

THE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

May 31, 2019

Chehalis Basin Board
c/o Office of the Chehalis Basin
300 Desmond Drive SE
Lacey, WA 98503

Dear Board Members:

At the end of June, the Ruckelshaus Center will conclude its work in support of the Chehalis Basin Strategy. As you know, the Center has worked on the Strategy since 2012, at the behest of Governors Gregoire and Inslee, and the Director of the Office of the Chehalis Basin. The goal has been to support leaders in the Basin coming together to develop an integrated strategy for reducing flood damage, and restoring the ecological health of the Chehalis River system for aquatic species, including salmon. There are numerous signs that process has achieved, and will continue to achieve, much success.

I would like to congratulate the Chehalis Basin Board, and all the other participants in creating the Strategy, on your hard work and accomplishments thus far. I, along with the Ruckelshaus Center Advisory Board and staff, wish you the very best for the journey and work that lies ahead.

The Center is proud to have supported you and this work over the past seven-and-half years. You have demonstrated the power and on-the-ground benefits that result from coming together, as diverse leaders of your various communities. Your success in gaining legislative approval for \$73M over the next biennium is just one example of those benefits. The results you have produced through numerous projects that reduce local flood damage, and by starting the process of repairing aquatic species habitat, will provide long-lasting benefits to your communities.

The technical work you have authorized has revealed that taking no action will result in catastrophic flood damage, loss of salmon runs, and degradation of the basin's environment and communities. But it also indicates that it is possible--through a carefully crafted suite of actions--to significantly enhance salmon runs, benefit other aquatic species, and reduce the risk of loss from major floods. You have an unprecedented opportunity in your watershed to restore habitat and help salmon, while improving the safety of the community.

The road ahead will be challenging, as you finalize your strategy and tackle the tough policy issues. However, I strongly believe you will achieve your goals, by continuing to work collaboratively, clearly stating your own interests and needs, while truly hearing and addressing the needs of your fellow community members. This is the source of the innovation and creativity that will find a path forward and benefit all. It is through mutual respect and hard work that you will continue to build trust with one another, and deliver the results you have promised your communities.

I have seen time and again that the most complex and important issues we face as a society are best resolved when people of diverse interests dedicate themselves to collaboration, and to finding common ground for actions that meet all needs. I am confident you will remain on that path.

Chehalis Basin Board
May 31, 2019

On behalf of everyone at the Center, thank you for the opportunity to serve you and the great Chehalis Basin. It is a special place that well-deserves your hard work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Ruckelshaus".

Bill Ruckelshaus
Advisory Board Chair

cc: Michael Kern, Ruckelshaus Center Director