



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
SEATTLE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
P.O. BOX 3755  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98124-3755

MAR 19 2015

Civil Works Branch

Mr. Ron Wesen  
Skagit County Commissioner, District 1  
1800 Continental Place, Suite 100  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Dear Commissioner Wesen:

I am writing to follow up on our February 13, 2015 meeting on the Skagit Flood-Risk Management General Investigation Project (Skagit GI), and subsequent discussions with Mr. Theodore Brown at Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Significant progress has been made on the Skagit GI in the last 3 years resulting in concurrence on the recommended plan identified by the study team, and the scope for study completion is clearer than it ever has been. The team, including Skagit County and USACE representatives from Seattle District, Northwestern Division, and HQUSACE, worked together at the October 29, 2014 charette to establish the scope of activities required in order for us to be successful on this study. Completing the Skagit GI requires adhering to the policy-compliant scope defined at the October 2014 charette and will necessitate a waiver for schedule and budget.

As of March 4, 2015, the additional non-Federal funding required to complete the study is \$810,000 and expected Chief's Report completion would be by the end of calendar year 2016. We expect these estimates to change as discussions regarding scope, schedule, and budget continue. We are committed to working with Skagit County to successfully complete the Feasibility Report/Environmental Impact Statement (FR/EIS) while remaining policy compliant.

The scope for study completion was developed in response to receipt of concurrent review comments (agency technical review, independent external peer review, public review, and HQUSACE legal/policy review), discussion at the October 2014 Agency Decision Milestone, and the feasibility-level design charette later that month. The Corps' Vertical Team participation in the October 29, 2014 design charette provided greater confidence in the now policy-compliant scope and that it will meet expectations regarding documentation needed to support the Final FR/EIS for the eventual Chief's Report and Congressional authorization. The scope, schedule, and budget also reflect the effort needed to revise the FR/EIS and technical appendices based on concurrent review comments and to meet engineering and design level of detail to support a sound cost estimate and subsequent Section 902 authorized cost. The aforementioned scope, schedule, and budget exceed 3x3x3 parameters and will require a waiver for budget and schedule (beyond 3 years and \$3 million to complete the study). It is the Corps' position that the study cannot be completed without the additional scoped work and therefore would not be allowed to move forward to the Civil Works Review Board (CWRB). As such, there is not a viable course

of action without a waiver for schedule and budget to address the policy-compliant scope that has been developed.

In addition, successful study completion will require unequivocal support for the recommended plan and assurance from sponsors that they are committed to partner for the construction phase of the project. If Congressional authorization is desired, establishing strong support for the project at local, regional, and national levels will be absolutely critical.

Landowner willingness is another component that is key to project success and moving past the CWRB. There are many parcels of real estate that are expected to be required to implement this project and provide flood protection. As feasibility-level design is prepared, we will communicate and coordinate with Skagit County to recommend the minimum real estate that is expected to be required.

On March 13, 2015, Seattle District staff and I briefed Mr. Brown on the Skagit GI scope, schedule, and budget for study completion. Mr. Brown confirmed the Corps' position that a waiver will be required. We recognize the commitment and contributions Skagit County has made to the Skagit GI to date and the importance of working toward a flood-risk management solution. As the project sponsor and partner with the Corps on this flood-risk management project, Skagit County's support of pursuing a waiver for schedule and funding is necessary to move forward. If the County indicates their support of pursuing a waiver by March 31, 2015, we anticipate a greater likelihood to adhere to the aforementioned schedule and budget. Details for the schedule and budget have been provided at the staff level to Kara Symonds.

If you have any questions or desire additional information, please contact Ms. Lynn Wetzler, Project Manager, at (206) 764-3695 or [lynn.wetzler@usace.army.mil](mailto:lynn.wetzler@usace.army.mil).

Sincerely,



John G. Buck  
Colonel, Corps of Engineers  
District Commander

cc:  
(see next page)

cc:

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, United States Senate

The Honorable Patty Murray, United States Senate

The Honorable Suzan DelBene, United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Rick Larsen, United States House of Representatives

Ken Dahlstedt, Skagit County Commissioner, District 2

Lisa Janicki, Skagit County Commissioner, District 3

Theodore A. Brown, HQUSACE

Steven Kopecky, HQUSACE