

**YAKIMA BASIN COALITION OPPOSES
CONGRESS ACTING ON YAKIMA PLAN**

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release - Seventeen national, regional, state, and local organizations have signed on to a letter to the U.S. Senate and House Conferees on S. 2012, (the Energy Policy Modernization Act, now the “North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act of 2016). The listed organizations wrote in strong opposition to adding S. 1694, Sen. Murray and Sen. Cantwell’s Yakima River Basin plan bill, S. 1694.

Concerns include:

* Opposition to authorizing the Bureau of Reclamation to enter into agreements with Yakima irrigators to build a new pumping project to withdraw water from Kachess Lake, and a conveyance (tunnel) between Keechelus Lake and Kachess Lake, as there are no completed studies or environmental impact statement for these projects.

* Opposition to authorization of continued funding of new storage projects, such as a new Bumping Lake dam or Wymer dam

* S. 1694 received only a single Senate Committee hearing, again, without project-level documentation, and where only project supporters were allowed to testify. The House version of the Energy Bill (H.R. 8) contains no Yakima water projects provisions, and H.R. 4686, **a companion bill to S. 1694, has never received a House Committee hearing.**

* The Yakima Plan itself identifies at least 170,000 acre feet of water conservation that the Yakima irrigation district have yet to carry out, and this does not include savings from water markets that could be implemented during a drought year. S. 1694, however, would continue to allow irrigation district water conservation to be voluntary.

“We strongly object to the presentation of the “Yakima Plan” as a “national model,” given that the individual dam projects in the Yakima Plan fail to have a positive benefit-cost ratio and would have devastating environmental impacts,” said Robert Angrisano, President, Kachess Community Association.

The organizations signing on include:

**Alliance for the Wild Rockies - Alpine Lakes Protection Society - East Kachess
Homeowner's Association - Endangered Species Coalition - Federation of Western
Outdoor Clubs - Friends of Bumping Lake - Friends of the Clearwater – Friends of the
Earth - Great Old Broads for Wilderness - Kachess Community Association – Kachess
Ridge Maintenance Association - Kittitas County Fire Protection District #8 – Kootenai
Environmental Alliance – Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society – North Cascades
Conservation Council – Western Watersheds Project - Wise Use Movement**