

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 13, 2019

The Honorable Russell T. Vought
Acting Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite
Chief of Engineers
United States Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear Acting Director Vought and Lieutenant General Semonite,

I am writing to urge you to make sediment monitoring for the Lower Cowlitz River in Cowlitz County, Washington state, a funding priority for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (Army Corps, or USACE) Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 work plan. As you are aware, funding was authorized by Congress in the Mount St. Helens Construction Account for Mount St. Helens Sediment Control in 1985. We know FY 2019 capability has been listed by the Army Corps, Portland District for providing the sediment monitoring. The local county government, along with several partners, committed \$110,000 to partially complete some of this work. It is imperative that future work plans include full funding to ensure this critical work is completed.

As you may be aware from my last letter to you on this issue, the Long-Term Sediment Management Plan was developed following the eruption of Mount St. Helens. Congress authorized the Army Corps to construct, operate and maintain a sediment retention structure and provide the associated downstream actions necessary to ensure flood risk reduction for the communities of Longview, Kelso, and Castle Rock. Although flood protection levels were at federally mandated levels when the Army Corps completed the monitoring three years ago, no further data has been obtained, and there is strong concern that the buildup of silt has been severe since that time. As sediment flows into the lower river, it reduces the flood-carrying capacity and puts these communities at unacceptable risk during winter storms.

Failing to address the risk to these communities not only threatens them with the uncertainty of flooding, but fails to give them the peace of mind that the monitoring can provide. Furthermore,

I share the concern expressed by the local communities who are being forced to use their own money to fulfill obligations promised by the Army Corps and authorized by Congress.

In order to ensure that these local communities located within my district are not forced to take money from other local priorities in order to financially offset additional oversights, I urge you to fulfill obligations authorized by congress that are the responsibility of the USACE and fully fund the needs of the Mt. Saint Helens Construction Project. I look forward to working with you to address this issue.

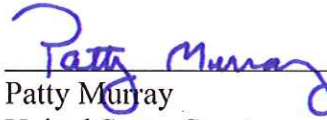
Sincerely,



Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator