



February 14, 2023

Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

RE: Funding for Watershed Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 1

Dear Governor Inslee,

I am writing on behalf of Public Utility District No. 1 of Whatcom County (PUD) for your support of the collaborative efforts our Nooksack watershed working group, with participation of our two tribes, Lummi and Nooksack, all Whatcom County cities, Whatcom County Government, the Whatcom County AG Water Board and the PUD to collectively advance our work in trying to find effective and equitable ways to manage our water resources in Whatcom County, instream and out of stream.

In the later part of 2023, the state Department of Ecology will be filing and begin the adjudication of water rights in the WRIA1, Nooksack River basin. The adjudication of the water rights in the basin is critical in determining everyone's water rights especially water needed for the recovery of our salmon populations and sustaining our cities and farms.

However, adjudication alone will not solve the age-old question of how to actually manage our water resources in the basin. It is through hard work, collaborative thinking and creative problem solving in which we will determine local, effective and efficient ways to manage our resources in a way to get our water where and when we need it for all purposes.

Since 1998, shortly after the passage of the Watershed Management Act, and in 1999, after the passage of the Salmon Recovery Act, there has been a local working group, the Watershed Management Board, working to develop solutions to our water management needs. Using science, data collection, planning and project development we have been successful to a point moving our collective work forward.

Although we have been successful working with federal, state and local resources to advance our work, time and funding is always critically short. Many work products have been completed, started and planned, but now that the adjudication is to be filed and commenced, our work that can lead to meaningful, effective and efficient products needs to be advanced.

**PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 1 OF WHATCOM COUNTY**

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# WHATCOM PUD

Other basins in the State of Washington, Yakima, Walla Walla and the Chehalis basins, have advanced in their work and funding is following their work. Now is the time for our legislature to do the same. It is essential that the Nooksack Basin is supported by state funding, allocated specifically for our work in the basin.

Over the years we have attracted funds through competitive grants to move our work forward. Now is the time to align funding specifically for our work with the adjudication process so that we can reach our goals of managing our resources, to align it with adjudication, streamflow, salmon recovery and climate change and resolve our resource needs and not wait until the adjudication process is complete.

We are developing a budget proviso that includes funding that will enable us to move our work forward. We ask you to support this budget proviso. This funding is critical to enable us to advance the work and align that work with the adjudication process.

We look forward to working with your office, the offices of our legislators, the Department of Ecology, local tribes and others to work collaboratively and effectively.

Thank you in advance for your support and that of the legislature.

Sincerely,



Atul Deshmane  
President, Board of Commissioners  
Public Utility District No. 1 of Whatcom County

cc:

40<sup>th</sup> District Representatives

Sen. Liz Lovelett  
213 John A. Cherberg Bldg.  
PO Box 40440  
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Rep. Debra Lekanoff  
JLOB 422  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Rep. Alex Ramel  
LEG 434A  
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42<sup>nd</sup> District Representatives

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