

## Yakima River Basin Water

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3 **WHEREAS** agriculture provides the economic and cultural foundation for the  
4 Columbia Basin's rural populations and contributes substantially to the overall  
5 economy of Eastern Washington;

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7 **WHEREAS** agriculture's sensitivity to climate change stems from its dependence on  
8 irrigation water, as well as other factors involving temperature and precipitation;

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10 **WHEREAS** drought in Washington state and across the West caused billions of dollars  
11 of losses in 2015, and is predicted to cost billions more in the coming years;

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13 **WHEREAS** continued warming will reduce snowpack and change the timing of stream  
14 flows, causing the availability of irrigation water during peak growing periods to be  
15 unreliable at best;

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17 **WHEREAS** Washington's water resources serve many competing demands in addition  
18 to agriculture;

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20 **WHEREAS** the Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (YBIP) is  
21 designed to provide a balanced approach to long-term water supply and environmental  
22 issues in the basin, more dependable water supplies to meet agricultural and municipal  
23 needs, and will significantly restore the fisheries and ecosystems of the Yakima River  
24 and its tributaries;

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26 **WHEREAS** Senate Bill S. 1694, the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project  
27 Phase III Act of 2015, authorizes federal involvement in projects that improve water  
28 security for farmers through water conservation, water marketing, and more access to  
29 water stored in an existing reservoir during drought years, and also authorizes projects  
30 to restore fish passage at two federal reservoirs and to protect and restore habitat for  
31 salmon, steelhead and bull trout; and

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33 **WHEREAS** the Bureau of Reclamation's statutory mandate to manage the basin's dams,  
34 hydropower facilities and irrigation infrastructure, and legal requirements to manage  
35 stream flows for tribal, fisheries and other needs requires that the federal government  
36 play an active role in a solution to the water resources problem;

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38 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that we, the Washington State Democratic  
39 Convention, thank Senator Maria Cantwell for sponsoring S. 1694 and ask our  
40 congressional delegation to approve S.1694 and to fully support the Yakima River Basin  
41 Water Enhancement Project Phase III Act of 2015 YBIP in order to avoid future  
42 devastating economic and environmental impacts in the region.

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Submitted by the Benton County Convention.

The Platform Committee recommended that this resolution be passed at their June 17, 2016 meeting.

The 2016 Washington State Democratic Convention passed this resolution on June 18, 2016.