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TESTIMONY OF THE SIERRA CLUB
before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
On S-0544.4
Olympia, WA, January 26, 2015

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity for the Sierra Club to provide testimony on S-0544.4, an ambitious water infrastructure bill to be funded by a new state-wide property tax. The Sierra Club is opposed to this version of the bill, particularly the water supply component of the bill. We find ourselves in agreement with the Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association's Policy Memorandum, January 21, 2015, that the Yakima Basin plan, is "a costly and economically questionable conglomeration of actions," and that the Yakima Plan proponents, "may have inadequately defined a least-cost path and insufficiently explored their own financial development capability."

New Section 107 directs the joint legislative audit and review committee to work with the Department of Ecology to determine if appropriate and reliable benefit/cost methodologies exist. This is problematic because the Department of Ecology for the past five years has failed to do any benefit/cost analysis of individual Yakima Plan water storage projects and, from our perspective, has failed to give adequate weight to the Washington Water Resource Center's Benefit/Cost analysis requested by the Legislature in 2013. The WRC's analysis demonstrates that projects such as a new Bumping Lake Dam or Wymer Dam are not cost effective or a wise use of taxpayer money. Before any more state taxpayer money is spent on water projects, the Office of Financial Management should prepare a performance audit of the Office of Columbia River to review the water supply benefits of the \$200 million provided to the Office since 2006. We have attached a recent op-ed from the Spokesman-Review that addresses our concerns.

Thank you.