

CONSOLIDATED  
DIKING IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT No. 3  
207 Fourth Avenue North  
KELSO, WASHINGTON 98626

April 25, 2000

Walla Walla District, Corps of Engineers  
Attn: Lower Snake River Study  
201 N Third Avenue  
Walla Walla, WA 99362

SUBJECT: **Salmon Recovery**

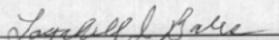
1, 2 | The Consolidated Diking Improvement District No. 3 encompasses an area of 1,360 acres along the banks of the Cowlitz and Coweeman Rivers protecting approximately 5,000 people including part of the City of Kelso, surrounding homes, industry and businesses. The District provides, operates and maintains 6 miles of levees and a very expensive, complicated system to discharge runoff of up to 224,000 gpm, including from outside the District, into these rivers. We have an assessed valuation of \$284,000,000 and the residents and businesses provide for these costs of approximately \$514,000 per year.

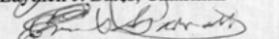
Breaching of existing dams is being discussed as a method of salmon recovery. Corps of Engineers information concludes that the storage capacity of the river systems result in flood levels of 5-6 feet lower at our location than if the dams were not in place. Because of the proximity to the lower Columbia River, these are backed up during high water in the Columbia River. In the recent 1996 flood we observed waters of the Coweeman River at 1 foot below the top of the levee in some areas. That was at least 2 feet above what the Corps of Engineers considers safe protection levels, or 2 feet in to the freeboard. Therefore, at some locations, we are already below a minimum protection level.

3, 4 | To raise the levees and modify all of our systems to accommodate higher levels would be extremely costly, including purchasing businesses, homes and relocating residents. A levee raise would require expanding the levee 9 feet landward for each foot of raise (riverward fill would be unacceptable). Discharge pumps would need to be upgraded to handle the increased head. Additionally, some of the levee is in proximity to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad.

We object to any breach of dams anywhere in the system, whether those dams are deemed significant or not. A radical, costly, questionable method of recovery such as breaching dams, however well intentioned, would be virtually irreversible.

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