

RESOLUTION NO. R-2015-_____

A RESOLUTION authorizing the City Manager to execute the attached letter of support for passage and funding of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Phase III Act of 2015 (S. 1694).

WHEREAS the Yakima River Basin is one of the most productive agricultural industries in the nation, contributing approximately \$4.5 billion to the state of Washington's annual economy; and

WHEREAS the Yakima Basin was historically home to one of the largest salmon populations in the Columbia Basin, second only to the Snake River in fisheries production, and has the potential, with proper conservation action, to support 300,000 salmon and steelhead, and the largest sockeye run in the lower 48; and

WHEREAS the Yakima River Basin is affected by a variety of water resource constraints that adversely impact ecosystem functions for endangered fish and other aquatic species, and water supply for agriculture, municipal and domestic uses; and

WHEREAS obstructions, changes in water temperatures, other obstructions and inadequate stream flow block fish passage to Yakima tributaries and spawning grounds, affect flows for smolt outmigration and rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids; and

WHEREAS demand for irrigation water cannot always be met in years with below-average runoff, leading to reduced (pro-rationed) irrigation water for junior water-right holders that in turn reduces farm and related income, and puts the basin's perennial crops at extreme risk; and

WHEREAS six drought years severely impacting the basin economy, ecosystem functions and reservoirs, have occurred since the 1990s, the most recent being the present year, with climate change models indicating that decreased snowpack and higher temperatures will be the norm throughout the 21st century; and

WHEREAS the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan represents a balanced package of actions rooted in 30 years of collaboration, negotiation, and compromise among diverse stakeholders in the Yakima basin including local irrigators, county commissioners, the Yakama Nation, the City of Yakima, the Governor's office, Washington State Department of Ecology, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the conservation community, and others; and

WHEREAS the goals of the Integrated Plan as endorsed by S. 1694 are to improve the reliability of water supply for irrigation, municipal supply and domestic uses; and to protect, mitigate and enhance fish and wildlife habitat; provide increased operational flexibility to manage in-stream flows to meet ecological objectives; and

WHEREAS the Integrated Plan has thus far achieved several key successes furthering these goals, including the design and implementation of efficiencies throughout Yakima basin

irrigation districts, the diversion of irrigation flows into threatened Yakima River tributaries, the successful acquisition of grant funding for floodplain restoration, and the purchase of 50,000 acres of community forest; and

WHEREAS the S.1694 builds on two previous Yakima River water management Acts and provides authorization and funding for the Initial Development Phase of the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan; and

WHEREAS the Initial Development Phase put forward by S. 1694 authorizes projects of immediate importance to addressing the aforementioned challenges and opportunities, including fish passage, accessing reservoir storage, habitat restoration and increased water market efficiencies; and

WHEREAS the Integrated Plan also includes an adaptive management framework to address potential future changes in water needs or hydrology, including potential climate change effects; and

WHEREAS our economic vitality, the health of our lands, quality of life, agriculture, fisheries, thriving wildlife populations and diverse, world-class recreational opportunities are dependent on the Yakima Basin's clean, cold water; and

WHEREAS without decisive legislative action we will leave neither a stronger economy nor a more resilient environment as a legacy to the next generation; and

WHEREAS the Washington State legislature has committed a \$160 million investment toward a more secure environmental and economic future for the Yakima Basin through their support of the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan; Now, Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YAKIMA:

The City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to execute the attached the attached letter of support for passage and funding of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Phase III Act of 2015 (S. 1694).

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Yakima commemorate our support for an equally strong investment by the federal government through passage and funding of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Phase III Act of 2015 (S. 1694).

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge Congress and our elected officials to act, and to act in implementing S. 1694, including associated environmental reviews, technical analyses, refinements to specific actions, project designs and program development/implementation, and project permitting and construction.

ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL this 17th day of November, 2015.

Micah Cawley, Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk