

(Copy)

Colonel Ernest L. Ferry  
Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Army Engineers District, Seattle

Sir:

Re: the addition of recreation and fisheries as project purposes to the Avon Bypass, Skagit River Basin, Washington

In compliance with the request for arguments to be submitted in writing for the public hearing January 10, 1964, Mount Vernon, Washington, we herewith present our points of view and pose a number of questions which we would like to have answered. As a preface to our remarks we wish to state that we are not opposed to flood control; our primary purpose relates to the modification of " structures in the Avon Bypass to permit the addition of recreation and fisheries as additional purposes of the Bypass."

1. We question the need for additional recreational resources in Skagit County of this particular type and at this time. Skagit County has within a short distance of metropolitan centers an outstanding array of lakes, rivers, creeks, and bays to provide ample recreation and fishing facilities. The existing county, state, and national resources are in need of development. Reports state that county fresh water lake resorts have not had sufficient patronage in 1963.
2. We would ask who are the initiators of the recreation and fishing plan since we note on Page 12 of the Information Bulletin for Public Hearing, November 22, 1963, that the plans set forth in this bulletin do " not constitute either a concurrence or non-concurrence " on the part of the organizations there set forth. Recently the Parks and Recreation Commission has been quoted in the Skagit Valley Herald as saying that they do not consider that the project has statewide appeal. ( Tuesday, November 19, 1963)
3. No estimated cost is given for the recreation and fisheries aspects of the Bypass. In comparison to the cost of development of already existing recreational areas, we would question the cost of the proposed additions. Even though recreational facilities are provided by private enterprise, the taxpayers would be capitalizing the initial venture. Recently the Board of County Commissioners of Skagit County ordered the sale of County owned tidelands already providing hunting, the only feeding ground for brant, crabbing, and tons of herring. Since the Board considered it necessary for financial reasons to allow the public auction of these lands at an initial bid of a mere \$7,000 and accepted a final bid of \$7100, it would seem that it is, indeed, to quote the old saying, " penny wise and pound foolish " to expend millions on a probable recreational area while they are practically giving away an established area. Skagit County cannot afford this kind of financing.
4. On Page 10 of the Information Bulletin the following statement is made:  
" Project Plans include boat access to Padilla Bay, which could give the public further access to waterfowl hunting." We would inquire by what means access is to be made in winter time when the Avon Bypass would be needed for drainage and high water control and the tide is in on the bay almost all day? We are not engineers, but we have not doubt that hydraulic lifts or bypass chutes of some sort could be provided, at what cost we can only conjecture.

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And one would also inquire of what value it would be to have access to the bay if it were all silted up?

5. If this plan is followed, does the Corps of Engineers contemplate the dredging of Indian Slough to a depth of 60 feet out to the Swinomish Channel as has been rumored? If so, how, the dredged earth to be disposed of? What would be the additional cost to the taxpayers, or would the Corps of Engineers be paid by private individuals? If so, by whom?
6. Is the ultimate plan then to make the southern portion of Padilla Bay as far north as the Bay View State Park a settling basin for the Bypass? It could not then provide the recreational opportunities which it presently provides. We would be changing the expansive area of Padilla Bay for 340 acres of honky-tonk possibilities. We would cite the tens of thousands of persons who use Bay View State Park every year, the numerous hunting clubs on the Bay, the public access to bathing, boating, and water-skiing, the fact that at little cost to taxpayers the County could provide boat-launching ramps at the road ends fronting the Bay. We would also point out the crab-spawning areas in the south end of Padilla Bay.
7. Is the conclusion of such a project then to be, in addition to the upkeep of the Avon Bypass itself, another Swinomish Channel with yearly dredging at constant expense to the County, the Federal Government, and naturally to the individual?

Summing up our point of view, we would state that the recreational and fishing aspects are not needed, that they would prove costly, and that the Avon Bypass itself is detrimental to the best recreational interests of the County.

Respectfully yours,

Edna Breazeale  
Bay View-Padilla Civic Association