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,

Organizations:

Robert Angrisano, President
Kachess Community Association
2800 Thorndyke Ave W
Seattle, WA 98199

Nick Coluccio, President
Kachess Ridge Maintenance Association
PO Box 93
Easton, WA 98925
Gordon Brandt, President  
East Kachess Homeowner’s Association  
6100 Kachess Dam Road  
Easton, WA  98925

Jerry Watts, Commissioner  
Kittitas County Fire District #8  
PO Box 618  
Easton, WA 98925

Bill Campbell, Grant Learned Jr. & Jay Schwartz  
Friends of Lake Kachess  
P.O. Box 613  
Easton, WA 98925

Saundra McPhee, Chair  
Bumping Basin Conservationists  
450 Clover Springs Rd  
Naches, WA 98937

Karl Forsgaard, President  
Alpine Lakes Protection Society  
Box 27646  
Seattle, WA  98165

Tom Hammond, President  
North Cascades Conservation Council  
Box 95980  
Seattle, WA  98145

Chris Maykut, President  
Friends of Bumping Lake  
4000 Aurora Ave North, Suite 224  
Seattle, WA  98103

Michael Garrity, Executive Director  
Alliance for the Wild Rockies  
Box 505  
Helena, Montana  59624

Janine Blaeloch, Executive Director  
Western Lands Project  
1314 NE 43rd St.  
Seattle, Washington  98105
Ken Cole, Idaho Director  
Western Watersheds Project  
P.O. Box 2863  
Boise, ID 83701

Rep. Gerry Pollet, JD, Executive Director  
Heart of America Northwest  
444 Northeast Ravenna Boulevard, Suite 406  
Seattle, WA 98115

John de Yonge, President  
Wise Use Movement  
P.O. Box 17804  
Seattle, WA 98127

Joan Zuber, President  
Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs  
44731 South Elk Prairie Road  
Mollalla, OR 97038

Brock Evans, President  
Endangered Species Coalition  
PO Box 65195  
Washington DC 20035

Adrienne Cronebaugh, Executive Director  
Kootenai Environmental Alliance  
PO Box 1598  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816

Gary Macfarlane, Executive Director  
Friends of the Clearwater  
Box 9241  
Moscow, Idaho 83843

Linda Murtfeldt, Member  
Seattle Audubon Society  
8050 35th Ave NE  
Seattle, WA 98115