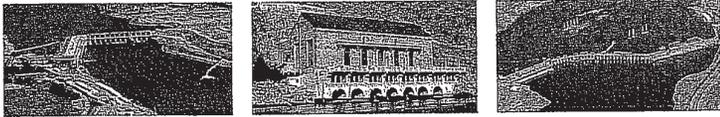
Sincerely,
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Dan Curry
Deputy Public Works Director

11/27/2006

Comment Letter No. 16 – City of Wenatchee

- 16-1. Your comments regarding the policy alternatives are noted. Ecology has worked with a Policy Advisory Group and others to revise the policy alternatives. Please see the revised Chapter 6 in the Final EIS.
- 16-2. Water quality impacts of pump exchange projects, including potential indirect impacts associated with growth and/or other types of development, will be evaluated when those projects undergo project level environmental review.



PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 1 of CHELAN COUNTY
 P.O. Box 1231, Wenatchee, WA 98807-1231 • 327 N. Wenatchee Ave., Wenatchee, WA 98801
 (509) 663-8121 • Toll free 1-888-663-8121 • www.chelanpud.org

November 20, 2006



Derek Sandison
 Department of Ecology CRO
 15 W. Yakima Ave., Suite 200
 Yakima, WA 98902-3452

Re: Columbia River Draft EIS Comments

Dear Mr. Sandison

Public Utility District No.1 of Chelan County (Chelan) would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Columbia River Draft EIS. Chelan would also like to recognize the work Ecology has put into this very complex subject of balancing multiple needs with a finite source. Chelan has two brief but interrelated comments regarding the proposed drawdown of Lake Roosevelt and one comment regarding municipal water supply.

17-1

The first comment relates to the timing of refill for the additional Lake Roosevelt water withdrawals. If additional water is to be withdrawn, this water will have to be replaced at some point prior to the next season. Due to the low flows and high loads during the winter months of December-February, Chelan would like to impress on Ecology the importance of not using this time period to replace the water withdrawn when implementing this option.

17-2

The second comment relates to compensation impacts relating to the additional drawdown of Lake Roosevelt. Chelan recognizes the additional drawdown would be within the normal operation range of Lake Roosevelt. However, the additional drawdown would be water released above and beyond the amount normally released in a given water year, creating a potential impact. It has been difficult for Chelan to analyze the impacts of this operation on its ability to produce power. This is due to the fact that the timing of the withdrawal and the subsequent refill has a large effect on the magnitude of impact and the timing of the refill component has not been identified. With this being said, Chelan would like Ecology to consider compensation for impacts related to lost power opportunities or costs incurred to purchase power if impacts are identified when more detailed information is available. The compensation would be for the additional costs or loss power opportunities caused by the change in flows when compared to the normal operations of a given water year.

17-3

The final comment is made as a point of clarification regarding Section 3.13.1. This section identifies the East Wenatchee Municipal Water supply separately from the Greater Wenatchee Regional Water Supply. The municipal supply of water for the City of Wenatchee, East Wenatchee Water District, and Chelan County PUD is provided by a Regional Water System that is operated by the City of

COMMISSIONERS: Bob Boyd, Ann Congdon, Norm Gutzwiller, Werner Janssen, Gary L. Montague GENERAL MANAGER: Richard Riazzi

Mr. Derek Sandison
 WA State Department of Ecology

17-3

Wenatchee. The three entities, listed above, purchase wholesale water from the Regional Water System. The need for future water rights will be driven in large part by growth and economic development within the service territories of these three entities. Current estimates indicate that the region will reach its water right capacity by 2020. Additional water rights will be needed to serve the region once these water rights are fully utilized.

Thank you for considering these comments as Ecology moves forward on this very complex but important regional issue. Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Tracy Yount
 Director, Environmental Affairs

Comment Letter No. 17 – PUD No. 1 of Chelan County

17-1. Comment noted. Additional information and analysis on the impacts from the amount and timing of additional drawdown will be provided in the Supplemental EIS that Ecology will be preparing on the Lake Roosevelt drawdown.

17-2. See response to comment 17-1.

17-3. Section 3.13.1 has been revised in the Final EIS.



November 16, 2006

Derek I. Sandison, Regional Director
 Central Regional Office
 Washington State Department of Ecology
 15 West Yakima Avenue, Suite 200
 Yakima, WA 98902

Re: Grant PUD Comments on Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Columbia River Water Management Program

Dear Mr. Sandison:

On behalf of the Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County (Grant PUD), I am writing to submit comments on the Draft EIS for the Columbia River Management Program. First off, we would like to express our appreciation to the Department of Ecology (Ecology) for their responsiveness related to implementation of the Columbia River Management Act including the timely completion of this EIS and formation of the Policy Advisory Group. I am pleased to serve as a member of this group and plan to offer my assistance for successful implementation of the principles of the Act. Grant PUD believes that its participation in this process is vital as we are directly affected by many of the measures of the Act. These comments are structured to provide assistance and suggest improvements to Ecology as you seek to finalize this EIS.

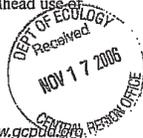
The following comments are divided into two primary areas. An initial section that focuses on our review of the analysis and accuracy of the EIS and a second section that focuses on the policy questions posed in Chapter 6. The following present areas relating directly to Grant PUD requiring modifications:

1. Page 3-25 provides a brief description of total dissolved gas related to spill at the seven mid-Columbia dams. It however, fails to mention that the spill creating elevated TDG levels is typically related directly to fish passage operations and occurs at not just the mid-Columbia dams but can occur at all mainstem Columbia River dams. In addition, Ecology has specific regulations providing standards allowing higher TDG levels during the fish passage season. This section should be revised to reflect these facts.

2. Page 3-55 provides a very cursory overview of the fish community of Crab Creek. This appears to ignore issues and controversy associated with the National Marine Fisheries Service designation of Crab Creek as critical habitat for steelhead listed under the ESA. In addition, the statement: "The intermittent sections of Crab Creek may have precluded the presence of anadromous fish species from accessing the upper reaches of the drainage" is very misleading. It is quite certain that the ephemeral nature of Crab Creek historically rendered as unsuitable for anadromous fish habitat. The more recent issue is the genetic source and verification, or lack thereof related to claims of listed steelhead use of Crab Creek. This section should properly identify these issues.

Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington

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Washington Department of Ecology
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3. Table 3-23 on pages 3-81 and 3-82 is not correctly described; the surface area of Priest Rapids Reservoir is 7,725 acres at normal maximum elevation of 488 ft. The surface area of Wanapum Reservoir is 14,680 acres at normal maximum elevation of 571.5 ft. The reference for the table gives Grant County PUD 2006 but there is no matching reference in Chapter 7. It appears that these statistics were taken from Exhibit E-6 of Grant PUD's Priest Rapids Project license application filed with FERC in 2003. The acreage estimates provided in this document were from the "Area of Potential Effect" not Project surface area as implied in Table 3-23. These citation errors and comparison errors should be corrected in the Final EIS.

The following comments are specifically directed to the Policy Discussion of Chapter 6. Grant PUD owns and operates the Wanapum and Priest Rapids Dams located on the mainstem Columbia River. Many of the proposed measures and alternatives being evaluated or considered under the Columbia River Management Act would have a direct impact on Grant PUD, our customers or on Columbia River water management that would impact a number of other entities. These comments are intended to provide some guidance to Ecology on its efforts to implement the Program in a way that proactively manages these potential issues and impacts. However, it is very important to recognize that the economic and other interests of Grant PUD and its customers will be affected in some manner by any of the choices or alternatives that Ecology implements. Since this is a Programmatic EIS, Grant PUD is offering general guidance to Ecology related to these Policy Issues.

The alternatives offered by the DEIS on selection of new storage projects is of particular interest to Grant PUD. This is an area of the DEIS that is overly general and in need of major expansion and improvement. To simply state only a passive option and to re-state what is now required by RCW 90.90 (i.e. aggressively pursue storage options) ignores the policy choices available to Ecology. One of the most important considerations for development of new storage projects will be the process that Ecology uses to develop or consider multiple project purposes. The Final EIS should be revised to include a site evaluation, public involvement and overall development process that would be followed by Ecology in its efforts to implement RCW 90.90. Grant PUD also would like to comment that RCW 90.90 strongly implies that Ecology is already required to take a leadership role on development of new storage projects. This would mean that the alternatives for this section should be structured around the question of "how" to develop new storage projects not whether to be passive or active.

The issue of calculating new water savings from conservation is an issue with high potential for conflict. It might be very desirable to attempt to use some scientific methodology related to instream flow benefits but in practical terms for most conservation projects, this will be nearly impossible for a multitude of issues related to scientific uncertainty, measurement error, assumptions of biological effectiveness, prioritization of habitats and life stages and a number of other unknown complications. For these reasons, a simple rule should be applied.

The funding criteria alternatives suffer from the same problem as described above. Under RCW 90.90 the one-third/two-thirds approach is required by law. The Policy Advisory Group has initiated a process that could result in project funding criteria and Ecology should take these recommendations under advisement.

Ecology should waive the instream flow rule and define the process used for evaluating the situation where overriding considerations of public interest would benefit from increase flexibility. This would enable public input into this rule-making process and eliminate the potential for politics or other considerations related to a concentration of decision-making authority on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Ecology.

Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington

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18-9 [The Department of Ecology should follow the literal interpretation of the law and not include exempt wells in the information system. It will be a monumental task to get a complete and accurate information system related to water rights and certificates of the Columbia River. Taking an expansive view of the requirement will only complicate the inventory effort and result in concern about future regulation of exempt wells.

18-10 [Grant PUD works closely with the Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District and the East-Columbia Basin Irrigation District on many of the issues in this Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and in addition to our comments, we support their position and comments as well.

18-11 [The Draft EIS has recurring general shortcoming in the Policy Discussion because it repeatedly describes alternatives contrary to the Columbia River Management Act. In short, these don't appear to be viable alternatives; instead Ecology should focus on a more thorough analysis of alternatives that are consistent with the intent of RCW 90.90. This would greatly improve the ability of the Final Programmatic EIS to provide guidance related to implementation of the Columbia River Management Act.

18-12 [Grant PUD appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft EIS and has been impressed with Ecology's responsiveness and commitment to successfully implementing the Columbia River Management Act. We will continue to actively participate with the Policy Advisory Group and offer our advice and assistance as these efforts continue. Please call me at 509-750-8684 if you have questions about these comments.

Sincerely,



Joe Lukas
Assistant General Manager

Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington

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Comment Letter No. 18 – Grant County PUD

- 18-1. Comment noted.
- 18-2. Section 3.4.2 was revised to reflect the fact that elevated TDG occurs during spill at all of the Columbia mainstem dams and that Ecology has specific regulations that allow a higher standard for TDG during spill for the fish passage season.
- 18-3. Section 3.7.1.4 has been revised to include these issues.
- 18-4. Text and references in Table 3-23 have been updated to reflect this comment.
- 18-5. See the response to Comment 12-1.
- 18-6. See the response to Comment 9-8.
- 18-7. See the response to Comment 9-9.
- 18-8. See the response to Comment 9-11.
- 18-9. See the response to Comment 9-19.
- 18-10. Comment noted.
- 18-11. Ecology has worked with the Columbia River Policy Advisory Group and others to revise the Policy Alternatives. See the revised Chapters 2 and 6 in the Final EIS.
- 18-12. Comment noted.

EAST COLUMBIA BASIN IRRIGATION DISTRICT55 North 8th
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November 20, 2006



Mr. Derek I. Sandison, Regional Director
Central Regional Office
Washington State Department of Ecology 15 West Yakima Avenue, Suite 200
Yakima, WA 98902

RE: ECBID Comments on Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement For
the Columbia River Water Management Program dated October 5, 2006 – Ecology
Publication #06-11-030

Dear Mr. Sandison:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the referenced document. The following
comments are organized in the order in which they appear in the draft PEIS.

19-1 Page S-8, S.3.2.1 This section contains a bulleted statement stating there is a potential
for the expansion of irrigated agriculture and additional decline of shrub-steppe habitat.
This statement is at best an exaggeration and mostly inaccurate. Also I didn't find the
supporting or source discussion in the main body of the draft PEIS. The Columbia Basin
Project CRI MOU and the Odessa Subarea Special Study both target the replacement of
the ground water irrigation with Columbia Basin Project surface water. Both have text
acknowledging there may be some incidental conversion of dryland agriculture to
irrigated agriculture using Columbia Basin Project surface water. "Incidental" is not
quantified and is not known but is likely to be very minor relative to the amount of ground
water replacement. Possible scenarios resulting in the new irrigation of dryland ag lands
could be the avoidance of surrounding relatively small areas of dryland ag with irrigated
land thus compromising the quality of the dryland ag, including some dryland ag in a
specific service area to improve infrastructure economics or as a consideration in the
acquisition of rights-of-way for new infrastructure. The portion of the Odessa Subarea
within the Columbia Basin Project is almost entirely in dryland ag, irrigated ag, or Crop
Rotation Program. There is very little, if any, shrub-steppe remaining on lands suitable
for cultivation. Given the demand for ground water replacement water and for water to
irrigate dryland ag it is very far fetched to think there will be any loss of shrub-steppe
with the possible exception of minor area needed for rights-of way for new
infrastructure.

19-2 Page 2-15, 2.2.3 and 6.2.2 Categorizing the funding of individual projects in the bright
line manner described may exclude beneficial projects having only an out-of-stream or
only an instream flow benefit. Many applicants may not have the ability to provide both
but can provide one or the other. Ecology should develop a methodology to provide for
the projects to provide the best overall combination of benefits.

19-3 Page 2-21, 2.2.13 and also 6.2.12 Is there enough information presently available about
exempt wells to make it practical to include information about them? If more information
is needed will that create delay or controversy? The exempt well topics tend to raise
emotion with some stakeholder groups.

Mr. Derek I. Sandison, Regional Director
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19-4 Page 2-22, 2.4.1 The conservation only approach cannot solve the entire water supply
problem or even come close. 49 conservation projects by this District over an 18 year
period yielded about 16,000 acre feet in annual water savings. When return flow effects
were accounted for the net savings reduced to just over 10,000 acre feet per year.
These are significant amounts and these types of efforts should continue and even
be-intensified. But this is only a drop-in-the bucket compared to the need.

19-5 Page 2-24, 2.5.1 Acknowledge that the 30,000 acre feet applied for by Reclamation is
for a secondary permit from an existing storage certificate. This is acknowledged in
Chapter 5 but a corresponding statement here would be useful for readers who don't
read the entire report.

19-6 Page 2-29, 2.5.2 and Pages 5.2.6 to 28, 5.2.1.3 Mention that a supplemental feed route
will benefit the availability of ground water replacement water for Odessa Subarea by
increasing operational flexibility for the East Low Canal.

19-7 Page 3-14, 3.3.5 Is Lake Roosevelt known to be "heavily" contaminated or just
contaminated? Consider deleting the adverb.

19-8 Page 3-33 to 34, 3.4.2.2 and Pages 5-26 to 28, 5.2.1.3 Consider mentioning that Moses
Lake is 303 (d) listed for phosphorous and describe Ecology's ground water and surface
water technical studies for the cancelled TMDL. One or both of those studies describe
the water quality benefit to Moses Lake of present feed to Potholes Reservoir and
speculate that feeding through the entire summer could offer further water quality
improvements. Both the W20 and Crab Creek alternatives have the potential to offer
such improvements. The W20 alternative has the disadvantage of not being available
through the entire summer. The Crab Creek alternative has a possible disadvantage of
introducing additional phosphorous as it migrates through the Adrian Sink from Crab
Creek to Rocky Ford Creek. Both have the advantage of increasing water circulation
and flushing of phosphorous in the main arm of the lake below the mouth of Rocky Ford
Creek.

19-9 Pages 4-34 to 35, 4.1.2.3 The conservation section appears to lack much discussion
about the possible impacts to return flows being relied upon by down gradient water
users as a source of supply. This is discussed a little in the water rights impacts section,
4.1.2.5, but is not referenced regarding physical impacts.

19-10 Pages 5-1 to 24, 5.1 This sub chapter is well written and comprehensive.

19-11 Pages 5-27, 5.2.1.3 In the first full paragraph should the reference to Rocky Coulee
Creek be Rocky Ford Creek?

Mr. Derek I. Sandison, Regional Director
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19-12 [Pages 6-1 to 2.6.2 Doesn't the mandate of the Columbia River Management Act, ESSHB2860, require the "Aggressively pursue storage option"? That doesn't preclude Ecology from pursuing storage proposals by various applicants but Ecology should maintain its now established initiative regarding new storage.

19-13 [Pages 6-2 to 4.6.2.1 As a methodology also consider:
"Phase I Seepage Analyses East Columbia Basin Irrigation District Water Conservation Projects": by Montgomery Water Group, Inc. August 2, 2004 and
"Phase II Seepage Analyses East Columbia Basin Irrigation District Water Conservation Projects" by Montgomery Water Group, Inc. October 6, 2004.

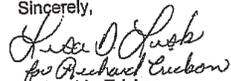
Ecology's Keith Stoffel and Lynn Coleman were involved in reviewing and editing both reports.

19-14 [Pages 6-16 to 17.6.2.8 Including backwater areas as described should be opted for unless it is likely to delay things or incite controversy.

19-15 [Lower Crab Creek We support the comments offered by Joe Lukas, Assistant General Manager of Grant County PUD, particularly the discussion about Lower Crab Creek.

Please contact the undersigned if there are questions.

Sincerely,


for Richard Erickson
Richard L. Erickson
Secretary-Manager

RLE:ll

cc: Joe Lukas, Grant Co. PUD
Darvin Fales, QCBID
Shannon Mc Daniel, SCBID
Bill Gray, USBR
Mike Schwisow, CBDL

Comment Letter No. 19 – East Columbia Basin Irrigation District

- 19-1. The purpose of a Programmatic EIS is to describe the range of potential impacts that might occur from a project. Although it is not expected that the early action items that you list will substantially expand irrigated agriculture, expansion is possible. In addition, the storage and conservation components of the Management Program may also expand irrigated agriculture. Therefore, it is appropriate to discuss the impacts associated with the potential expansion.
- 19-2. See the response to Comment 9-9.
- 19-3. Ecology has decided to include exempt wells in the inventory. Initially, the information will be limited to data that are available electronically and will be modified with future inventories as more data are available.
- 19-4. Comment noted. As stated in the EIS, the conservation only alternative was not carried forward by the Legislature.
- 19-5. The information has been added to the Final EIS text.
- 19-6. This information was added to Section 2.5.2 and Section 5.2.1.4 in the Final EIS.
- 19-7. The Final EIS text has been revised.
- 19-8. Moses Lake is not on the 2002/2004 303(d) list for phosphorus. An additional discussion on water quality based on the Moses Lake TMDL was added to Section 5.2.1.3.
- 19-9. Added a discussion of how conservation could impact return flows and how a decrease in return flows could affect downstream users to Section 4.1.2.3.
- 19-10. Comment noted.
- 19-11. The text in the Final EIS has been modified.
- 19-12. See the response to Comment 12-1.
- 19-13. See the response to Comment 9-8.
- 19-14. See the response to Comment 9-15.
- 19-15. Comment noted.



November 8, 2006

COLUMBIA RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT BRIEFING/CONSULTATION

Mr. Gerry O'Keefe, Columbia River Water Management Coordinator
 Mr. Derek Sandison, WADOE Central Regional Office Manager
 Mr. Tom Tebb, WADOE, CRO, Water Resources Program Manager
 Mr. Dan Haller, Technical Lead, Columbia River Water Management Program

Subjects: KID Comments on the Proposed Voluntary Regional Agreement, Programmatic EIS, and Funding Request for New Water Right Engineering; and Project Development per the Columbia River Account

Gentlemen:

As part of Ecology's consultation process, the KID offers formal comments on the Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association (CSRIA) and Ecology Voluntary Regional Agreement (VRA) for the development of new water rights under the Columbia River Water Management Program.

Our comments reflect the KID's needs and objectives to provide irrigation service to over 20,000 agricultural, residential, and commercial customers, and to meet the apparent demand needs of a growing Quad-Cities area. Irrigation water is an important asset supporting our economy and lifestyle, and it is our intent to sustain and enhance this asset through careful water resources management, and through the acquisition of a new Columbia River water right.

CSRIA-Ecology Voluntary Regional Agreement (VRA) and Related Actions:

The KID firmly supports the implementation of the CSRIA-Ecology VRA; this Agreement is an important implementation "tool" that brings into being the 2006 Columbia River Water management legislation. The Columbia River legislation directs the state and water users to embrace collaboratively new water efficiency and management approaches, and to protect current water users and secure new supplies for our communities.

The KID also offers the following recommendations:

- Ecology should move expediently forward with the consultation process for the VRA. The VRA should be signed by CSRIA and Ecology, as soon as statutory and procedural time lines allow.

12 West Kennewick Avenue, Kennewick, WA 99336

Phone: (509) 586-5111

Columbia River Water Management Briefing/Consultation
 November 8, 2006
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- The pending KID water right should be one of the initial water rights granted under the new VRA. The proposed water right is highly consistent with the VRA approach and the application of a new water management approach taking advantage of conservation and efficiency improvements, water transfers, and improvements to in-stream flows where measurable impacts can be obtained.
- Via the guidance offered by the draft VRA, Ecology and KID staff should pursue regular consultations throughout the next few months to evaluate technical, legal, and policy components surrounding the issuance of a new Columbia River water right for the KID.
- With the completion of the VRA consultation period, Ecology staff and KID representatives should review how the VRA may be used to accommodate some of the key features of the new KID water right, including:
 - Respect for the existing KID Conditional Final Order (CFO) under the current Yakima River Basin water adjudication; and providing pragmatic and workable efficiency standards for the diverse needs of the District.
 - An ability of KID to improve water efficiency objectives and provide "no negative impacts" to main stem Columbia River flows through internal recalibration of the District's existing water right—and used in conjunction with a new Columbia River water right.
 - An optimization of the water resources transfer under the new water right, exchanging Yakima River flows for Columbia River water.
 - Mitigation options for the new KID water right.
- With the completion of the VRA consultation period, Ecology and KID staff should jointly prepare a report of examination and record of decision for the issuance of the new KID water right permit.

The Ecology Programmatic EIS:

The KID generally supports the proposed action/proposal contained in the Programmatic EIS for implementing the new Columbia River Water Management legislation (and the preferred alternatives/proposed actions therein).

More specifically, we note the following:

- The KID supports the proposal/proposed action for implementing the Columbia River Water Management Program and the early implementation actions, including a Lake Roosevelt drawdown (re-regulation), a supplemental feed route for the Potholes Reservoir, and the Ecology-CSRIA Voluntary Regional Agreement (VRA).

Columbia River Water Management Briefing/Consultation
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- 20-3
- The KID supports most directly the VRA and its application for the issuance of a new Columbia River water right for the KID.
 - The EIS offers a satisfactory level of information to assess adequately the significant or non-significant impacts affecting the proposed actions. The technical information within the EIS is adequate to proceed with the VRA.
 - The coverage of the irrigated agriculture impacts within the EIS is more realistically served by the UW review—as it relates to incremental additions of irrigated acreage—than the American Rivers commentary. The UW work also was conducted with a technical review committee, while the American Rivers' work is simply advocacy politics. It would seem to be very self-serving for a group from Texas A&M to downplay new irrigated agriculture in Washington State, while their own state is a market competitor with Washington agricultural products. The real-world conditions in Columbia River agriculture—and within our service area—do not conform to that suggested by American Rivers.
 - We are pleased to see that the observations and recommendations of the NAS report are not overstated, as the report contains serious gaps in adequately evaluating available empirical data/studies pertinent to impacts related to new Columbia River water right withdrawals.

Funding Request Under the New Columbia River Basin Water Supply Development Account:

As previously conveyed to you, the KID would like to apply for Ecology/state co-funding, for its proposed Columbia River water right review, under the Columbia River Basin Water Supply Development Account. We believe that this work is eligible for co-funding under Section 7(2) of the 2006 Columbia River Water Management legislation, encouraging projects for water exchanges in the Yakima River.

20-4 The new (KID) Columbia River water right would allow for:

- Water transfers (change in withdrawal points, water exchanges, and some additional water withdrawals) from the Yakima River to the Columbia River.
- A significant amount of the existing KID service territory, currently served by Yakima River water, to be serviced by Columbia River water, and additional lands in the Red Mt.-W. Richland and South Ridge areas to be serviced with Yakima River water.
- New pump stations placed at Kiona (Yakima River) and at Edison St. (Columbia River); the overall approach is more, smaller withdrawals along the river corridors to service KID.

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- 20-4
- Significantly increase flow within the Prosser to mouth of Yakima River Reach (ranging from about 400 to 130 cfs), with a very small decrease to mainstem Columbia River flows (57 cfs as currently envisioned).

Specifically, co-funding is initially requested for:

- Appraisal and preconstruction engineering/economics and water right evaluation work for the Edison St. portion (direct water transfer between Yakima and Columbia Rivers) of the proposed project (Columbia River pump station and mainline).

With completion of the project review and the issuance of a new Columbia River water right, co-funding is requested for:

- The construction engineering and capital construction for the Edison St. portion of the proposed project (Columbia River pump station and mainline).

20-5 Per our recent discussions, we know that you are in the process of some internal clarification of what types of projects can be funded, and we are aware that the construction engineering and capital funding needs for the KID water right project would not be eligible for state funding until issuance of a water right. However, the project appraisal work now being conducted by the KID appears to be eligible for co-funding.

Please let us know how you wish to proceed with this funding request, and what types of information you require, in addition to the technical reports and information previously provided to you.

The KID management and staff are very pleased with our current interaction and consultations with the Ecology staff, and we are looking forward to soon acquiring a new Columbia River water right to better serve our customers and community.

With my appreciation for your efforts and consideration,



Victor N. Johnson
 District Manager

VVJ/mh

cc: WA State Sens. Erik Poulsen, Mike Hewitt, Jerome Delvin, and Jim Honeyford
 WA State Reps. Kelli Linville, Bruce Chandler, and Dan Newhouse
 Mr. Jay Manning, Director, WADOE
 Mr. Tom Mackay and Dr. Darryll Olsen, CSRIA

Comment Letter No. 20 – Kennewick Irrigation District

20-1. Comment noted.

20-2. Comment noted. The issues you cite will be considered as Ecology evaluates the CSRIA VRA.

20-3. Your comments on the Draft EIS are noted.

20-4. Comment noted. Your request for funding under the Management Program will be considered separately from the EIS.

20-5. See the response to your Comment 20-4.