

Resolution in Support of the Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan

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

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

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13 **WHEREAS** dams, changes in water temperatures, other obstructions and inadequate
14 stream flow block fish passage to Yakima tributaries and spawning grounds;

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16 **WHEREAS** floodplain modifications and riparian habitat degradation prevent proper
17 floodplain functions;

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19 **WHEREAS** flow modifications and river operations have affected flows for smolt
20 outmigration, rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids, and other key habitat functions;

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22 **WHEREAS** surface water rights are fully appropriated in the basin, and groundwater
23 pumping for irrigation, domestic and municipal uses can reduce surface water flows in
24 many locations, and hydraulic continuity between groundwater and surface water in
25 the basin creates uncertainty over the status of groundwater rights, with most of these
26 right junior to surface water rights;

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28 **WHEREAS** five drought years have occurred in the Yakima Basin since the early 1990s
29 that have severely impacted the basin economy and ecosystem functions, and the
30 potential for future climate change would likely increase the frequency and severity of
31 future droughts;

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33 **WHEREAS** in March 2011 after 21 months of planning, the Yakima River Basin Water
34 Enhancement Project (YRBWEP) Workgroup, comprised of representatives of the
35 Yakama Nation, federal agencies, Washington State and local governments, an
36 environmental organization (American Rivers), a local business organization and five
37 irrigation districts unanimously approved the Integrated Plan elements and actions;

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39 **WHEREAS** the goals of the Integrated Plan are to protect, mitigate and enhance fish
40 and wildlife habitat; provide increased operational flexibility to manage instream flows
41 to meet ecological objectives; and improve the reliability of water supply for irrigation,
42 municipal supply and domestic uses;

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44 **WHEREAS** the Integrated Plan includes seven elements collectively essential for
45 realizing the plan goals: 1) fish passage, 2) structural and operation changes, 3) surface
46 water storage, 4) groundwater storage, 5) habitat protection and enhancement, 6)
47 enhanced water conservation, and 7) market-based reallocation; and
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49 **WHEREAS** the Integrated Plan also includes an adaptive management framework to
50 address potential future changes in water needs or hydrology, including potential
51 climate change effects;
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53 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that we, the Washington State Democratic Central
54 Committee, endorse the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management
55 Plan; and
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57 **THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that we call on our elected state and
58 federal officials and government agency leaders to fully support authorization and
59 appropriations necessary to implement the Integrated Plan, including associated
60 environmental reviews, technical analyses, refinements to specific actions, project
61 designs and program development/implementation, and project permitting and
62 construction.
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65 Submitted by the 14th Legislative District Democrats to the Washington State
66 Democratic Central Committee for consideration at its January 28, 2012 meeting in
67 Shelton. (Date Submitted 1/17/2012)
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69 The WSDCC Resolutions Committee "RECOMMENDED A PASS" at its January 28,
70 2012 meeting in Shelton.
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72 The WSDCC "PASSED" this resolution at its January 28, 2012 meeting in Shelton.