



Skagit County Board of Commissioners

Ron Wesen, First District
Peter Browning, Second District
Joe Burns, Third District

March 10, 2026

Skagit County Climate Impact Advisory Committee

RE: Initial Climate Impact Advisory Committee Questions

The Board of Skagit County Commissioners thanks each of you for agreeing to contribute your valuable time and substantial expertise to the Skagit County Climate Impact Advisory Committee (CIAC). We are hopeful that each of you can help us produce consensus around some of the key challenges that climate changes presents for our community. As a Board, we need to better understand risks and mitigation strategies, which will help inform our future decisions about resiliency and related investment of public funds.

As the CIAC adopting ordinance discusses, our intention is that you will focus on matters within the County's jurisdiction, authority and direct responsibilities. Within that framework, issues related to the Skagit River's historic floodplain and coastal edge - including sea level rise, riverine flooding and saltwater intrusion - pose our most significant set of climate-related challenges.

Consistent with Skagit County Code 2.22.030(9), we ask that you prioritize the following questions:

- I. Riverine Flooding
 - a. What is the current probability of Skagit River flooding above 34 feet at the Mount Vernon USGS Gage?
 - b. What are the expected probabilities of floods larger than 34-ft under current climate conditions?
 - c. How are these probabilities predicted to change under future climate conditions?
 - d. What is the anticipated extent of inundation associated with floods greater than 34 feet at the Mount Vernon USGS Gage?
 - e. How does the area of inundation and probability of inundation change under potential future climate conditions?
- II. Sea Level Rise
 - a. What were the probabilities of the 2021 and 2022 coastal floods?
 - b. How are these probabilities predicted to change under future climate conditions?

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- c. What is the range of predicted sea level rise under a under future climate conditions?
- d. In the low-lying areas of the Skagit and Samish delta, how are groundwater levels expected to change under future climate conditions?
- e. What is the probability that the predicted changes could impact underground utilities, foundations, or roads.
- f. In the low-lying areas of the Skagit and Samish deltas, what is the probability that saltwater intrusion will impact drinking water wells and agricultural lands under future climate conditions.

We are asking the CIAC to utilize existing scientific studies and tools to report on these questions, identify data gaps, and provide recommendations for additional studies and analysis. We acknowledge that there may be other important questions that the CIAC identifies. We request an initial progress report by year end 2026.

Sincerely,

**BOARD OF SKAGIT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**



Ron Wesen, Chair



Peter Browning, Commissioner



Joe Burns, Commissioner