
HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4005

State of Washington

55th Legislature

1997 Regular Session

By Representatives Mulliken, Chandler, Hankins, Sheahan, Skinner, Lisk, Delvin, Clements, Honeyford, Schoesler, Mastin, Grant, Mielke and McMorris

Read first time 01/24/97. Referred to Committee on Agriculture & Ecology.

1 TO THE HONORABLE WILLIAM J. CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED
2 STATES, AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
3 OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
4 THE UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE
5 DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY:

6 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
7 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully
8 represent and petition as follows:

9 WHEREAS, The area south of the Saddle Mountains in Grant, Franklin,
10 and Adams counties, Washington, known as the Wahluke Slope, is one of
11 the most productive agricultural areas in the Pacific Northwest; and

12 WHEREAS, The need for a large security and control zone around the
13 Department of Energy's Hanford control zone on Wahluke Slope caused the
14 forced relocation of citizens of Hanford, White Bluff, Wahluke, and the
15 surrounding agricultural lands that had been settled prior to 1900; and

16 WHEREAS, Due to the decommissioning of all the production reactors
17 along the Hanford Reach opposite the Wahluke Slope, and with the
18 overall change of the Department of Energy's Hanford mission from
19 plutonium production to environmental restoration, the need for a large
20 security and control zone no longer exists; and

1 WHEREAS, The Wahluke Slope's topography and its proximity to the
2 Columbia River make the area unique in terms of the economic
3 feasibility of irrigation development; and

4 WHEREAS, Prior to its inclusion in the Hanford control zone, the
5 Bureau of Reclamation purchased over twenty-seven thousand acres of the
6 Wahluke Slope with the intent of future development in the Columbia
7 Basin Project; and

8 WHEREAS, The balanced development of this land would achieve the
9 long-awaited completion of irrigation on the Wahluke Slope and improved
10 wildlife and recreational opportunities; and

11 WHEREAS, Based on current land prices, the sale of land to private
12 owners could potentially cover a great deal of the cost of constructing
13 water delivery systems, due to the suitability of topography and nearby
14 water supply; and

15 WHEREAS, Resulting property tax and income tax revenues from this
16 new farm land would be an immediate and significant benefit; and

17 WHEREAS, Farmland development would result in millions of dollars
18 in capital investment for farm equipment of all kinds, the great
19 majority of it manufactured in the United States by American workers;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, The vast majority of crops presently raised on the Wahluke
22 Slope have potential for export to the Pacific Rim and other nations;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, Other than small grains, the crops grown on the Wahluke
25 Slope are completely driven by the free-market economy and are not
26 subsidized or supported by the federal government; and

27 WHEREAS, Broad support exists for the preservation of the natural
28 beauty and topography of the Hanford Reach, including protecting the
29 White Bluffs from sloughing into the Columbia River, prohibiting
30 dredging and damming, and providing for a one-quarter mile buffer zone
31 on both sides of the river including even wider zones depending on the
32 terrain; and

33 WHEREAS, The Wahluke Slope contains significant areas of land not
34 suitable for farming, but that are ideally suited for wildlife habitat
35 and recreational uses; and

36 WHEREAS, The United States can no longer afford to hold idle public
37 lands of this potential;

38 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that, except
39 for needed buffer zones, the present boundaries of the Department of

1 Energy's Hanford control zone on the Wahluke Slope be reduced to the
2 area south of the Columbia River and that the Wahluke Slope presently
3 under the custody and control of the Department of Energy be
4 transferred in total to the counties of Grant, Franklin, and Adams for
5 the purpose of returning the land to its former agricultural use, as
6 well as for wildlife and recreational areas along the Hanford Reach.

7 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
8 transmitted to the Honorable William J. Clinton, President of the
9 United States, the Director of the Department of Energy, the President
10 of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of
11 Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of
12 Washington.

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