



March 30, 2017

Re: [S.714](#), a bill to amend Public Law 103-434 to authorize Phase III of the Yakima River Basin Water Basin Water Enhancement Project for the purposes of improving water management in the Yakima River basin, and for other purposes. (Ms. Cantwell)

Trout Unlimited strongly supports S.714, the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Phase III Act of 2017. S. 714 authorizes the Initial Development Phase of the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan and will provide important drought relief for water users while at the same time improve the basin's fisheries and ecosystems. This bill is a critical step forward in achieving urgently needed benefits to water supply, drought relief, fisheries, and stream flows. Among the innovative actions in the Initial Development Phase are:

- Fish passage at Cle Elum and Rimrock dams, allowing fish to access 65 miles of river habitat blocked by Reclamation dams within the basin;
- The Kachess Reservoir Drought Relief Pumping Plant, with construction and operation financed by water users rather than taxpayers (no other surface water storage projects are authorized by the legislation), and conveyance between Keechelus and Kachess to balance storage and improve fish flows;
- 85,000 acre-feet of water conservation;
- Habitat restoration projects including mainstem Yakima River floodplain restoration, meadow restoration in the Teanaway Valley and elsewhere, barrier removals, and projects to remove roads from floodplains;
- Groundwater storage projects that will provide cooler, more plentiful stream flows and reduce the need for new surface water storage;
- Enhanced water markets; and
- Protection of 50,000 acres in the Teanaway River Valley as a working, Community Forest

S. 714 is a critical step towards executing an innovative, integrated response to drought and water supply security that supports our fish, farms, families, and forests. We thank Senators Cantwell and Murray for reintroducing this bill.

For questions related to these comments, please contact the following:

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