

**Kachess Community Association ♦ Kachess Ridge Maintenance Association ♦ East Kachess Homeowner's Association ♦ Kittitas County Fire District #8 ♦ Friends of Lake Kachess ♦ Bumping Basin Conservationists ♦ Alpine Lakes Protection Society ♦ North Cascades Conservation Council ♦ Friends of Bumping Lake ♦ Alliance for the Wild Rockies ♦ Western Lands Project ♦ Western Watersheds Project ♦ Heart of America Northwest ♦ Wise Use Movement ♦ Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs ♦ Endangered Species Coalition ♦ Kootenai Environmental Alliance ♦ Friends of the Clearwater ♦ Seattle Audubon Society**

September 11, 2015

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member  
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

cc: Washington State US Congressional Delegation

RE: S. 1694 Yakima Plan and our meeting in Ellensburg

Dear Senator Cantwell,

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you on August 18th in Ellensburg to convey our concerns and opposition to the Yakima Workgroup and its 2012 Yakima Plan.

The Yakima Workgroup is not representative of interested parties (as witnessed by the over 30 groups and organizations that have opposed portions of the Yakima Plan) nor did the Workgroup allow adequate public participation in the development of the Yakima Plan. Workgroup Implementation Committee meetings remain closed to the public. The Workgroup did not allow public comment during Workgroup meetings prior to voting on elements of the Yakima Plan, relegating public comment to 5-10 minutes at the end of Workgroup meetings. The Bureau of Reclamation did not comply with the Federal Advisory Committee Act in establishing the Yakima Workgroup. This is in contrast to the 1994 Phase II Act, which established a FACA compliant Yakima River Basin Conservation Advisory Group. We request that the Yakima Workgroup be terminated with future basin conservation and water marketing issues and projects addressed through an expanded Yakima River Basin Conservation Advisory Group and strong public participation and objective third party review procedures.

The Final Programmatic EIS on the Yakima Plan also violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by failing to present a range of alternatives. Because the FPEIS did not

comply with NEPA and because the Yakima Workgroup was not FACA compliant, the 2012 Yakima Plan is also not valid. Therefore, we request that the 2012 Yakima Plan be dropped as a model for the future of the Yakima River Basin.

Instead of environmentally damaging and economically wasteful storage projects, such as K-K pipeline, Kachess pumping project, a new Bumping Lake dam, a Wymer dam, or Columbia River pumping projects such as Black Rock, Congress should focus on the following:

- Terminate the Yakima Workgroup and expand the existing Yakima River Basin Conservation Advisory Group
- Abandon the 2012 Yakima Plan
- Promote and fund cost-effective fish passage projects at existing Bureau of Reclamation Yakima Basin dams
- Promote and fund water conservation projects, water marketing, and innovative water-saving programs such as rotation fallow -- all with firm water saving targets
- Promote and fund an innovative and world-class demonstration water conservation project on the Wapato Irrigation Project
- Promote and fund aquifer recharge and re-regulation ponds

While we all recognize the challenges posed by climate change, we also believe that there is great potential for using the existing water supplies in the Yakima watershed more efficiently and productively. We urge you to do all you can to make sure the current supplies are used wisely before even considering expensive and environmentally harmful projects to increase water storage.

Thank you,

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