

Testimony against SB 5367 regarding Yakima Basin Integrated Plan

From: Susan Cyr, cabin owner, Bumping Lake

Jack Nelson was the first dam tender at Bumping Lake who for 35 years maintained the dam and insured that the proper amount of water flowed through the dam to grow the Yakima Valley. Jack built his wife Kitty a home that they named Normandie and they lived there together beside the lake until Kitty died in 1960. They had been married 50 years.

This is the same building where my family, for three generations now, have spent every spare moment living and loving up in the mountains. We've restored the old lodge upstairs and down and it is being listed on the National Registry of Historic Places this year.

The proposed dam at Bumping Lake would put Normandie Lodge under 20 feet of water.

I don't expect you to care very much about my story, but I am a 30 year taxpayer and property owner at Bumping Lake and I have come to know a lot about the area and its issues. I know that there is a tremendous amount of political capital behind the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan but I really need you to understand that it has been carried forward by specific interests in spite of fundamental flaws in the plan having to do with the construction of new dams. *Even if I did not own a cabin at Bumping Lake or knew nothing about the area, as a taxpayer I would be outraged at the Plan's price tag and priorities.*

As early as 1913 (only three years after the dam was completed!) and for the following 100 years, the Bureau of Reclamation has been considering enlarging Bumping Lake via a new dam. At least five serious proposals including legislation have come forth over the years and yet *every single time* the construction of a new dam at Bumping Lake has been dropped from consideration due to multiple problems including extremely low cost/benefit ratios that are well below federal funding thresholds. Time and again, and as recently as 2008, an enlarged lake has been determined to be not even practical because the watershed for the lake is insufficient to fill a larger lake even every third year and would therefore not be a reliable water source for any users.

The second major flaw with this plan is really the elephant in the room. This plan has been sold to environmental groups with the promise of increased fish passage and expanded fish habitat in the Yakima Basin. These are important goals but they have nothing to do with the construction of a new irrigation dams at Bumping Lake or Wymer. Most dams in the region do not have fish passage facilities and block fish. The new dams would not have fish passage facilities either. If we are to create a huge new program trapping and trucking fish over dams, we could start those programs and gain improvements in fish populations *right now* without building new dams that also don't have fish passage. Destroying critical fish habitat to create habitat makes absolutely no sense and is completely counterproductive.

We are in an era of dam deconstruction, having finally recognized the vast ecological damage caused by dams. We should be building dams as a last resort, not first, and only after every measure of water conservation, banking and marketing has been implemented. To date, water conservation remains voluntary for the basin. As a result the amount of water that could be saved each year is far in excess of the amount of water potentially available by a larger Bumping Lake.

The place that you are proposing destroying is a place full of history, of life, of names, of ancient trees, spawning streams, and endangered wildlife. There are trails, cabins, and campgrounds but as a whole the ecosystem is intact; this wild and remote place being for the most part untouched and unchanged since the last Ice Age. It is beautiful, unique and irreplaceable and it is not worth sacrificing for so little gain.

You may not care about the environmental effects of the plan, but as a legislator, you must care about the fiscal implications. *No lawmaker who is at all serious about fiscal responsibility could possibly vote for a government plan that is proposing to spend over 5 billion dollars (and counting) in part to build two massive new dams that have already been demonstrated to have a negative cost benefit ratio in addition to being in practice ineffective.* These same dams would flood hundreds of acres of critical habitat and destroy cabins that have been in families for generations and recreational areas that are used by thousands.

The dam portion of the plan (surface water storage) has been pushed forward for years by special interests that benefit few and are not relevant or practical. They are the most expensive part of the plan, the least beneficial, the most damaging and the most controversial and should be dropped completely from the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan.

Thank you for your consideration,
Sincerely,

Susan and Thomas Cyr
Normandie Cabin
Bumping Lake Tract #17