

## Skagit Project FERC Relicensing Settlement

# MANAGING FLOOD RISKS FOR SKAGIT COMMUNITIES

### Managing Flood Risk While Balancing Environmental and Community Needs

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The Skagit Hydroelectric Project Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Relicensing Settlement includes flood risk management measures designed to meet the interests of Skagit County, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the local drainage and diking districts.

By updating storage standards and clarifying coordination processes, Seattle City Light and its partners have an approach for balancing flood risk management, fish habitat, recreational opportunities, and hydropower.



### Flood Risk Management: The Project's Top Priority

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Flood risk management is the Skagit Project's highest operational priority. City Light works closely with partners, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), to manage reservoir storage with the goal of reducing downstream flooding impacts on communities.

When river flows at Concrete are expected to top 90,000 cubic feet per second, the Corps temporarily takes control of Ross Dam to coordinate flood management across the system.

The system's effectiveness has been demonstrated during recent extreme weather events. In 2025, heavy rainfall drove the Sauk and Skagit rivers to record levels—more than nine feet above flood stage at Concrete—causing

substantial local flooding throughout the Skagit Valley. Evacuation orders stretched from Marblemount to Mount Vernon. Despite extensive property and infrastructure damage, thankfully no lives were lost.

Early forecasts warned of similar record flooding in Mount Vernon, but downstream flooding turned out to be much less damaging. Through careful planning and coordinated water storage management at the Skagit and Baker dams by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and with some help from a forecast that did not fully materialize, enough water was held back to keep the Skagit River from overtopping Mount Vernon's flood-protection system.

### Clear Roles in Emergency Management

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The Skagit Project operates under rigorous federal dam safety standards set by FERC. Pursuant to these standards, City Light continuously monitors and routinely inspects the Project, and both FERC and independent experts regularly evaluate the Project's infrastructure and operating procedures.

Skagit County Department of Emergency Management is responsible for issuing public alerts and leading community-wide emergency responses. The county manages the 911 emergency notification system and has the legal authority, trained personnel, and multichannel

communication systems to coordinate public warnings and, if necessary, evacuation in the unlikely event of a dam emergency.

State law places emergency notification responsibility with county leadership to ensure a single, coordinated response to any disaster—whether flooding, earthquakes, or other large-scale emergencies.

This structure is deliberate. It ensures that dam operations, public notification, and emergency response are handled by the entities best equipped and legally authorized to perform those functions.

Flooding is a natural part of the Skagit River's cycle. Effective preparation, coordination, and operations manage risk.