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**From:** Skagit FACT [skagitfact@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 16, 2007 4:13 PM  
**Subject:** Skagit FACT Newsletter

Dear Skagit FACT Members,

This first monthly newsletter is "too long". **READ IT ANYWAY .**

This is the first of an ongoing monthly newsletter to keep you informed as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) revises the flood maps for the Skagit Valley.

Much has transpired to date. Many of you played a part in the success we have seen recently as the County has joined with the Cities in the effort to address what we believe to be seriously flawed preliminary maps from FEMA. This unification of local governments is essential for any local appeal efforts to be successful. Now we are in a stronger position to tackle the tough process ahead of us. Your continued interest and involvement is important as events unfold. We may ask you to help with specific actions. We need accurate maps to protect the community: first and foremost from the standpoint of life and safety, and also with appropriate attention to quality of life considerations. To summarize the current situation:

### **Goals**

- **We need accurate hydrology** (100 year flood estimates). FEMA is using clearly flawed estimates from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and this is artificially driving the 100 year flood estimate up 40,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water or more. That's an additional 3.5 billion cfs of water in one 24 hour period!
- **We need accurate hydraulic modeling.** FEMA uses a Levy Failure Policy which is flawed and deeply problematic for this community due to the sharp bend in the Skagit River at River Bend west of Mount Vernon. Even the Cities' preliminary alternate flood maps prepared by Pacific International Engineering (PIE) are constrained by FEMA's flawed hydraulic modeling (and driven upwards by it). Our levy system must be addressed in a scientifically sound way.
- **We need time to certify our levies.** FEMA needs to allow us to operate under the current flood maps for the reasonable amount of time it will take us to certify our levies and bring our communities back out of the flood plain.

### **Current State of Affairs**

- FEMA's proposed maps are currently delayed. The maps are estimated to come out at the earliest next month.
- The County has joined with the Cities by signing a Joint Prosecution Agreement, which will allow vital sharing of information between the parties as they prepare for a possible appeal of FEMA's maps.
- The County has hired the services of K&L Gates Law Firm in Seattle. U.S. Senator Slade

Gorton and Mr. Bart Freedman gave a presentation to the public on their initial take of our situation and how they suggest proceeding. Click the link to see the video of that presentation: [http://skagit.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish\\_id=28](http://skagit.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=28)

- Thanks to the proactive approach of Burlington and Mount Vernon, Pacific International Engineering (PIE) is nearing completion of their study which will serve as a full technical alternative to FEMA's proposed maps in the appeal.

### **Next Steps**

- As the County takes the lead they must work in concert with the Cities to pull together the most effective appeal on both procedural and technical grounds. This will require the County and the Cities' staffs and technical consultants (NHC and PIE) to get their heads together to present a unified case.
- We need our State and Federal delegations to put pressure on FEMA to listen to this community and heed the expertise we bring to the table when it comes to our Valley's flooding characteristics.

Your continued interest and assistance is key to maintaining a strong grass roots effort to ensure our valley is taken care of through this remapping process. We'll keep you posted.

Thank you,

**Don Gordon**  
President, Skagit FACT (Flood Advisory Conference Team)

*The mission of the Skagit Flood Advisory Conference Team is to advise and educate citizens, businesses, and local governments on issues and impacts of flood policies and regulations with attention to safety and quality of life concerns of the region.*