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TESTIMONY OF
OLYMPIC FOREST COALITION
BEFORE THE
HOUSE CAPITAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
ON HR 1414 - RELATED TO THE YAKIMA RIVER BASIN

Olympia, WA
February 22, 2013

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for allowing the Olympic Forest Coalition to testify on HB1414. Although OFCO's primary mission statement is concentrated on the Olympic Peninsula, any policies affecting the U.S. National Forest have the potential impact to affect the Olympic National Forest and Olympic Peninsula.

The Olympic Forest Coalition is opposed to this bill in its current form. SSB 5367 promotes and funds a controversial Yakima Plan that seeks to build expensive new dams in the Yakima Basin and alter recreational land use on the Okanogan-Wentchee National Forest to favor off-road vehicle use.

First, as taxpayers, we are concerned about the billions of dollars that the State of Washington is being asking to fund to carry out this controversial Yakima Plan, especially when the majority of the expenses involve two new dams, Bumping Lake and Wymer. Especially when the Bureau of Reclamation in 2008 concluded that the proposed Wymer project would have only 31 cents of benefits for every dollar spent.

Second, we are concerned about the bad precedents for recreational planning within the Yakima Plan. On January 4, 2012, the day after comments closed on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on the Yakima Plan, a new element was developed to add new National Recreation Areas to the Okanogan-Wentachee National Forest with over 40,000 acres proposed for off-road vehicle use.

As a forest protection organization, OFCO recognizes the importance of adhering to open and orderly planning processes for forests on our public lands. On March 11, 2012, the Olympic Forest Coalition joined with 25 other organizations and signed a letter to the Department of Ecology and Bureau of Reclamation strongly opposing this element of the Yakima Plan. Three other organizations sent similar letters of opposition. This

demonstrates that the proposal as it stands cannot correctly be characterized as a "consensus" plan.

Third, as an organization concerned about National Forest policy, we are concerned that the Department of Ecology and the Bureau of Reclamation are promoting a new Bumping Lake dam that would destroy ancient forests, endangered species habitat, and trails, all on the Okanogan-Wentachee National Forest.

In summary, the Olympic Forest Coalition believes this legislative package is significantly flawed. Thank you.

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