

Senator Patty Murray
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

July 14, 2021



Dear Senator,

We are the group Washington Sensible Shorelines Association, representing approximately 1000 owners of property on the shores of Lake Sammamish in King County. We are writing you as a last resort, short of litigation, to ask your assistance in ensuring that the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) fulfills its responsibilities by assuring the proper functioning of the federally funded Sammamish River Flood Control Project (the flood control project or project).

King County, under agreement with the Corps, has been responsible for maintaining the project by removing flow-restricting vegetation. Aware of inadequate maintenance, the Corps forewarned King County that their failure to maintain the project would result in high water levels and property impacts. We are asking for your involvement since our efforts over more than a decade to get the Corps and the County to deal with this matter have been unsuccessful. To expedite your consideration we provide supplemental, supporting information.

As noted, the County agreed to maintain river flow capacity - the result being adequate protection of our properties in all but extreme weather events. However, citing threats to endangered species (Chinook salmon), the County halted agreed upon annual maintenance, then only partially resumed it. The result has been property damaging elevated lake levels.

In 2008, the Corps - citing the accumulation of flow reducing restrictions - declared the flood control project defective, leaving the County to rectify the situation. More than a decade later, obstructions to flow, identified by the Corps, remain.

We respect the lake environment and the needs of the salmon. However, our property improvements were legally constructed with the understanding the Corps' flood control system would be adequately maintained resulting in appropriate water levels. That has not been the case, as attested to by an estimated \$10 million in damage to lakeshore properties in February 2020 due to a weather event that should not have produced such losses.

In Attachment A you will find a document we prepared to assess the impacts suffered by residents last year and to appeal for help from King County, federal agencies, and cities around the lake. Our effort included a petition listing specific requests and resulted in more than 250 petition signatures from our neighbors (Attachment B). Despite these pleadings, there has been no action to remedy the defects identified by the Corps.

We now ask that your office take the necessary steps to provide the Corps of Engineers and King County an immediate directive to halt any efforts that would further degrade flow capacity of the flood control project and to proceed with restoration of the intended flow capacity of the entire project. That direction should include the specific actions we enumerate in Attachment C.

Respectfully -

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laurie Lyford".

Laurie Lyford, President WSSA

cc: Senator Cantwell

Feb. 2020 Lake Sammamish Flooding

Damage Photos, Letters of Concern,
Citizen Petition, Estimated Damages



Prepared with data dated 2/15/2020 and subject to change as damage assessment continues

This 26 page report is available for viewing on WSSA's website. To view [Click Here](#)

Attachments continue on next page

Attachment B - WSSA 2020 Shoreline Damage Petitioners

Aaron Wiehe	Delie	Kangho Lee	Qi Ke
Albert Ting	Denica Bucklin	Karen Hamilton	Rachelle Benbow
Amy Byron	Don Johnson	Karen Schirmer	Radhika Arun
Amy L. Schutt	Donald T. Stewart	Kathleen&Bill Bonney	Ramesh Balasubramanian
Anne Gardiner	Donna Thorson	Kathryn Fedor	Randy Love
Anthony Gonchar	Doug Schumacher	Kathryn Pizzo	Raymond Castor
Anthony Jurcan	doug thorpe	Kendall Bateman	Reid Brockway
Arthur Ty Whitten	Douglas Evans	Kip Durrell	Reiko Hisamatsu
Arul Menezes	ed johnston	Kramp	Richard Lange
ary Chatfield	Emily B Repperger	Kristin Landry	Rick Carovano
Barbara Petzold	Eric Shuey	Kyle Buckner	Robert Gunther
	Eugene Morel	Laurie Lyford	Rod Wentworth
Benjamin zylstra	Eva Vanderhoeven	LaVey Norquist	Ron and Sharon Selsset
Bob Azelby	Fernando Mendez	Lawrence Brennan	Ron Hallissey
Bob Dixey	Ferrol McCartney	Lennard Nahajski	Rory Dees
Bob Morrison	Gary Heitlauf	Leonardo Axel Steinman	Roxanne M Moening
Bobby Witty	Gavin Skok	Linda Bowers	Saeed Abtahi
Brad Del Matto	Gene Harden	Linda Johnson	Sally Beckwith
Brandon Stock	Gene Roeglin	Linda Rasmussen	Sally Julien
Bruce Miller	George Toskey	Lizanne Madgett	Sandra Rice
Bruno Medina	Gilad Odinak	lorrie garrett	scot fordyce
Bryce Hausmann	Gilbert B. Pauley	Lynne Storrar	Scott Carroll
Calan DeWald	Greg Mowrer	Majdi Daher	Scott Eaton
Cameron Pelly	Greg Reiswig	Marc and Heidi Evanger	Sean Muller
camilla george	Hank Waggoner	Margaret Klomp	sean vanderdasson
carol jendrezak	Harold Bantle	margo allan	Seetharaman Harikrishnan
Carol Witty	Harold goodman	Margo Thompson	Serina Kaye
Caroline Kaufman	Holly Ellis	Marguerite Harvey	Stacy Dunlap
Carolyn Martin	Holly Hauser	Mark Allan	Stephen Carrigan
Carvel Moore	Hung Le	Mark Kaushagen	stephen dennis
Cathleen Aiken	Ivan Tarapov	Mark Rogalski	Stephen M Storrar
celia casas	James & Bonnie Kulinski	Mark Wagner	Stephen Taylor
Chong Ka	James A. Creevey	Martin Nizlek	Stephen Williams
Chris Keats	James Aiken	Martin Piecyk	Steve Peck
Chris Monger	James O'Neill	Mary Devino	Sue O'Riley
Chris Ramirez	James P. Mackey IV	Matt Pohle	Sundi Mathewson
Chris Tuohy	James Stulz	Meredith McDade	Susan Brockway
Christer Lundin	James T. Stenson	Michael and Diane Vasey	Suzanne Dodd
Christi Hettich	Jamie Brakken	Michael Donelson	Tara Rose-Large
Christopher M McKinsey	Jason & Kim Gray	Michael Eng	Terence Clancy
Chuck Last	Jason Gray	Michael Merhej	Terrance R Schulze
Cindy Pauley	Jay & Rebecca Buxbaum	Michael S Tihista	Terry and Donna Lemke

Claudia Burke	Jeffrey S Lum	Michelle Eden	Thomas G Cowan
Clifford and Kathy Schroeder	Jill and Douglas Hendel	Mike Gallop	Thomas Goar
Cory Hitzemann	Jill L Wagner	Mike Hettich	Thomas Harsh
Craig Owens	Jill Lum	Mike Mathy	Thomas Hodge
Craig R. Wilbour	Jim and Annita Presti	Mikhail Parakhin	Thomas Leach
Craig Williamson	Jim Schirmer	Nancy Myers	Thomas Marxen
Crystal Stull	joan murray	Naveen Garg	Tim Wright
D. R. Hendel	JoAnn Spears	Neil Koorland	Todd Dunlap
Dan & Shane DeWald	Joanna Ray	Nick Tsilas	Tom Rodgers
Dan Tylutki	Joanne T. Pietromonaco	Palma Conces	Toren Elste
Daniel C Smith	Joerg Hallmann	Pam Teglovic	Tracy Ficca
David Bochsler	John & Barbara Johnson	Pamela Leeming	Tracy Neighbors
David Chickering	John and Carolyn Rossi	Pamela Miller	Trevor Nies
David Fortin	John D. Thueringer	Patrick Haluptzok	Tuna Ertemalp
David Herness	John Moodie	Patrick W Lathrop	Upinder Dhinsa
David Knopf	John R. Strong	Paul Armour	Valerie Shinn
David Lambert	Joseph and Lora VanSickle	Paul Best	Vasilios Petrakos
Dawn Matte	julie mahler	Paul R. Harvey	Vern Lindquist
Dean Heathcote	Julie McClain Oppenheim	Paul Stahura	Vibhu Passi
Debbie Santi	Jun Zhang	Peggy Reddy	Vinayak Bhalerao
Deborah Freng	Kabir Siddiqui	Peggy White	Vincent Santoro, MD
Xiaoli Yang	William R Selset	William Gottschalk	Vo Le
Yih Herng Chuang	William Rissberger	William R Greve	Walter Pereyra

Attachment C - Actions Needed

Background

The Corps and King County have an agreement whereby the county is to perform annual maintenance and routine inspection of the flood control project in the Sammamish River, including a critical portion called the Transition Zone. Maintenance is to consist of removal of flow-restricting vegetation and other obstacles. However, the county has recently declared its intent to make several modifications to the river, such as the introduction of woody debris, as well as changes to its maintenance process, that would likely further diminish lake outflow capacity. Fish and environmental factors drive these changes, and the county asserts that these considerations outweigh the need to provide requisite outflow designed and implemented by the Corps.

It is WSSA's understanding that recent rulings by the federal claims court (Ideker Farms Vs US ACOE) have determined that flood protections cannot simply be abandoned for these other considerations. This supports WSSA and lake resident appeals that the agreement between the county and the Corps should be enforced. And, as shown below an independent analysis needs to occur before the introduction of further flow-restricting measures. The Corps should be pro-active and provide oversight.

Actions Requested

The Corps should be directed to do the following as regards the Flood Control Project (FCP):

STOP WORK – Assure that King County and other agencies cease all activities within the FCP that could impact lake water levels except for previously agreed activity. Specifically, proposed changes to annual maintenance in the section known as the Transition Zone should not be permitted under Corps Section 408. Only routine brush maintenance should occur, no mitigation downstream or placement of Large Woody Debris.

PUBLIC PROCESS - Establish a public involvement process carried out under Corps leadership.

INSPECTION TEAM - Establish a joint project inspection team (PI Team) composed of county, Corps, and local jurisdictions (with observer rights for residents or their representative).

PROJECT INSPECTION – Immediately carry out inspections of the entire river documenting – (a) the nature and location of each obstruction, (b) their importance to lake level management, fish protection and wetlands, and (c) rating of need for action to remove or mitigate each obstruction focusing on restoration of the Corps' design flow in the entire river.

CONCEPT EVALUATION - Immediately commence an independent review of the viability and effectiveness of a flow control gate at the Transition Zone (aka dynamic weir) to provide advance lowering of lake levels and, thereby, a reduction of property damage.

REVISE AGREEMENT - Update the Operation & Maintenance agreement recognizing the goals reflected above.