

# SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

*return to Miller*

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102 SKAGIT COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
MOUNT VERNON, WASHINGTON 98273

W.H. 'BILL' SULLIVAN  
1<sup>st</sup> DISTRICT  
ROUTE 1, BOW

ARNOLD M. HANSEN  
2<sup>nd</sup> DISTRICT  
ROUTE 1, BURLINGTON

HOWARD A. MILLER  
3<sup>rd</sup> DISTRICT  
423 TALCOTT, SEDRO WOOLLEY

April 6, 1971

Colonel Sargent  
Department of the Army  
Seattle District, Corps of Engineers  
1519 Alaskan Way South  
Seattle, Washington 98134

Dear Colonel Sargent:

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners wish to notify you of our establishment on September 1, 1970 of a county-wide flood control district in accordance with the laws of the State of Washington. The flood control district enables us to assume the responsibility of sponsorship of the levee and channel improvement project on the lower Skagit River, authorized under the Flood Control Act of 1966, as requested in the District Engineer's letter of December 8, 1966. This project is Phase I of our comprehensive flood control plan. Phase II of our plan provides for obtaining flood control storage from the existing Baker River project operated and owned by Puget Sound Power and Light. Phase III would be additional flood control storage on the Sauk River and/or construction of the Avon Bypass.

By this letter we are providing assurance of local sponsorship of Phase I and are requesting that the Corps of Engineers begin as soon as possible the necessary studies leading to early construction of the levee and channel improvement project.

The Seattle District Office of the Corps of Engineers advised the Skagit County Commissioners in 1967 that the levee and channel improvements to be effective must be constructed in conjunction with either the Avon Bypass project or upstream storage. The levee and channel improvement project alone would increase the minimum level of flood protection on the Skagit River downstream from Burlington to once in only eight years. The present expected occurrence is once in about three years. The Corps of Engineers considered the increase too low to permit proceeding independently with this project without other additional protection such as storage or river diversion. The low degree of protection provided by the levee project was said to create a false sense of security from flooding. Accordingly, by this letter we further ask that the Corps of Engineers begin whatever action is necessary to implement the required flood control storage at the existing Baker project. By article 32 of the Federal Power Commission license for project number 2150, provision has been made for storage reservation for flood control, provided that the power losses resulting from the flood control operation could be compensated for.

PD 4196

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Seattle District, Corps of Engineers  
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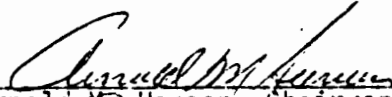
The Skagit basin has been exceedingly fortunate in not having been subject to really major floods since 1921. However, the period from 1896 to 1921 is replete with examples in which at least six times past floods have exceeded almost twice the present channel capacity. Again in 1951, flood stages were within inches of overtopping the dikes at Mount Vernon. These events can readily be repeated and cause large damages to the Skagit Valley.

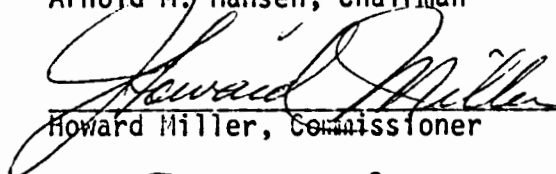
Average annual flood damages were estimated at \$3,020,000 in 1966 and were projected in the Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters Study to reach \$4,340,000 by 1980 if flood damage reduction measures were not provided. The urgency of the need for your assistance is obvious.

We wish to thank the Corps for its past assistance and hope that Phases I and II of our comprehensive plan can soon be implemented.

Respectfully yours,

Board of Skagit County Commissioners  
Skagit County, Washington

  
Arnold M. Hansen, Chairman

  
Howard Miller, Commissioner

  
W. H. "Bill" Sullivan, Commissioner

cc: Mr. Greg Hastings  
Department of Ecology

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