



November 2, 2020

King County Flood Control District Board of Supervisors
516 Third Avenue, Room 1200
Seattle, WA 98104

VIA EMAIL

Re: Support for approval of Motion FCD20-07.1

Dear District Supervisors,

We are pleased to write today in support of proposed King County Flood Control District (District) commitments to environment, equity, justice and transparency. Please accept the following comments from the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe Environmental and Natural Resources Department.

The Snoqualmie Tribe—sduk^walbix^w in our Native language—consists of a group of Coast Salish Native American peoples from the Puget Sound region of Washington State. We have been in the Puget Sound region and the Snoqualmie Valley since time immemorial. sq^wed (Snoqualmie Falls) is the birthplace of the sduk^walbix^w. We had more than 90 long houses along the Snoqualmie River and its tributaries. These rivers and streams were the highways used to travel from village to village and connected all the ?acitalbix^w (Natives).

Our Tribe was a signatory of the Treaty of Point Elliott with the United States and Territory of Washington in 1855. At that time, our people composed one of the largest tribes in the Puget Sound region totaling around 4,000. We lost federal recognition in 1953, but after much battle, we regained federal recognition in October of 1999. Today, the Snoqualmie Tribe is made up of approximately 650 members and occupies a sovereign homeland in the Snoqualmie Valley. The Snoqualmie Tribe (Tribe) is governed by an elected Council and our Tribal Constitution.



We support the District in declaring and codifying its commitment to the principles of integrated floodplain management, multi-benefit projects, environmental stewardship, equity and social justice, and environmental justice. We also support the District in its willingness to reconsider the priority and schedule for projects identified in Capital Investment Strategies, as this may allow greater responsiveness to opportunities to purchase lands where quick action is needed, or to collaborate with other project sponsors.

In March 2020, we wrote to the District in support of the District's proposal to double funding for salmon recovery, which the District did, and for which we are thankful. You may recall, we also encouraged the District and its staff and technical service providers, to embrace the idea that when it comes to managing our watersheds, our rivers and streams and shorelines, that we are stronger together. At that time, we invited the District to take a more involved, pro-active, and collaborative approach to working with salmon recovery partners such as the Tribe, the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum, the Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum, and the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council. We reminded the District that closer communication and cooperation between the District and other watershed partners will result in numerous benefits for all parties, and for the resource, since a well-coordinated approach will result in more and better projects being completed, greater overall reduction in flood risks, and a more resilient and productive system. Based on the goals and spirit of the Motion FCD20-07.1, it appears that the District is listening and may agree with the Tribe that an integrated approach is the most desirable approach to floodplain management. We strongly encourage each Supervisor to approve Motion FCD20-07.1.

As the District is aware, Best Available Science indicates that poor quality freshwater and nearshore habitat is one key limiting factor impeding the recovery of salmon, and that manmade alterations of this habitat to reduce flooding and erosion is a primary driver influencing this poor habitat quality. Our tribal harvest rights have been rendered almost meaningless because the federal and state governments are allowing salmon habitat to be damaged and destroyed faster than it can be restored. Salmon populations have declined sharply because of the loss of spawning and rearing habitat. As the salmon disappear, our tribal cultures, communities and economies are threatened as never before. Some tribes such as the Snoqualmie have lost access to even their most basic ceremonial and subsistence fisheries – the cornerstone of tribal life.

We believe that Motion FCD20-07.1 is an indication of a possible brighter future for salmon, salmon habitat, and the lifeways that depend on robust, healthy salmon populations in King County. We find this to be an encouraging bright spot in an otherwise gloomy situation, and we strongly support the District in approving



this motion which has potential to help restore equity and environmental and social justice for tribal communities such as the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe, as well as many other benefits for our shared Puget Sound community. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Baerwalde", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Matt Baerwalde
Environmental Policy Analyst
425-363-2008
mattb@snoqualmietribe.us

Via email to:

dave.upthegrove@kingcounty.gov
reagan.dunn@kingcounty.gov
claudia.balducci@kingcounty.gov
jeanne.kohl-welles@kingcounty.gov
rod.dembowski@kingcounty.gov
girmay.zahilay@kingcounty.gov
pete.vonreichbauer@kingcounty.gov
kathy.lambert@kingcounty.gov
joe.mcdermott@kingcounty.gov

CC:

Diana.Phibbs@kingcounty.gov
jhovenkotter@kingcounty.gov