May 28, 2020

North Bend City Council
211 Main Avenue North
P.O. Box 896
North Bend, WA 98045

Dear City of North Bend Councilmembers,

The Snohomish-Stillaguamish Local Integrating Organization (LIO) is pleased to provide this letter in support of the Water Conservation Ordinance NBMC 13.50. The LIO supports this ordinance as it aligns with recommendations in the Puget Sound Action Agenda and our local 5-Year Ecosystem Recovery Plan strategies to promote sustainable natural resource management through conservation.

This proposed ordinance will implement actions recommended by science-based, locally-derived strategies for improving water quantity and reducing low flow impacts which will benefit residents of this area environmentally and economically. If customers conserve water then they will receive lower water bills from more efficient and reduced water use. If low flows are improved then healthy habitat is increased and several priority Puget Sound Ecosystem Component Vital Signs will benefit.

Stream Flow Protection is a high priority Ecosystem Component in the Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO 5-Year Ecosystem Recovery Plan. This proposed ordinance is consistent with LIO Strategy 09.1 Streamflow Protection.

The LIO endorses the City of North Bend’s adoption of this Water Conservation Ordinance because it will benefit multiple stakeholders and implement key local actions to help achieve targets identified in the Puget Sound Action Agenda.

Sincerely,

Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO Executive Committee

Gregg Farris
Co-Chair, Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO Executive Committee
July 24, 2020

Washington State Departments of Ecology:
Lisa Nelson, Floodplains by Design Grant Manager

Dear Floodplains by Design Project Review Team,

The Snohomish-Stillaguamish Local Integrating Organization (LIO) is pleased to provide this letter in support of the Community Floodplain Solutions Program application for the 2021-2023 Floodplains by Design program. The project will lead to on-the-ground actions that balance community needs for flood protection and agricultural viability with ecological needs, such as habitat improvements that help recover threatened fisheries.

The LIO’s vision is to accelerate Snohomish and Stillaguamish ecosystem recovery. We facilitate this by communicating recovery needs and coordinating recovery actions between local communities and regional stakeholders. This project emulates this tiered communication and coordination approach by:

• Protecting hundreds of acres of habitat and farmland,
• Advancing and implementing multiple-benefit projects identified in the Agriculture Resilience Plan for Snohomish County,
• Determining the feasibility of and advancing designs for large-scale floodplain projects on the Lower Skykomish River that advance fish, farm, and flood interests, and
• Promoting the enabling conditions that allow for integrated floodplain management at the Snohomish Watershed scale.

Proposed actions are informed by science-based, locally-derived strategies for improving water quality and reducing flood damages which will benefit floodplain residents and the economy of this active agricultural landscape. Solutions are developed to increase collaboration among agencies and organizations working to preserve agricultural viability while improving ecological functions and reducing flood losses. Actions are consistent with the LIO’s 5-Year Ecosystem Recovery Plan elements, such as SSLIO 10.1 & 10.2 Freshwater and Estuarine Protection and Restoration:

• Reducing loss of forested land and vegetation cover through preservation and replanting actions, and
• Halting additional loss of floodplain function through habitat restoration and conservation actions.

Completion of these subreach solutions also leverages several of the LIO’s funded Near-Term Actions (2018-0097, 2018-0623, 2018-0873, 2018-0715, 2018-0810, 2018-0613, and 2018-0964).

Thank you for considering this project for funding.

Sincerely,

Erik Stockdale for Gregg Farris
Co-Chair, Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO
Executive Committee

Joan M Lee
Co-Chair, Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO
Executive Committee
July 24, 2020

Washington State Departments of Ecology:
Lisa Nelson, Floodplains by Design Grant Manager

Dear Floodplains by Design Project Review Team,

The Snohomish-Stillaguamish Local Integrating Organization (LIO) is pleased to provide this letter in support of the South Fork Snoqualmie River Levee Setback Project application for the 2021-2023 Floodplains by Design program. The LIO supports this proposal as it aligns with recommended Puget Sound Partnership near term actions (NTA) and is also on the Snohomish River Basin Salmon Recovery Plan 4-year work plan.

Proposed tasks will implement actions recommended by science-based, locally-derived strategies for improving water quality and reducing flood damages which will benefit floodplain residents and the economy of this active agricultural landscape.

Floodplains were selected as a High Priority Ecosystem Component in the LIO’s 5-Year Ecosystem Recovery Plan. The Plan acknowledges that reconnection of floodplain habitat is a key strategy for recovery identified in both basins’ salmon recovery plans. This project’s actions are consistent with the LIO Strategy 10.1 & 10.2 Freshwater and Estuarine Protection and Restoration.

The LIO endorses this project that will benefit multiple stakeholders and implement key local actions to help achieve targets identified in the Puget Sound Action Agenda.

Thank you for considering this project for funding.

Sincerely,

Erik Stockdale for Gregg Farris
Co-Chair, Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO
Executive Committee

Joan M Lee
Co-Chair, Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO
Executive Committee
November 6, 2020

Snohomish County Council
3000 Rockefeller Ave
Everett, WA
98201

Dear Snohomish County Councilmembers,

The Snohomish-Stillaguamish Local Integrating Organization (LIO) Executive Committee opposes the proposed ordinance to remove the annual inflationary adjustment for Snohomish County Surface Water Management’s (SWM) utility fee. The LIO is comprised of 24 stakeholder representatives from local governments, Tribes, non-governmental organizations, salmon recovery Lead Entity representatives, State Agencies, and concerned citizens. The LIO was formed to advise Snohomish County Council and Executive on matters pertaining to watershed health and Puget Sound ecosystem recovery.

The Committee is aware that without the annual adjustment, Snohomish County SWM will face a budget shortfall in the coming years and funding for Puget Sound recovery efforts is at risk. The SWM fee not only directly funds habitat restoration projects, but it also pays for monitoring salmon recovery, water quality, and shellfish protection and restoration progress in Snohomish County. These funds provide for the staff team needed to support the LIO, the Stillaguamish Watershed Council, and the Snohomish Salmon Recovery Forum. These committees work to implement and adaptively manage the Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO Ecosystem Recovery Plan.

If passed, the ordinance will have a significant effect on SWMs ability to deliver services. The utility has estimated it will lose $606,585 of revenue in the first year. Cumulative losses will total $1.8 million after the second year, reaching a cumulative total of over $13 million after six years. See Figure One below. If enacted with no future rate changes, SWM will have to significantly reduce services and eliminate positions in the coming years to remain solvent.

We are aware that the SWM fee is among the lowest in our region, which is very concerning given that Snohomish County is one of the fastest growing Counties in the State. We have seen the data showing 70% of residents, who responded to the SWM survey, are in favor of clean water and the programs the SWM utility fee supports. The Committee opposes the proposed ordinance as the funds are needed to benefit multiple stakeholders and implement key local projects in the Puget Sound Action Agenda as well as our Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO Ecosystem Recovery Plan.

This is not the time to reduce services regarding water and natural resources as we face stronger winter storms and other climate impacts. Surface water management and healthy salmon populations go together. As a region, we need all our partners and stakeholders to have adequate resources to face these challenges.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joan Lee
Co-Chair, Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO Executive Committee

Valerie Streeter
Chair, Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO Implementation Committee
Figure One: Impact of Eliminating 2.8% SWM Rate Adjustment Loss of Revenue