

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West



CCA-5700
2.2.4.23

NOV 06 2018

Mr. Mike Leita
Yakima County Commissioner
128 N. 2nd Street
Yakima, WA 98901

Subject: Response to Your Letter Dated September 24, 2018

Dear Commissioner Leita:

In response to your letter dated September 24, 2018 on the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan, the Bureau of Reclamation and Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) would like to express our appreciation of Yakima County's continued support of the Yakima River Basin Integrated Plan (Integrated Plan) and we appreciate you and the other Yakima County commissioners taking the time to meet with us on October 9, 2018 at Reclamation's Yakima Office.

We would like to clarify that while your referenced letter said that you only support funding the water supply and fish passage projects that are part of the Surface Water Storage and Reservoir Fish Passage Elements of the Integrated Plan respectively, you clarified at the meeting that Yakima County supports all seven elements of the Integrated Plan.

We understand from your letter and our meeting that Yakima County feels strongly that the proposed 2019-2021 biennial State Capital budget request further places water supply element of the Integrated Plan out-of-balance in comparison to other elements of the plan. We strongly disagree and would reference Department of Ecology's Office of Columbia River *2018 Cost Estimate and Financing Plan*¹ to the State Legislature that provides specific detail in how state, federal and private dollars have been invested during the Initial Development Phase of the Integrated Plan. We understand from our meeting that Yakima County will not oppose Ecology's full \$42 million 2019-2021 State Capital Budget request to further advance the implementation of the Integrated Plan.

The Initial Development Phase (IDP), as agreed to by the YRBWEP Work group, identified the Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant (KDRPP) and Keechelus Reservoir-to-Kachess Reservoir Conveyance projects as the first large scale water supply components of the plan to be pursued. As you know, Reclamation and Ecology are currently engaged in the necessary environmental review for these projects and are on schedule to complete them in a timely

¹ Department of Ecology, Office of Columbia River *2018 Cost Estimate and Financing Plan*, October 2018, Publication 18-12-006.

manner. If one or both of the projects are approved, private capital will be a significant component for construction. You expressed frustration that no water supply project has yet been completed, and we explained how we are only 5 years into the IDP and large scale water storage projects such as KDRPP take significant time to come to fruition. We also pointed out that both KDRPP and Cle Elum fish passage are on track to complete at about the same time in 2024.

The Integrated Plan IDP also included studies on the Wymer Dam and Reservoir and Bumping Dam and Reservoir Enlargement storage sites so as to be in a position to select one of the storage sites for construction in the next phase of the Integrated Plan.

To date the Integrated Plan has accomplished significant environmental improvements in the Yakima River Basin and specifically in Yakima County. The Integrated Plan along with YRBWEP has invested millions of dollars in conservation, habitat improvement and floodplain restoration projects that have directly benefited Yakima County and its residents.

Reclamation and Ecology understand and value your strong commitment to water supply and fish passage and share your commitment to make significant and meaningful progress for all seven elements of the Integrated Plan. We appreciate Yakima County's values and perspectives you bring to the Workgroup, Executive Committee and Implementation Committee and encourage your continued participation.

Sincerely,



Dawn A. Wiedmeier
Columbia-Cascades Area Manager
Bureau of Reclamation



G. Thomas Tebb, L.H.g., L.E.G.
Director
Office of Columbia River
Washington State Department of Ecology